



Tehran rejects Saudi visa claim as wrong, unreal, gives details **2**



Maersk sees up to 140,000 bpd potential for Iran South Pars oilfield **4**



Mobile dental clinics to offer free services in deprived areas **12**



Tehran Symphony Orchestra to perform for children **16**

Zarif urges anti-Israel front



See page 2

July oil exports up 45,000 bpd on month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian crude oil exports rose by 45,000 barrels per day in July compared to the preceding month, Shana reported on Tuesday, citing a report by Oil Ministry.

The report did not reveal the exact volume 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.

Earlier, Oil Ministry's website reported that Iran's oil exports to Europe

and Asia stood at 2.15 million bpd in June.

According to the report, cited by IRNA, Iran's oil exports hovered around 2.1 million bpd on average since the beginning of 2017 of which near 1 million barrels were sent to the European markets.

After the implementation of the nuclear accord (called JCPOA) in January 2016, Iran has been seeking to expand its target markets. Since then, oil exports to Europe has risen by more than 300 percent.

The country is currently producing around 4 million bpd of oil.

Rouhani inauguration to signify Iran's global status

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran will once again will put on display its international importance as it will be hosting eight presidents, 19 parliament speakers, and dozens of high-profile officials in the swearing-in ceremony of Hassan Rouhani as president for a second time.

Parviz Esmaili, the communications director at the presidential office, said Tuesday that at least 92 high-ranking foreign delegations will attend Rouhani's swearing-in ceremony.

Esmaili added nine vice presidents and prime ministers, seven parliament vice speakers, 11 foreign ministers, 12 deputy foreign ministers, 35 special

envoys and six heads of parliamentary friendship groups will be among the foreign guests at the ceremony.

Rouhani, who sworn in for his first term on August 4, 2013, was re-elected in the May 19 election in a landslide, garnering 57 percent of the votes.

Rouhani's swearing-in ceremony will be held at the parliament on Saturday, August 5. Iran has ramped security measures for the upcoming event. The Interior Ministry has declared Saturday a holiday in Tehran.

Alireza Rahimi, a lawmaker, said the ceremony would be unprecedented in Iran's history in terms of the number and ranks of the foreign dignitaries participating. **→2**

Moscow, Tehran coordinate steps to bolster Syria security: Russia

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — A top Russian official says Moscow and Tehran continue to coordinate steps to bolster security in Syria and put an end to hostilities in that country.

Mikhail Bogdanov, the Russian president's envoy for the Middle East and Africa, made the remarks at a meeting with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari on Tuesday.

"We will continue our consultations. We began them with the Syrian issue, discussed the situation in North Africa (as well)," Bogdanov said. "We are very interested in such vigorous, productive exchange of views and assessments based on trust, the joint analysis of what is going on in the region."

Russia, Iran and Turkey brokered a Syrian peace initiative in the Kazakh capital of Astana in the beginning of 2017. Ever since, the Astana talks have brought representatives from the Syrian government and opposition groups to the negotiating table in order to find a solution to the Syrian conflict.

So far, the sides have convened at the Kazakh capital five times with the sixth round due to take place at the end of August.

"The most important thing is the forecast of agreeing specific steps on how to help the peoples in that region, above all the Syrians, to develop optimal specific solutions concerning security, the cessation of hostilities, while effectively fighting terrorists and tackling humanitarian issues," Bogdanov said.

"There are two important platforms here - Astana and Geneva. We appreciate Iran's contribution [to that process] very much," the senior diplomat noted. "We have contacts with the Syrian parties, naturally, with Damascus."

Jaber Ansari arrived in Moscow on Tuesday morning to hold talks with top Russian officials on the latest developments in the Middle East.

'Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty supporters eyeing nuclear-weapons-free world'

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Nader Entessar from South Alabama University says the countries that backed a UN treaty in July banning nuclear weapons have an eye on "a nuclear-weapons-free world".

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was endorsed by 122 countries at the United Nations headquarters in New York on July 7. The ratification came after months of talks in the face of strong opposition from nuclear-armed states and their allies.

"The supporters of this treaty do not see the treaty as an end but as a first strong step towards achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world," Entessar tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

■ Why despite strong emphasis on nuclear disarmament, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted so late? And

why was it approved by the UN General Assembly which its ratifications are not mandatory?

A: The initial proposals for the current version of a nuclear-weapons-ban treaty date back to 2010 and to the aftermath of the review conference on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty that year. As is normally the case, drafting a major multilateral treaty is an arduous task that takes years. After several rounds of intergovernmental conferences, the UN General Assembly in 2015 established a working group to draft concrete measures to deal with a variety of legal provisions and technical issues that could be addressed by international experts. In October 2016, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly reviewed the recommendations of the aforementioned working group and adopted a resolution that was voted upon by the entire General Assembly of the UN in December

of that year. The UN General Assembly's involvement from the outset explains why the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was handled by the body. In fact, multilateral treaties of this nature normally originate in the workings of the UN General Assembly.

■ Will the adoption have customary provisions? Or can it lead to disarmament of nuclear weapons states?

A: This treaty was not intended to have all the customary provisions that a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention would have had. Therefore, this treaty does not have all the technical and/or legal provisions that would lead to the eliminations of nuclear weapons. This treaty was envisioned as the first step towards future negotiations that would discuss how to prohibit nuclear weapons and ultimately move towards the total elimination of them. **→13**

Iranian envoy hopes for growing tourism ties with Russia

Visa-free travel for tour groups, established by Iran and Russia, will lead to the growth of tourist inflow, TASS quoted Iranian Consul General Ali Mohammadi as saying on August 1. According to him, in 2017, more than 150,000 Iranians may visit Russia.

Moscow and Tehran signed a visa-free travel agreement concerning tour groups on March 28, 2017, during Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's visit to Russia. On June 25, the Iranian

government adopted a relevant directive.

"Last year, more than 120,000 Iranian tourists visited Russia, so I believe that this year, the number will exceed 150,000," Mohammadi said. "We hope that the Russian tourist inflow to our country will also grow," he pointed out. "This will happen when people know more about Iran's culture, its civilization, opportunities and safe environment. However, at present, the number of Russians

visiting Iran is less when compared to the number of Iranian tourists," the Iranian diplomat added.

According to him, Iran is on the top-10 list as far as the number of tourists visiting Russia goes. Iranians particularly like Moscow and St. Petersburg.

"In summer, it is too hot in Iran, while there [in Moscow and St. Petersburg] the weather is nice. **→13**



© Tehran Times/Mahdi Bakshi

World Ranger Day celebrated

The chief of the Department of Environment Masoumeh Ebtakar presents a gift to an exemplary ranger during a ceremony which was held in Tehran on Monday to mark World Ranger Day.

World Ranger Day takes place annually on July 31 to recognize the park rangers around the world who have been injured or killed in the line of duty.

In the past year, at least 105 rangers were killed doing their job, according to the International Ranger Federation.

Earlier this month, a plane he was believed to be traveling in was turned away when it tried to land in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Last month, Atta Noor, one of the main leaders of the Tajik community and government Deputy Chief Executive Mohammad Mohaqiq, a prominent leader of the mainly Shi'ite Hazaras, met Dostum in Turkey to form the "Coalition for the Salvation of Afghanistan".

The meeting was widely seen as a possible prelude to the formation of a formal opposition group. Dostum's case has become a pivotal issue in the growing stand-off between Ghani and other members of his administration, who include rivals brought together into the national unity government formed after a disputed election in 2014.

"I ask the international community, the United States of America and Europe, if General Dostum was a bad man, why he was good before the elections?" said Mohaqiq. "Why was he accepted as first vice president if you oppose him now?"

(Source: Reuters)

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran to hold workshop to educate citizenship rights instructors

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran is going to hold a d e s k workshop to educate citizenship rights instructors, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The workshop will use 150 elite figures from the field of law, the news agency further reported.

The National Library of Iran, Allameh Tabataba'i University, the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance will partake in the event.

The report added it will be a two-day event, but did not mention the date.



Amazon says under probe over trade with Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Amazon, the American d e s k electronic commerce and cloud computing company, has said it is under federal investigation for possibly violating U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The online giant said it sold and delivered about \$34,000 worth of products, including books, software, consumer electronics, musical instruments and jewelry, to an Iranian embassy, as well as to others with links to the Iranian government, between January 2012 and June 2017, The Washington Post reported on Monday.



Cabinet's women go different way each

POLITICS TEHRAN — Women who served d e s k in the first Rouhani administration are reportedly going different ways in the future administration.

According to a report by Ensaf News published on Monday, Masumeh Ebtekar, the incumbent head of the Department of Environment, has been chosen to head the Women's Department.

This is while Shahindokht Molaverdi, the incumbent chief of the department, will be laid off and there is no news about where she would serve afterward.

Reports also said on Tuesday that the status of Elham Aminzadeh, president's deputy for civil rights, is not clear.



Parliamentary investigation upholds Iran's Total gas deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — A move against the Iranian d e s k government's recent deal with the French Total over the development of South Pars Phase 11 failed after a high-ranking parliamentary body tasked with making a final judgment on it ratified the deal.

The deal was ratified by the Supreme Council on Oil Reserves in the Parliament, according to Kholamreza Tajardoon, head of the Parliament Planning and Budget Committee, SHANA reported on Tuesday.

Government spokesman Mohammad Bagher Nobakht said the approval came despite efforts "to cast doubt on" the deal.



Conservative figure defends Total deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — A senior conservative d e s k Iranian politician has defended a recent deal between the Iranian Oil Ministry and France's Total.

Mohammad Reza Bahonar, secretary of the Islamic Society of Engineers and a supporter of 2017 presidential candidate Ebrahim Raisi, expressed pity that "the phobia of conspiracy and betrayal has become rampant," the Shargh daily reported on Tuesday.

He censured remarks by the deal's critics as "politically-motivated and unfounded".



Rep calls on feds to investigate Iran's ties to U.S. universities

POLITICS TEHRAN — Federal authorities should d e s k investigate how a charitable foundation with ties to Iran steered millions of dollars to dozens of American universities including Columbia, Harvard and Princeton, said Rep. Dan Donovan.

Critics charge the grants from the Alavi Foundation helped fund pro-Tehran and anti-Israel professors.

"I'll be contacting the secretary of education ... about this matter immediately," said Donovan.

"We need to investigate this, and universities have to do a better job of vetting their donors."

Failure of satellite-carrier rocket denied



POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran on d e s k Tuesday denied its recently tested satellite-carrier rocket was a dud, saying it was a "successful project," according to Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan.

"The project was successful, and we reached our intended goals," Dehghan said.

The remarks were the first official reaction to a Fox News report which said the Iranian Simorgh (Phoenix) rocket suffered a "catastrophic failure" after liftoff, quoting two U.S. officials.

The officials also speculated the natively manufactured rocket had likely blown up before it reached space.

In a separate report, U.S. Strategic Command, which monitors launches around the world, said a satellite was not deployed from the rocket.

"We do not expect that they (the Westerners) and particularly the Americans announce that the launching was successful," Dehghan added, referring to failure claims by American officials.

Successfully fired on Thursday, the two-stage, liquid-fuel Simorgh can deliver satellites weighing up to 250 kg

into orbit, a significant improvement in Iran's fledgling space program.

Also, with the launch, Iran officially opened the Imam Khomeini National Space Station in Semnan province, some 220 kilometers east of Tehran.

With the space station operating now, Deputy Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on Tuesday that Iran can run the

entire "space cycle which includes station, satellite-carrier, satellite, designing and navigation."

In an Instagram post on Thursday hours after the firing, President Hassan Rouhani said: "Today, space science and technology are of great importance to us."

The rocket test sparked objection from the U.S., France, Germany and Britain

which said on Friday it was inconsistent with a UN Security Council resolution which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, calling on Iran not to conduct such tests.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 "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".

Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, on Friday denied Tehran had missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads.

"Iran is not, and will not be, developing nuclear weapons; so by definition cannot develop anything DESIGNED to be capable of delivering them," Zarif said on Twitter.

"Iran - unlike the U.S. - has complied in good faith with the letter AND spirit of (the nuclear deal). Rhetoric and actions from U.S. show bad faith," Zarif added.

One day after the rocket test, the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control imposed sanctions on six subsidiaries of an Iranian company key to the country's ballistic missile program.

Zarif urges anti-Israel front

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister d e s k Mohammad Javad Zarif suggested on Tuesday that a unified global campaign should be formed to stop the Zionist regime of Israel from concealing its "criminal policies and practices" in the occupied territories.

"We in the Islamic Ummah should, first and foremost, close our ranks in a unified global campaign to thwart the Zionist attempts to conceal their criminal policies and practices," he said during his speech at an OIC emergency meeting in Istanbul held to assess the recent developments in al-Aqsa Mosque.

Following is the full text of the speech published on the website of the Iranian Foreign Ministry:

Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation to the people and government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting this important meeting to address the deteriorating situation in al-Quds al-Sharif. We strongly condemn the latest episode of Zionist aggression and provocation, which indicate absolute contempt for

international law aiming to alter the historic status of Haram al-Sharif, change the demography and assert control over the Islamic holy sites in the heart of Occupied al-Quds al-Sharif. We take pride in the resolute resistance of the Palestinian People which brought this act of aggression to an end.

The city continues to suffocate because of a prolonged siege characterized by checkpoints, occupying forces, illegal settlements, armed and violent settlers, and humiliation, discrimination and oppression of its Palestinian inhabitants.

We should not also forget the 2 million Palestinians in Gaza, who remain under illegal blockade, in an act of collective punishment, and are deprived from basic necessities even vital medicine, clean water and energy. This deliberate humanitarian nightmare requires urgent remedy through ending the blockade immediately.

The Israeli regime has continued to ignore all appeals of the outside world to cease and reverse its racist policies and practices against the Palestinian people. We in the

Islamic Ummah should, first and foremost, close our ranks in a unified global campaign to thwart the Zionist attempts to conceal their criminal policies and practices. We should all resist any attempt to divert our collective attention from the main goal that brought us together in the OIC. We should not allow any agenda or cause to compromise the main goal of this Organization to enhance the unity of the Ummah against Zionist expansionism and in support of the establishment of a viable independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. We should not allow the Zionist to set our agenda or manufacture new causes to ensure their impunity for the crimes they have perpetrated against all of us. We should not be misled by their empty gestures and the illusive mirage of their promises.

We need to engage with one voice with the international community, particularly the Security Council, to put an end to the culture of impunity for the Israeli regime and compel it to cease and reverse its criminal policies and practices.

Rouhani inauguration to signify Iran's global status

Officials from Germany, France, Britain, Russia, and China who struck the nuclear deal with Iran will attend the swearing-in ceremony

I → He noted that the turnout in the event would send "an important message" to the world, especially at a time when the United States is seeking to unite the world against Iran.

Russia, Britain and China would be represented by their vice president, deputy foreign minister and deputy prime minister, respectively, while France and Germany would be participating at

the level of assistant foreign minister, Rahimi said.

The parliamentarian added that European foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini will also take part in the ceremony, showing the EU's resolve to preserve and strengthen ties with Iran.

During Rouhani's first term, Iran reached a historic nuclear agreement, officially known as the JCPOA, which put

some restrictions on Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions. The other parties to the deal were the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain, and Germany.

Rouhani was also Iran's chief nuclear negotiator from 2003 to 2005. His leading role in the nuclear negotiations as well as his clerical background won him the nickname of "the sheikh (cleric) diplomat".

In his presidential campaign, Rouhani promised to reap the benefits of the nuclear agreement and bring faster economic progress to satisfy the people.

Since Donald Trump became president of the United States, Washington has taken a hostile stance towards the accord. The EU member states, however, stress the necessity of staying committed to the JCPOA.

Tehran rejects Saudi visa claim as wrong, unreal, gives details

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran on Tuesday rejected d e s k as "wrong and unreal" claims by Saudi Arabia on its delegation having been denied visa to launch probe into the storming of its diplomatic posts in Tehran and Mashhad, providing visa and flight details.

"Visas for the Saudi delegation to visit the diplomatic missions have been issued one month ago," spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.

"The remarks are wrong and unreal," he added. Qassemi was responding to a report by the Saudi SPA news agency which quoted a Foreign Ministry source as claiming Tehran has denied the entry into the country of

a Saudi team to launch a probe into the storming of its embassy in Tehran and consulate in Mashhad.

In January 2016, the Saudi diplomatic posts were attacked by some demonstrators in protest to Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric.

Tehran and Riyadh have no diplomatic relations since the event. They are also at loggerheads over regional issues, particularly the conflict in Syria.

Iran was doing so to "gain diplomatic privileges inside the Kingdom", the source was quoted as saying, too.

Rejecting the accusations, Qassemi said, "These remarks are likely to have been made without the consent of related

authorities in Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry."

He added, "Permit for the charter flight of the (Saudi) delegation was issued in the shortest time, and the delegation was due to arrive in Tehran on July 23. But they requested the trip be postponed for more preparation."

The Saudi side seems to have been surprised by good faith and promptness of the Iranian side, the spokesman said, adding that available evidence puts the Saudis' claims to lie.

On Monday, Iran's Court of First Instance rejected appeals by 19 convicts participating in the January attacks.

Iranian, Turkish FMs meet in Istanbul

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Mevlut Cavusoglu, his Turkish counterpart, met in Istanbul on Tuesday to discuss bilateral ties and the recent developments in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Zarif expressed hope that the emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the recent developments at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound would lead to Muslim unity against the Zionist regime of Israel.

Upon his arrival in Istanbul, he said, "This emergency meeting, which is in fact meeting of executive committee, shows the Islamic countries' coordination against the Zionist regime's new move."

Clashes erupted in the West Bank and al-Quds between the Israeli forces and the Palestinians following a deadly shooting incident there on July 14.

Tensions escalated as Israel installed security equipment, including metal detectors and cameras, at the sacred compound. Two days after metal detectors were also dismantled.

The main prayer session at Al-Aqsa mosque ended relatively calmly on Friday. But tensions remained high and more serious violence erupted in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

"It is essential for the Islamic and regional countries to be vigilant about policies of the Zionist regime and not let this fake regime divert the world of Islam's attention from the main threat," Zarif noted.

The chief diplomat also faulted Israel for the spread of terrorism and extremism in the Islamic world.

"The main threat to the world of Islam is the Zionist regime which has spread those threats [terrorism and extremism]," Zarif remarked.

Tehran says has filed complaint to JCPOA body over U.S. sanctions

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Tuesday that Iran has filed a complaint to the JCPOA Joint Commission against the new U.S. sanctions.

Talking to reporters in Qom, Larijani said it is clear that the U.S. has violated the letter of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the July 2015 nuclear agreement.

JCPOA Joint Commission is tasked to supervise the implementation of nuclear deal.

Larijani said, "Iran will determinedly prevent the U.S. from reaching its objectives."

Larijani added, "Diplomatic actions should be taken regarding the new U.S. sanctions and a complaint should be lodged to the related committee which has been done. The committee has issued an announcement according to which the U.S. has committed some violations in implementing the JCPOA."

The next meeting of the Joint Commission will be held at ministerial level, Larijani announced.

Last week the two houses of the U.S. Congress ratified sanctions against Iran. The U.S. Treasury Department also imposed sanctions on six Iran-based satellite companies on Friday after Iran launched Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier rocket into space on Thursday.

According to Iran's Foreign Ministry, the Supervisory Committee of the JCPOA held a meeting to discuss the latest sanctions by the United States. The committee was chaired by President Hassan Rouhani.

The Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran briefed the committee on the latest developments and the members stressed that the U.S. has violated its commitments under the JCPOA, especially Paragraphs 26, 28 and 29, demanding that Iran must respond.

U.S.-led strikes kill 60 civilians in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr

Turkey, U.S. accuse each other of terror sponsorship in Syria

At least 60 civilians have lost their lives in fresh air strikes conducted by the United States-led coalition in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr Province, according to Syrian media reports.

Syria's official news agency said that Tuesday's air raids destroyed homes in several Dayr al-Zawr districts and left scores, mostly women and children, wounded.

The strikes came less than 48 hours after the bombardment by the U.S.-led jets of some areas, including a hospital, in the city of Abu Kamal in the same province, which killed 6 civilians and injured 10 others.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting air raids against what are said to be the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit's positions inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate.

But the strikes have on many occasions resulted in civilian casualties and failed to fulfill their declared aim of countering terrorism.

On Sunday, Damascus wrote to the United Nations, calling for the dissolving of the U.S.-led coalition in Syria and an immediate halt to the alliance's crimes in the country.

In two letters addressed to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the world body's Security Council, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates complained that the coalition "continues to commit massacres against Syrian innocent civilians through conducting systematic airstrikes."

It further noted that the US-led strikes are meant to support terrorist groups operating in Syria.

■ **Turkey, U.S. accuse each other of terror sponsorship in Syria**

The development follows as Turkey and the U.S. have been accusing each other of supporting various terrorist groups in Syria.

Brett H. McGurk, the U.S. special envoy to the international coalition against the ISIL terrorist group, has suggested that Turkey facilitates al-Qaeda terrorists in Syria's Idlib Province.

He said in a speech delivered at a Washington-based think tank on July 29 that Idlib has turned into a "safe zone for al-Qaeda terrorists on the Turkish border," asking "why and how" a deputy to al-Qaeda's



leader had allegedly managed to travel to the Syrian province.

He said it might not be the best approach for some partners of the U.S. "to send tens of thousands of weapons and turn their faces to the other side as foreign fighters enter this area," according to reports.

The U.S., McGurk reportedly said, intended to work with Turkey to have the border closed to recruited militants.

Ankara has strongly denounced McGurk's "provocative" remarks, accusing Washington of terror sponsorship in Syria by supporting the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/Yekineyên Parastina Gel?), which Ankara views as the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Yekineyên Parastina Gel?), a militant group that has been fighting the central Turkish government since 1984.

"Our reaction to the statements of Brett McGurk, in which he associated Turkey with the presence of terrorist organizations in Idlib, was brought to Mr. McGurk's attention at a high-level démarche, and his

statements, which could be characterized as provocative, were protested," Turkish media on Monday quoted Foreign Ministry spokesperson Huseyin Muftuoglu as saying.

Muftuoglu also said that the US had to end its support for the Kurdish Democratic Party, aka PYD (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat).

A Turkish Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be named, also told Hurriyet Daily News that Foreign Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Sedat Onal had urged the US envoy to "correct" his statements.

The official added that Onal warned that such remarks could harm mutual cooperation between Turkey and the U.S., which is seeking cooperation with Ankara for the post-ISIL period in Syria.

Syria has been gripped by foreign backed militancy since March 2011, when a section of the opposition in the country took up arms against President Bashar al-Assad. A vast mix of foreign terrorists soon blended with the armed opposition, joining the fight against the Syrian government. (Source: SANA)

Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units retake 17 villages southeast of Tal Afar from ISIL

Iraqi fighters from Popular Mobilization Units (Hashd al-Sha'abi) have liberated more than a dozen villages near Tal Afar as pro-government forces and army soldiers are working on a planned offensive to expel the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists out of their remaining urban strongholds in the country.

The media bureau of the volunteer forces, announced in a statement on Tuesday that the fighters had established full control over seventeen villages on the southeastern outskirts of the city, located 63 kilometers west of Mosul, starting from the northern part of Adaya area towards the village of Ain al-Jahash southeast of Tal Afar.

The statement added that fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units are now conducting survey and bomb disposal operations in the liberated areas.

Commander of Nineveh Liberation Operations, Major General Najim Abdullah al-Jubouri, told Reuters in an interview on Monday that he expects a relatively easy

victory for government forces in the forthcoming operation to retake Tal Afar from ISIL as the terrorists are "worn out and demoralized."

"I don't expect it will be a fierce battle even though the enemy is surrounded. The enemy is very worn out. I know from the intelligence reports that their morale is low," he commented.

Jubouri estimated that there are between 1,500 and 2,000 ISIL terrorists left in Tal Afar. He highlighted that the battle for Tal Afar is set to start soon, and is waiting for orders from Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi which would probably be issued within the next few "days, or a week, or two."

Speaking at a youth meeting on Saturday, Abadi said Popular Mobilization Unit fighters will take part in the offensive to win back Tal Afar.

He said the army and security commanders have devised a plan to dislodge ISIL from Tal Afar, which requires participation of security personnel as well as Popular

Mobilization Units and tribal fighters.

■ **UN: Violence left 241 Iraqis dead in July**

Meanwhile, the United Nations (UN) says some 250 people lost their lives and hundreds others sustained injuries as a result of acts of terrorism and violence in Iraq in the month of July.

According to the latest figures released by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on Tuesday, the terror attacks claimed by the ISIL terrorist Takfiri outfit claimed the lives of 241 Iraqis and left another 277 injured last month.

The worst-affected area, with the highest number of casualties was the northern province of Nineveh, where violence took the lives of 121 civilians and left 112 others wounded.

The capital province of Baghdad saw 38 deaths and 85 injuries. Thirty-three people also died and 49 others were wounded in Iraq's embattled western eastern province of Anbar. (Source: Press TV)

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq Jan Kubis condemned ISIL's terror attacks, and called for the protection of civilians in imminent operations to recapture the remaining parts of the country from the scourge of ISIL.

"As we commend the Iraqi forces' humanitarian concept of operations that has put civilian protection and assistance to IDPs at the center of the battle plan for Mosul, it is imperative that the protection of civilians continues to be the top priority in the conduct of military operations going forward," he said.

Gruesome violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since ISIL terrorists mounted an offensive there more than two years ago, and took control of portions of Iraqi territory.

Iraqi army soldiers and pro-government fighters from Popular Mobilization Units, are engaged in joint operations to win back militant-held areas.

(Source: Press TV)

Pakistani lawmakers elect Abbasi as PM to replace ousted Nawaz Sharif

Pakistani ruling party lawmakers on Tuesday waved posters of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and chanted his name after electing a close ally to replace the leader removed in a Supreme Court ruling last week.

"Nawaz Sharif! ... Lion, lion Nawaz Sharif!" shouted supporters of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party after voting in Shahid Khaqan Abbasi as the country's new prime minister. Abbasi is a former petroleum minister.

Abbasi won 221 votes in the 342-seat National Assembly, in which Sharif's party retains a solid majority after winning elections in 2013.

Sharif's supporters have decried the Supreme Court's disqualification of the former leader over undisclosed income as overreach and part of a political conspiracy by opponents.

The ruling PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League/Nawaz) party has vowed a smooth transfer of power after Sharif's removal.

The quick handover looks to ease political upheaval sparked by the Supreme Court's decision on Friday to disqualify Sharif for concealing his assets.

Sharif has lashed out against the court's decision and his opponents who used the Supreme Court to topple him.

But he has vowed his party would continue to focus on economic development, touting a faster-growing economy as proof of his success.

"The wheel of development is moving and may God keep it rolling, and may it never stop," he told members of PML-N on Saturday night.

Opposition leader Imran Khan, who pushed for Sharif's investigation, called Shahbaz's selection "a form of monarchy."

"They are family parties," he said. "They are basically - families run the parties ... In monarchy, it's hereditary, it's through blood. We are still stuck into it"

The probe against Sharif began after his children were named in the so-called Panama Papers leak for owning offshore accounts and properties.

Sharif's party has resolved to file a review petition in the Supreme Court to reverse the judges' decision.

The court also ordered criminal investigations for him and his family. (Source: Reuters)



Afghan Taliban: Qatar plays major role in peace talks

Qatar played a major role in facilitating peace talks between Afghan officials and the Taliban by opening an office for the group in Doha, a senior Taliban official told Al Jazeera.

The Taliban official's comments on Tuesday come as a series of leaked emails from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) diplomats suggest the Emirati foreign minister was disappointed that the United States officials had chosen Doha over Abu Dhabi to host the office.

The June 2013 opening of the unofficial embassy allowed for talks to develop, said the Taliban official, who is based in the Qatari capital.

"We got a chance to discuss with Afghan diplomats, journalists and analysts face-to-face on how peace can be achieved in Afghanistan," he told Al Jazeera, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

In 2016, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, an international crisis group, organized a meeting in Doha bringing Afghan diplomats, analysts and journalists to the table with the Taliban to discuss how to achieve peace.

"We've conducted many peace conferences in Doha and discussed many issues with the help of Qatari officials who played the role of mediators, and nothing else."

That conference was not a part of the official process between officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the U.S. aimed at charting a roadmap to peace.

But the Taliban official said such meeting were important.

He also noted a separate meeting was held between the Taliban and Afghan journalists where both sides were able to discuss their ideas for peace.

The official went on to say that demands on Doha by a Saudi regime-led bloc currently boycotting the peninsula are "unfair", and that the quartet should not "accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism."

As part of its attempt to isolate the peninsula, the House of Saud regime, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have derided Qatar for hosting an office for the Afghan armed group.

But a series of leaked emails show UAE diplomats lobbied U.S. officials so Abu Dhabi could host the office.

Reported by the New York Times on Monday, the emails from UAE ambassador to the U.S. Yousef Al Otaiba apparently contradict a mounted campaign against Qatar for its alleged support of "terrorist groups".

Otaiba said he received an "angry call" from UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, complaining that the Taliban had ended up in Qatar and not the UAE, according to messages in the ambassador's Hotmail account.

"I got an angry call from [Zayed] saying how come we weren't told," Otaiba wrote to an American official.

The newspaper obtained another email dated September 12, 2011, in which an Emirati official questioned the US position on the Taliban office's location.

"There is an article in the London Times that mentions U.S. is backing setting up a Taliban embassy in Doha," the diplomat, Mohamed Mahmoud al-Khaja, wrote to Jeffrey Feltman, then assistant secretary of state for near east affairs.

"HH says that we were under the impression that Abu Dhabi was your first choice and this is what we were informed", Khaja said in the email, referring to bin Zayed.

The latest email leak comes from a group called "GlobalLeaks", which is not affiliated with the software developer, GlobalLeaks. (Source: Al Jazeera)

Mexican president denies calling Trump to praise border policy

China rejects Trump's criticism over North Korea

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto said on Monday he had not recently spoken to the United States President Donald Trump on the phone, after the U.S. leader boasted his counterpart had called him to praise his border policy.

Trump made the comments as he presented his new chief of staff, former Homeland Security secretary John Kelly, who is tasked with restoring order to a White House beset by scandal, infighting and legislative defeats.

"As you know, the border was a tremendous problem and they're close to 80% stoppage. And even the president of Mexico called me - they said their southern border, very few people are coming because they know they're not going to get through our border, which is the ultimate compliment," Trump said.

Pena Nieto's office rejected that account.

"President Enrique Pena Nieto has not recently communicated with President Donald Trump by phone," it said in a statement.

It said the two leaders had last discussed migration issues when they met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Germany on July 7.

The G20 sit-down was the first official meeting between the two presidents, whose relationship has been tense.

In January, Pena Nieto cancelled a trip to Washington in response to Trump's insistence that Mexico pay for his planned border wall - plunging the countries' relations into their biggest crisis in decades.

Nerves are still raw in Mexico over the wall, Trump's attacks on Mexican immigrants as "criminals, drug dealers and rapists," and his insistence on re-negotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he accuses of shipping U.S. jobs south of the border.



■ **China rejects Trump's criticism over North Korea**

Elsewhere, China slammed Trump for pointing the finger of blame at Beijing over the North Korean military program, calling on all sides to make joint efforts towards the resolution of the issue.

In a statement sent to Reuters on Monday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded to Trump's latest tweets, where he said he was "very disappointed" with Beijing after North Korea test launched another intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

Trump had written, "Our foolish past leaders have allowed them (the Chinese) to make hundreds of billions of dollars a year in trade, yet they do NOTHING for us with North Korea, just talk."

The Chinese ministry said in the statement that North Korea's nuclear issue did not arise because of China, and that everyone needed to work together to seek a resolution.

North Korea claimed on Saturday it had conducted a

new successful test of an ICBM capable of reaching the U.S. mainland, the North's second this month. Pyongyang says it needs its nuclear weapons and missiles as a deterrent against U.S. aggression and expansionism.

China is viewed as North Korea's closest ally, but it has been critical of Pyongyang's continued nuclear and missile tests.

China's state-run Global Times newspaper also wrote on Monday that Beijing's sanctions would not change the situation while Pyongyang is "determined to develop its nuclear and missile program and does not care about military threats from the U.S. and South Korea."

Its official Xinhua news agency also said in a commentary that Beijing seeks balanced commerce with Washington and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

In New York, China's United Nations ambassador said it is primarily up to Washington and Pyongyang, not Beijing, to reduce tensions and work toward resuming talks.

Meanwhile, Chinese Vice Commerce Minister Qian Keming responded telling a news conference there was no link between the North Korea issue and China-U.S. trade.

Russia, following the same line, said the U.S. and other countries were trying "to shift responsibility for the situation to Russia and China."

"We view as groundless attempts undertaken by the U.S. and a number of other countries to shift responsibility to Russia and China, almost blaming Moscow and Beijing for indulging the missile and nuclear ambitions of the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday. (Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Intl. home furniture expo kicks off in Tehran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The 26th edition of the international exhibition of home furniture (HOFEX home section 2017) kicked off at Tehran Permanent International Fairground on Tuesday, IRIB reported.

Over 400 exhibitors from Iran and several foreign countries including Italy, Spain, China, Turkey and Switzerland are showcasing their latest products and services during the four-day event.

According to the exhibition organizers, this year's event mainly focuses on promoting export of Iranian products and encouraging higher quality production.

Some foreign trade delegations have also been invited to visit the exhibition which could lead to signing trade deals between Iranian and foreign companies.

German jobless total falls more than forecast in July

The number of unemployed Germans fell more than expected in July, the Federal Labor Office said on Tuesday, as Europe's biggest economy powers ahead - news likely to please Chancellor Angela Merkel seeking a fourth term in a September election.

The jobless total fell by 9,000 to 2.537 million in seasonally adjusted terms, data showed, compared with the consensus forecast in a Reuters poll for a fall of 5,000.

The unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.7 percent, the lowest level since reunification in 1990 and in line with the Reuters poll.

"The news from the labor market is positive... Employment has risen strongly again and the demand in businesses for new employees is continuing to rise at a high level," said Detlef Scheele, head of the Labor Office.

(Source: Reuters)

UK house prices rise for second month in July

British house prices rose for a second month in a row in July after falling between March and May, mortgage lender Nationwide said on Tuesday, suggesting a stabilization in the housing market which has weakened since last year's Brexit vote.

House prices rose 0.3 percent in July from June, Nationwide said, slower than June's 1.1 percent jump. Economists polled by Reuters had expected prices to edge down by 0.1 percent in July.

Compared with July of last year, prices were 2.9 percent higher, slowing from a rise of 3.1 percent in June, Nationwide said.

(Source: Reuters)

EU receives 27 proposals to host London-based agencies after Brexit

BRUSSELS (Reuters) — The European Union has received 27 proposals from EU members to host the two agencies that will have to be relocated when Britain completes its exit from the bloc, the European Union Council said on Tuesday.

The council added it had received 19 proposals for hosting the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and eight candidate cities for the European Banking Authority (EBA).

The decision on which city will get to host these agencies will be made in November, the Council added.

China's factories power ahead in July

Factories in China and Japan motored ahead in July, giving investors optimism that the global economy can carry momentum through into the second half of the year as central banks in the West prepare to start scaling back years of massive stimulus.

Similar surveys from Europe later in the day are expected to point to strong expansion in manufacturing on the continent, while U.S. factories likely chugged along at a slightly more modest but still solid pace.

A revival in world trade this year and improving domestic demand in many economies have produced a string of forecast-beating company earnings reports in recent weeks, boosting MSCI's global stock index to record highs.

In China, factory activity unexpectedly expanded at the fastest pace in four months in July as export orders flooded in, a private survey showed on Tuesday.

The Caixin/Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 51.1, well ahead of June's 50.4 and the 50 break-even level.

The findings were more upbeat than official data on Monday, which suggested a slight loss of momentum. But taken together they pointed to continued resilience in the world's second-largest economy and the possibility that its industrial recovery may last a bit longer than expected.

"The key takeaway from the PMIs is China, which shows that the momentum is still ongoing into the start of the third quarter," Khoo Goh, head of Asia research at ANZ.

"The PMIs in the rest of the region are somewhat mixed. We do expect a bit of a growth slowdown (in Asia) in the second half but full-year growth numbers to be an improvement from last year's."

(Source: Reuters)

Maersk sees up to 140,000 bpd potential for Iran South Pars oilfield

Denmark's Maersk Oil has estimated potential output for the second phase of Iran's South Pars oil deposit at 120,000-140,000 barrels of oil per day, Fars News Agency reported, citing an official at National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

The estimate is part of Maersk Oil's development study for the second development phase of the offshore oilfield, NIOC's vice president for engineering and development Gholamreza Manouchehri as saying.

Maersk Oil, part of Denmark's A.P. Moller-Maersk, declined to comment. The company signed a memorandum of understanding with NIOC in 2016 "to explore opportunities for future collaboration."

South Pars stretches into Qatari waters where the oil-bearing layer is called Al-Shaheen and shares the same difficult geological characteristics.

Since the completion of the preliminary studies, the Danish company has been in talks with the National Iranian Oil Company for development of South Pars gas field's oil layer in the Persian Gulf.

The development of the South Pars oil layer will be awarded under a 20-year contract. The project is estimated to cost about \$6 billion and the field's final output will be 120,000 barrels per day.

(Source: Agencies)



Qatar launches wide-ranging WTO complaint against trade boycott

Qatar filed a wide-ranging legal complaint at the World Trade Organization on Monday to challenge a trade boycott by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates, the director of Qatar's WTO office Ali Alwaleed al-Thani told Reuters.

By formally "requesting consultations" with the three countries, the first step in a trade dispute, Qatar triggered a 60 day deadline for them to settle the complaint or face litigation at the WTO and potential retaliatory trade sanctions.

"We've given sufficient time to hear the legal explanations on how these measures are in compliance with their commitments, to no satisfactory result," al-Thani said.

"We have always called for dialogue, for negotiations, and this is part

of our strategy to talk to the members concerned and to gain more information on these measures, the legality of these measures, and to find a solution to resolve the dispute."

The boycotting states cut ties with Qatar - a major global gas supplier - on June 5, accusing it of financing militant groups in Syria, and allying with Iran, their regional foe, allegations Doha denies.

The boycotting countries have previously told the WTO that they would cite national security to justify their actions against Qatar, using a controversial and almost unprecedented exemption allowed under the WTO rules.

They said on Sunday they were ready for talks to tackle the dispute, the worst rift between Persian Gulf Arab states in years, if Doha showed

willingness to deal with their demands.

The text of Qatar's WTO complaint cites "coercive attempts at economic isolation" and spells out how they are impeding Qatar's rights in the trade in goods, trade in services and intellectual property.

The complaints against Saudi Arabia and the UAE run to eight pages each, while the document on Bahrain is six pages.

There was no immediate reaction from the three to Qatar's complaint, which is likely to be circulated at the WTO later this week.

■ "Remain hopeful"

The disputed trade restrictions include bans on trade through Qatar's ports and travel by Qatari citizens, blockages of Qatari digital services and websites, closure of maritime bor-

ders and prohibition of flights operated by Qatari aircraft.

The complaint does not put a value on the trade boycott, and al-Thani declined to estimate how much Qatar could seek in sanctions if the litigation ever reached that stage, which can take 2-5 years or longer in the WTO system.

"We remain hopeful that the consultations could bear fruit in resolving this," he said.

The WTO suit does not include Egypt, the fourth country involved in the boycott. Although it has also cut travel and diplomatic ties with Qatar, Egypt did not expel Qatari citizens or ask Egyptians to leave Qatar.

Al-Thani declined to explain why Egypt was not included.

(Source: Reuters)

S.Korea's exports surge 20% as global demand supports growth

South Korea's exports topped expectations in July, as strong global demand continues to underpin the nation's economy.

Exports jumped 20 percent in July from a year earlier, a seventh straight double-digit increase and the ninth consecutive gain, data from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy showed. The median estimate of economists was for a rise of 16 percent. Imports advanced 15 percent, matching estimates and the resulting trade surplus was \$10.6 billion.

Surging exports and investment have supported Korea's recovery even as weak consumption at home has limited overall growth. President Moon Jae-in last week laid out policy plans to boost jobs and wages to stimulate domestic activity, and an 11 trillion won extra budget approved last month is expected to help sustain the uptrend for Asia's fourth-biggest economy.

Exports are projected to continue growing during a sustained recovery in global trade, but downside risks include the possible spreading of trade protectionism, the U.S. Federal Reserve reducing its balance sheet and falling oil prices, the trade ministry



said. The U.S. has formally requested talks on revisiting a trade deal that came into force in 2012, amid tensions with the Trump administration over trade.

Export growth will slow in the second half of the year to high single-digit rates, partly due to a base effect, but the deceleration shouldn't be cause for concern, said Park Sang-hyun, the chief economist for HI Investment & Securities in Seoul.

"Pressure from the U.S. regarding trade will likely increase, but aggravation of the situation could also cause side-effects for the U.S., so we believe the impact won't be too strong," said Lee Sangjae, an economist at Eugene Investment & Securities.

(Source: Bloomberg)

UK manufacturing grows as export orders climb to near record

UK manufacturing growth accelerated for the first time in three months in July, bolstered by the strongest jump in export orders in seven years.

A measure of factory output rose to 55.1 from a revised 54.2 in June, according to IHS Markit's Purchasing Managers' Index. That exceeds the advance to 54.5 forecast by economists in a Bloomberg survey and is well above the 50 level dividing expansion from contraction.

Companies reported that export orders, which climbed to the second-highest reading since records began in 1992, were boosted by the pound exchange rate as well as stronger economic growth in the euro area, North America and Asia-Pacific regions. The domestic market also contributed to order books, albeit at a weaker level than earlier in the year.

Firms were assisted by easing price pressures, with input costs rising at the slowest pace in over a year. The report suggests that the inflation effect of the pound's drop, triggered by the vote to leave the European Union last year, is starting to fade.

That may help take the strain off Bank of England policy makers, who meet this week to decide how to re-



spond to above-target price gains. The Monetary Policy Committee, which voted 5-3 against raising interest rates in June, will announce their decision on Aug. 3.

"If this trend of milder price pressures is also reflected in other areas of the UK economy, this should provide the Bank of England sufficient leeway to maintain its current supportive stance until the medium-term outlook for economic growth becomes less uncertain," said Rob Dobson, senior economist at IHS Markit.

Manufacturing accounts for about a 10th of the UK economy. PMI data on services, which make up almost 80 percent, will be published on Thursday.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Global growth boosts stocks, dollar mired near multi-month lows

LONDON (Reuters) — World stocks, on their longest streak of monthly gains in more than a decade, rose on Tuesday amid further signs that the global economy is in fine fettle, while the beaten-down dollar edged up slightly from 14-month lows.

Softening U.S. inflation and incessant political turmoil has hit prospects of another Federal Reserve rate hike in coming months and sent the dollar down 10 percent from its January peaks.

The dollar's decline, low inflation and robust global growth has stoked appetite for stocks, however, with the MSCI ACWI extending its run after the index logged its longest streak of monthly gains since 2003-04 in July.

"Data and market behavior are consistent with our global deflation theme," strategists at Morgan Stanley, led by Hans Redeker, said in a note, pointing to strong Chinese factory data, corporate earnings and surging South Korean exports.

"The combination of USD weakness with decent, but not too strong, U.S. economic growth works in favor of risk appetite, pushing financial conditions globally, and especially in the U.S., higher," said the



strategists.

The dollar edged up slightly against major currencies although the outlook remained downbeat following the ouster of recently hired White House communications chief Anthony Scaramucci overnight.

"I think the short dollar trade is still the broad consensus trade in the financial markets," said Esther Maria Reichelt, an FX analyst at Commerzbank in Frank-

furt. "But we are approaching important levels against other currencies, such as 1.20 on the euro, which may prompt some concerns from other central banks."

The euro is widely seen benefiting the most from the greenback's slide. It has risen 12 percent against the dollar this year, with most of the gains coming in the last three months, and is trading at its highest in more than two years.

Bets on another quarter point U.S. rate increase have whittled down to around 47 percent compared to a 50 percent probability a month ago, according to CME's Fedwatch tool.

The index .DXY measuring the greenback's value against a basket of six major currencies fell to its lowest levels since May 2016 on Monday and was trading a shade above that at 92.92 on Tuesday.

U.S. stock futures were up 0.3 percent. In commodities, oil prices made further gains as falling U.S. inventories eased some concerns about oversupply. Futures on Brent crude and U.S. crude oil rose 0.2 percent and held comfortably above \$50 a barrel for the first time since May.

(Source: Reuters)

OPEC oil output jumps to 2017 high on further Libya recovery

OPEC oil output has risen this month by 90,000 barrels per day (bpd) to a 2017 high, a Reuters survey found, led by a further recovery in supply from Libya, one of the countries exempt from a production-cutting deal.

A dip in supply from Saudi Arabia and lower Angolan exports helped to boost OPEC's adherence to its supply curbs to 84 percent. While this is up from a revised 77 percent in June, compliance in both months has fallen from levels above 90 percent earlier in the year.

The extra oil from Libya means supply by the 13 OPEC members originally part of the deal has risen far above their implied production target. Libya and Nigeria were exempt from the cuts because conflict had curbed their production.

A gain in Libyan and Nigerian output has added to the challenge the OPEC-led effort is facing to get rid of excess supply on world markets. To address this, ministers at a July 24 meeting moved to cap Nigerian output and officials are holding talks next week on improving compliance.

"There is a need to align all countries to achieve full compliance," a source close to OPEC said of the compliance talks, which will be held on Aug. 7-8 in Abu Dhabi.

As part of a deal with Russia and other non-members, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is reduc-



ing output by about 1.2 million bpd from Jan. 1, 2017 until March next year.

High compliance with the deal, and much-reduced output in the exempt countries, pushed supply lower earlier in the year. But extra Libya and Nigerian production has prompted output to rise since May, and adherence has slipped in some other countries.

July's biggest rise came from Libya, where output, curbed by years of conflict and unrest, rose to an average of more than 1 million bpd. Production remains short of the 1.6 million bpd Libya pumped

before its 2011 civil war.

Iraqi supply was revised up for June and in July output has edged higher, the survey found. Supply also increased slightly in the United Arab Emirates, Gabon and Ecuador - which said it planned to pump more, citing its lack of funds.

Among countries with lower output, the biggest decline was in Angola, which exported 50 cargoes, two less than in June. August volumes are expected to increase.

Nigeria pumped slightly less in July after an increase in June, partly due to a

force majeure on Bonny crude exports. Growth could resume next month if exports reach the planned rate of at least 2 million bpd.

Top exporter Saudi Arabia pumped 50,000 bpd less, the survey found, although output in June was revised higher to just above its OPEC target. The reduction achieved by OPEC's biggest producer in July is back above the target cut of 486,000 bpd.

OPEC announced a production target of 32.50 million bpd last year, which was based on low figures for Libya and Nigeria. The target includes Indonesia, which has since left OPEC, and does not include Equatorial Guinea, the latest country to join OPEC.

The Libyan and Nigerian increases mean OPEC output in July averaged 32.85 million bpd, about 1.1 million bpd above its supply target, adjusted to remove Indonesia and not including Equatorial Guinea.

With Equatorial Guinea added, total OPEC production in July has reached 33.0 million bpd.

The Reuters survey is based on shipping data provided by external sources, Thomson Reuters flows data, and information provided by sources at oil companies, OPEC and consulting firms.

(Source: Reuters)

Ukraine coal exports part of trump bid to counter Russia

A Pennsylvania company will send 700,000 tons of coal to Ukraine in a deal the administration of President Donald Trump heralded as an important tool to undercut the power Russia has over its European neighbors.

While Trump has pledged to improve ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin, his administration says it's trying to use more U.S. exports of coal, natural gas and oil to curtail Putin's sway with Russian natural resources. Ukraine had been reliant on Russia for much of its oil and gas, and its domestic thermal coal supply collapsed because much comes from the rebel-controlled eastern part of the nation.

At a ceremony in Kiev Monday, Pennsylvania-based Xcoal Energy & Resources LLC announced an agreement with Ukraine power generator Centrenergo PJSC to supply the 700,000 tons for this winter season. Ukraine's initial purchase for 210,000 tons will be at a price of \$113 a ton, Oleh Kozemko, acting chief executive officer of Centrenergo, told reporters during a press conference in Kiev.

Trump has said U.S. oil, coal and natural gas exports are a potent diplomatic weapon.

"Russia makes its money through selling of oil, and we've got underneath us more oil than anybody, and nobody knew it until five years ago," he told reporters

earlier this month. "And I want to use it."

The contract represents the first time U.S. origin thermal coal has been supplied to a customer in Ukraine, Latrobe, Pennsylvania-based Xcoal said in a statement. The deal will create and sustain hundreds of jobs for Pennsylvania coal miners, it said.

"The U.S. coal will replace Russian origin coal at existing thermal power plants, i.e. energy security and diversification," Ernie Thrasher, Xcoal's chief executive officer said by email.

The U.S. exported more than 60 million short tons of coal worldwide last year.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil hits two-month high, further U.S. inventory drop seen

Oil climbed towards \$53 a barrel on Tuesday, reaching a two-month high, supported by signs that a persistent supply glut is starting to ease amid strong demand and OPEC-led production curbs.

U.S. inventory reports due on Tuesday and Wednesday are expected to show crude stocks fell by 2.9 million barrels last week, the fifth straight week of declines. Stocks have already fallen below year-ago levels.

Brent crude, the international benchmark, was up 12 cents at \$52.84 a barrel at 0848 GMT. The contract traded intraday at \$52.93, the highest since May 25. U.S. crude was up 20 cents at \$50.37.

"The most bullish argument looking forward is that we are now in the second half of the year," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM. "Global demand is expected to pick up significantly."

Oil company BP, which reported its earnings on Tuesday, was upbeat on the demand outlook.

After a slow start to the year, global demand recovered in the second quarter and was expected to grow by 1.4 to 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd), BP said - higher than some 2017 forecasts such as that of OPEC.

"Global demand is looking pretty strong, and prices will firm around the levels seen today," BP Chief Financial Officer Brian Gilvary told Reuters.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, as part of a deal with Russia and other non-members, is reducing output by about 1.2 million bpd from Jan. 1, 2017 until March next year to get rid of excess supply. (Source: Reuters)

Shell invests in Singapore solar firm Sunseap

Royal Dutch Shell has invested in Singapore-based solar firm Sunseap Group for an undisclosed sum as part of a planned collaboration on solar projects in the Asia-Pacific region, the companies said on Tuesday.

Shell declined to reveal the amount invested by Shell Technology Ventures, the company's corporate venturing arm. Privately held Sunseap Group has about 160 megawatts of distributed solar contracts in Singapore, holds an electricity retailer license and has secured utility scale solar projects in the region, the two companies said.

Sunseap said in May that it aimed to expand in Singapore and the region, and scale up its operations following the implementation of several solar energy projects in Singapore, Malaysia, India, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. It said then that it aimed to raise S\$75 million (\$55 million) for its expansion plans. (Source: Reuters)

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Why Trump won



ARTICULAR

By Fareed Zakaria

The real question of the 2016 presidential election isn't so much why did Donald Trump win, as why did he even get close?

After all, Trump was a totally unconventional candidate who broke all the rules and did things that would have destroyed anyone else running for president. So why did he break through?

Here's the answer: America is now divided along four lines, each one reinforcing the others. Call them the four Cs.

The first is capitalism. There was a time when the American economy moved in tandem with its middle class. As the economy grew, so did middle class employment and wages. But over the last few decades that link has been broken. The economy has been humming along, but it now enriches mostly those with education, training, and capital. The other Americans have been left behind.

The second divide is about culture. In recent decades, we've seen large scale immigration; African-Americans and Hispanics rising to a more central place in society; and gays being accorded equal rights. All of this has meant new cultures and narratives have received national attention. And it's worried a segment of the older, white population, which fears that the national culture they grew up with is fading. One comprehensive study found that after party loyalty, the second strongest predictor of a Trump voter was "fears of cultural displacement."

The third divide in America today is about class. The Trump vote is in large part an act of class rebellion, a working class revolt against know-it-all elites who run the country. These voters will stick with Donald Trump even as he flails, rather than vindicate the elite, urban view of him.

The final C in this story is communication. We have gone from an America where people watched three networks that provided a uniform view of the world to one where everyone can pick their own channel, message, and now even their own facts.

All these forces have been at work for decades, but in recent years, the Republican Party has been better able to exploit them and identify with those Americans who feel frustrated, anxious, angry -- even desperate about the direction that the country is headed in. Donald Trump capitalized on these trends even more thoroughly, speaking openly to people's economic anxieties, cultural fears, and class rebellion. He promised simple solutions, mostly aimed at others -- Mexicans, Muslims, Chinese people and, of course, the elites and the media.

It worked. He won. Whether his solutions are even enacted is another matter. But the real victory will come for this country when someone looks at these deep forces that are dividing it and tries to construct a politics that will bridge them. Rather than accept that America must remain a country split between two tribes -- each uncomprehending of the other, both bitter and hostile -- he or she would speak in a language that unites them.

That kind of leadership would win not just elections -- but a place of honor in American history.

(Source: CNN)

The threats of war

America's longest war has cost more than 2,300 lives and 20,000 wounded, and \$1.07 trillion. The value of the lives cannot be measured. Now President Trump has authorized sending 3,000 to 5,000 more troops to strengthen training and support efforts there, adding to the 9,800 Americans who are part of an international force of 13,000.

But the price of the war in Afghanistan has to be reckoned as much greater than that. Battlefield medicine has so improved that more than 90 percent of the soldiers wounded in Afghanistan recover; the survival rate in the Vietnam War was 86.5 percent. But 320,000 veterans of the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq suffer Traumatic Brain Injury. More than 1,600 veterans lost all or part of a limb and many thousands more suffer flashbacks, hypervigilance and difficulty sleeping. The cost for these veterans' medical payments over the next 40 years will be more than \$1 trillion.

Now there's a resurgence of fighting against the Taliban and the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL), in Afghanistan. The options for policymakers in Washington are narrowing, and another threat against the American homeland grows from North Korea. Decision time appears ever more imminent for Trump and his administration. The intelligence wise men -- who have been saying for months that the ultimate threat, an ICBM missile with a nuclear warhead, is years away -- now are not so sure. The fighting in Afghanistan, terrible as it is, might become a mere distraction from the main show.

A complete withdrawal from Afghanistan would surely lead to a resurgence of Taliban operations and the added participation of other radical forces. The possibility of the region becoming a base for attacks on the American homeland as well would be a real possibility. Afghanistan in Taliban hands would threaten neighboring Pakistan, with 200 million Muslims, and in India, with an Islamic minority projected to reach 310 million over the next three decades.

NATO formally ended combat operations in Afghanistan in 2014, in effect transferring full security responsibility to the Afghan government. Pakistani military operations in the North Waziristan tribal area two years ago dislodged thousands of mainly Uzbek, Arab and Pakistani Islamic militants, who flooded into Afghanistan to swell Taliban ranks.

Last year the U.S. military was authorized to go on the offensive against militants affiliated with the ISIS in Afghanistan after the U.S. State Department designated the ISIS in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a foreign terrorists.

The question facing the United States in Afghanistan, and it's a true dilemma, is whether it should strengthen its forces, modify the terms of engagement to add more air attacks to break the various Taliban groups. The alternative appears to be a total withdrawal, rather than the piecemeal approach illustrated by the new increase in American forces. And that suggests the mission-creep strategy that led to the war in Vietnam.

(Source: The Washington Times)

What will be the ramifications of Putin's order to reduce U.S. embassy staff?

By Shaun Walker

When it comes to diplomatic expulsions, Vladimir Putin likes to pull a surprise.

When the outgoing Barack Obama administration kicked out 35 Russian diplomats in December, the Russian president was widely expected to make a symmetrical response, but surprised everyone by doing nothing at all -- apparently in the hope that relations would become rosier when Donald Trump took office.

Now, seven months later, the response has finally come, and Putin had another surprise up his sleeve: this time, the Russian move is so severe that if it goes ahead it is likely to paralyze the work of U.S. diplomats in Russia.

■ Moscow's response

Moscow's response, announced by the foreign ministry on Friday morning and confirmed by Putin on Sunday night, was to demand that the Americans reduce their presence in Russia -- the Moscow embassy, as well as consulates in St Petersburg, Ekaterinburg and Vladivostok -- to a total of 455 people. The main victims of the huge cull demanded by the Russians are likely to be the embassy's local Russian staff.

Standard diplomatic practice, when it comes to expulsions, is an eye for an eye: you kick out eight of our diplomats, and we'll kick out eight of yours. Putin's order, which gave a specific number allowed to remain, rather than a specific number of expulsions, caused some confusion.

A source in Moscow confirmed that the 455 figure was not only for U.S. diplomats but for all staff employed at the U.S. missions, "from the cleaners to the ambassador", and said it would be up to the Americans to decide how they reorganized their staffing.

Putin said on Sunday evening that the Russian order meant that 755 employees would have to "cease their work".

The U.S. embassy has refused to comment on how many staff it has and what the breakdown is between local hires and diplomats, but a 2013 internal report into the Russia mission noted that the state department deployed 301 diplomats and 934 locally hired staff positions in Russia. Allowing for small changes over the past four years, this would fit roughly with Putin's statement that 755 should be dismissed to leave a total of 455.

Theoretically, this could mean the Americans could merely release the majority of their local staff and would not need to send any diplomats home, but the embassy relies on a huge staff of caterers, drivers, gardeners and cleaners to keep it running. The only way to make the cuts without sending



Russia's surprise move is so severe that if it goes ahead it is likely to paralyze the work of U.S. diplomats in Russia -- depending on how the details shake out.

dozens of diplomats home would be to make career diplomats start pruning the hedges and answering the phones.

The closest historical parallel was a 1986 Soviet decree banning local staff from working for the U.S. embassy in retaliation for the expulsion of 55 Soviet diplomats from the U.S. The order meant that for a brief period the ambassador had to drive himself around Moscow, his wife did the catering and U.S. marines worked at the embassy bar.

■ Strong disappointment

The U.S. embassy in Moscow has made no comment at all on the Russian order, except to say Ambassador John Tefft expressed his "strong disappointment and protest" when he was informed on Friday of the cuts by the foreign ministry, and that the embassy is liaising with Washington.

It is possible that some kind of negotiations are underway, as the reduction in staff does not come into effect until 1 September. Russia is desperate to gain back two diplomatic properties seized by the Americans in December, and to have new diplomats accredited for work in the U.S. If the U.S. agrees to grant visas to more Russian diplomats, it is possible the Russian

demands will be waived or softened.

The cuts will be a huge challenge for the incoming U.S. ambassador Jon Huntsman, who -- if he is confirmed by the Senate -- is expected to arrive in the Russian capital at the end of the summer.

Russian counter-sanctions have a habit of hitting Russians themselves the hardest, with recent examples including banning the import of European produce, and banning the adoption of Russian orphans. There is even a popular Russian meme which suggests Russian officials will give the order to "bomb Voronezh" (a Russian city) in response to hostile attacks from the West.

Russians who work for the U.S. missions are likely to be the biggest casualties. Their lives are already make extremely difficult. One former local employee reported men he presumed to be FSB agents arriving at his family home and tailing him across Moscow, asking him why he was working for the Americans and telling him he ought to become an informant if he was a patriot. Eventually, he left the job.

"Russian citizens will be hit hardest by smaller U.S. staff at the embassy.

Wait time for a visa to travel to U.S. will increase dramatically," former U.S. ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul wrote on Twitter.

Russian officials, who have denied all allegations of meddling in the U.S. elections, say they had no choice but to respond harshly, as it becomes clear that whatever Donald Trump's desires, warmer relations with the U.S. are unlikely, as his administration remains mired in scandal.

The almost unanimous passing by both houses of Congress last week of new sanctions proved to be the final straw. Putin last week said Russia could not continue to tolerate such "insolence" from the Americans.

"After half a year of waiting and then harsh new American sanctions, a symmetrical response would have looked weak," the pro-Kremlin analyst Sergei Markov wrote on Facebook.

"After the new law in which Russia is basically called an enemy of the U.S., there's no possibility for good relations. So why do we need such a big army of their diplomats here? So that they can spy and interfere in our elections? It's better if they go home."

(Source: The Guardian)

By Michael Mansfield & Antonia Benfield

The most senior judge in the UK has brought to an end the hope of prosecuting Tony Blair, Jack Straw and Peter Goldsmith for the crime of aggression in invading Iraq in 2003.

The invasion and subsequent occupation resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, the displacement of over four million others, and has left the country and region in a state of chronic instability. Yet the High Court has confirmed that there is to be no accountability. Those responsible are to remain unpunished.

The circumstances of the invasion have been extensively scrutinized in the report of Sir John Chilcot, published on 6 July 2016. The report concluded that Saddam Hussein did not pose an urgent threat to the interests of the United Kingdom, that intelligence regarding weapons of mass destruction was presented with unwarranted certainty, that peaceful alternatives to war had not been exhausted and that war in Iraq was not necessary. On the report's findings, the conclusion that the UK and allied forces waged an aggressive war in Iraq is indisputable.

The High Court concluded, however, that domestic prosecution is impossible. As established in the earlier House of Lords decision in Jones, the High Court confirmed the crime of aggression is not a crime in domestic law, and as such, no prosecution can be brought in domestic courts.

On behalf of the claimant, a general of the Iraqi army, it was argued that the crime of aggression should be considered as part of the domestic common law, having been incorporated at least since 1945 when the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg commenced the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in the wake of World War II.

At the opening of the Nuremberg Trials, the British attorney general, Sir Hartley Shawcross QC, led the British prosecution and condemned the waging of aggressive war in the strongest terms, as the supreme international crime. Shawcross said that to allow individuals to escape punishment for such crimes made an absurdity of the law. Yet since Nuremberg there has been a shameful slide from the moral and legal high ground the UK then occupied.

■ The crime of aggression

It is widely accepted that the crime of aggression is

Blair escapes prosecution for the invasion of Iraq. What now for accountability?



The failure of the British government to prosecute crimes of aggression undermines the rule of law, setting an example to the rest of the world that states can wage aggressive war with impunity.

a crime in international law. The International Criminal Court has, however, been unable to exercise jurisdiction over the crime, and international law is at present unable to bring the guilty to account. Despite giving verbal commitment to the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, the British government has failed to ratify the statutory amendments to make it a possibility, significantly undermining its pretence of support.

The British government has, in addition, afforded itself de facto domestic immunity by failing to enact legislation that would make the crime of aggression a domestic criminal offence. Many countries including Germany, Kosovo, Iraq and Serbia have enacted

domestic legislation, while the British government has manifestly failed to ensure that those guilty of bringing devastation to nations through aggressive war can be brought to trial.

On the national and international stage the failure of the British government to give tangible commitment to the prosecution of the crime of aggression undermines the rule of law. It sets a dangerous precedent in times of global insecurity and sets an example to the rest of the world that states can wage aggressive war with impunity.

The devastation that has been caused to millions of Iraqi civilians leaves the world with only one lesson - how to commit the most serious of crimes, and get away with it.

(Source: middleeasteye.net)

North Korea's deterrent and Trump's options

By Tim Beal

The test launch of North Korea's Hwasong-14 ICBM on 4 July produced a predictable outpouring of official statements and media articles claiming that the United States is under an existential threat of an unprovoked attack from North Korea. 'North Korea brings missile threat to the US: What does Trump do now?' asked CNN. And it's not only the US that is in danger, according to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. North Korea poses 'a global threat', he said, so from Patagonia to Peoria, the world is at risk.

Actually, if there is one thing that is certain in life in addition to death and taxes it is that North Korea will not attack the US except in retaliation. The reason for this is obvious. America's military superiority is so overwhelming that retribution would be devastating and would mean the end of North Korea.

The balance of military power between the US and its 'allies' (the imperial alliance structure is a major part of American power) scarcely needs elaboration or documentation. South Korea on its own has a military budget perhaps 30 times that of the North, has, generally speaking, much more advanced and modern equipment (it buys more weapons from the US than even Saudi Arabia) and, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), can field two and a half times more troops (standing army plus reservists) than the North. Bring in the US and its allies, including especially Japan, and the imbalance is astounding: a combined military budget of roughly \$1 trillion against North Korea's \$1.2 to \$10 billion. The portrayal of North Korea as a threat to the US is not merely wrong, it is preposterously and diametrically at variance with reality. Yet it is widely believed. That is mainly due to omnipresent and repetitive propaganda, and as Harold Pinter pointed out in his Nobel lecture, the 'United States is without doubt the greatest show on the road' in that respect. And as we know, things that are repeated without contradiction, however silly and devoid of evidence or plausibility, tend to be believed.

Not merely would retribution be inevitable, but nothing could possibly be achieved by a preemptive North Korean attack on the United States. What would be the point, for instance, of North Korea launching a missile against Hawaii, as feared by authorities there according to a Yonhap report? Would Washington in terror ship the contents of Fort Knox off to Pyongyang? Would Kim Jong Un send in a fishing boat to harvest the irradiated pineapples?

The only way to overlook the absurdity of the notion of an unprovoked attack is to construct a pastiche of North Korea and its leaders as irrational, as, for instance, Nikki Haley did recently. The problem is that you have to be deeply ignorant (that's probably her excuse) to believe such nonsense, because no one with a modicum of knowledge does. Or perhaps to believe North Koreans are mad, you have to be mad yourself—an irony which Joseph Heller of Catch 22 fame would have enjoyed. Ambassador Haley might conceivably put her hand up for that one as well.

What we are talking about in the case of North Korea is deterrence, and that means the United States only faces danger if it attacks first. The United States can, of course, deter North Korea, and it can attack North Korea either with advanced conventional weapons or nuclear ones. But this does not hold for North Korea, which can only deter, and if it does retaliate against American attack, it would be, in the phrase used by Seymour Hersh in respect of Israel, the Samson option, because it would be an act of last

resort resulting in its own destruction. (The concepts and calculations, which are quite complex, are discussed in an article scheduled to be published in the Journal of Political Criticism of Seoul in December 2017.)

Hysteria and hyperbole

Why the hysteria and hyperbole about North Korea? Why is its deterrent against American attack recast as an existential threat to the US as if North Korea were some sort of national suicide bomber? If there is no attack, there is no retaliation. If the US adopted a peaceful, non-threatening policy towards North Korea, the danger of war would wither away. North Korea's nuclear disarmament is irrelevant. A number of countries could, in theory, attack the US with nuclear missiles: Russia and China certainly, India perhaps, and Britain, which is, after all, the only country to have mounted an attack on the United States with the burning of Washington in 1812. But no one for a moment thinks that Britain would do such a thing. Partly this is because of their shared history, but also because of two reasons that are common to Britain and North Korea (and every other country for that matter): no advantage would be gained, and the retribution would be terrible. If Britain destroyed New York or Washington (again), or if in a few years' time North Korea laid waste to San Francisco, what then? What would be achieved? The idea is preposterous. Why, then, is the myth of a North Korean threat so constantly and assiduously cultivated? An explanation can be located at three levels – the bilateral, the regional, and the global.

The bilateral dimension

The Korean War was the first war that the United States did not win. Objectively it was not a defeat such as in Vietnam where the Vietnamese, principally on their own, evicted the US from the whole of the country. In Korea, the US basically held on to the status quo – the southern part of the country inherited from the Japanese – despite massive Chinese intervention. But it was the first such setback, and North Korea's resilient

The Korean War was the first war that the United States did not win. In Korea, the US basically held on to the status quo – to destroy North Korea would be sweet revenge, both for the US and large swathes of the South Korean military and civilian elite.

defiance ever since, despite generations of US sanctions and threats, surely rankles. To destroy North Korea would be sweet revenge, both for the US and large swathes of the South Korean military and civilian elite.

The regional dimension

On a broader scale, the so-called 'North Korean threat' provides the capstone for the US military and political architecture in East Asia, the primary function of which is now the containment of China. The original division of the Korean peninsula in 1945 was driven by the strategy of containing the Soviet Union, but since then Russia has become the minor, though still important, player in this theatre. The continued political subservience of Japan plays an important role, though there is a latent contradiction between that and the US encouragement of Japanese remilitarisation. 'Containment', although a much-used word, is inadequate, because the ultimate strategic objective is enfeeblement, probably through fragmentation or a first (nuclear) strike. The deployment of the THAAD in South Korea and the X-band radar in Japan is a component of first-strike capability.

In the meantime, its need for the 'North Korean threat' poses a dilemma for the US. Removal of that 'threat', either through



If there is one thing that is certain in life in addition to death and taxes it is that North Korea will not attack the US except in retaliation.

military action or a genuine peace process, would make it difficult to justify the US military presence and its concomitant political dominance in South Korea, and to a lesser extent, in Japan. South Korea has no particular animus against China, which is why the THAAD deployment had to be disguised as a protection against North Korea. Japan is different, because China is seen as the only rival in Asia, and the Japanese conservative elite needs no persuasion to join an anti-China coalition even if, at the moment, in a subordinate position.

The global dimension

Finally, there is the purely global dimension. North Korea poses no direct military threat to the US, no matter how many nuclear ICBMs it is able to build. The military preponderance of the US and its geographical protection will always put any North Korean attack out of the question. Even the growing deterrent capability of North Korea

given the number of UN Security Council resolutions condemning North Korea and imposing sanctions the US has been able to orchestrate, clearly in violation of the UN Charter. North Korea is no revolutionary state, such as the early Soviet Union or Maoist China. On the contrary, it is actually the embodiment of the UN Charter with its commitment to the equal sovereignty of independent states, however weak or strong. Despite the verbiage about the UN and international law, this is not an idea with which the United States has much sympathy.

These three levels of American angst about North Korea, and the strategic concerns and imperatives that are generated, are both inter-related and somewhat at variance with each other. At this stage, with the successful test of North Korea's threshold ICBM Hwasong-14, it could be argued that the US faces three strategic alternatives.

America's three strategic options

The first is war, or rather war with China. The dangers of an invasion of North Korea, and the political problems that would ensue are such that it only makes sense in the context of deciding that now is the time to take out China. American military and civilian think tanks have been mulling over conflict with China for some time, so the groundwork is laid. The consequences of a US war against China would be dreadful and need no elaboration here. Fortunately, it is unlikely that the Trump administration has the strategic fortitude to embark on that.

The second alternative is peace. That would involve accepting North Korea's nuclear deterrent, though negotiations might put constraints on that. But that leaves the problem of the damage to America's non-proliferation strategy. The smart solution would be, 'If you can't beat 'em, get them to join you.' In this strategy, the US would accept North Korea's deterrent but also reverse its hostile policy—moving quickly to lift sanctions and the military threat and to open up trade, investment and social links, for instance by providing scholarships for North Korean students to study in the US or in allied countries. There are a large number of measures that could be employed so that North Korea, in Lyndon Baines Johnson's phrase, would be inside the tent pissing out rather than outside pissing in. After all, North Korea has, as noted above, made 'commitments to nuclear non-proliferation ... before the international community.'

The whole business could be fairly easily presented to the world as a great triumph of American diplomacy, generosity, and wisdom. However it is difficult to envisage any American government, especially the Trump administration, contemplating such an imaginative strategy let alone being able to drive it through the dysfunctional US governance system where the immediate monetary and political profits of war tend to overshadow the strategic benefits of peace. Unfortunately, hopes that President Moon Jae-in might nudge the United States into peaceful coexistence, removing the threat of war from the Korean peninsula are fading fast.

So the United States will probably opt for the third alternative—just muddling along, for some time at least, not accepting the legitimacy of North Korea and its nuclear deterrent, as well as the failure of its strategy.

(Source: Zoom in Korea)



The real reason why US wants to stop North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile program is that if North Korea succeeds in establishing an effective nuclear deterrent, then this could have serious geopolitical implications for U.S. policy, as other targeted nations may follow North Korea's example to ensure their survival.

How Romney loyalists hijacked Trump's foreign policy

By Ron Maxwell

Part 2

Meanwhile, Mitchell, another Romney alumnus and a Brian Hook buddy from the John Hay Initiative, has been nominated as assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs. Brace yourself for an unnecessary Cold War with Russia, if not a hot one. While Americans may not really care whether ethnic Russians or ethnic Ukrainians dominate the Donbass, these guys do.

Then there's Nadia Schadow, another prominent operative with impeccable neocon credentials. She was the senior program officer at the Smith Richardson Foundation, where her main job was to underwrite the neocon project by offering grants to the many think tanks in their network. For the better part of a decade she pursued a PhD under the tutelage of Eliot Cohen, who has pronounced himself a "Never Trumper" and has questioned the president's mental health. Cohen, along with H.R. McMaster, provided editorial guidance to Schadow for her book extolling nation-building and how we can do more of it.

Relationships beget jobs, which is how Schadow became deputy assistant to the president, with the task, given by her boss H.R. McMaster, of writing the administration's National Security Strategy. Thus do we have a neocon stalwart who wrote the book on nation building now writing President Trump's national security strategy.

How, we might ask, did these Never Trump activists get into such high positions in the Trump administration? And what was their agenda at such important meetings with the President if not to thwart his America First agenda? Put another way, how did Trump get saddled with nearly Mitt Romney's entire foreign policy staff? After all, the American people did not elect Mitt Romney when they had the chance.

Trump is a smart guy. So is Barack Obama. But even Obama, Nobel Peace Prize in hand, could not prevent the inexorable slide to violent regime change in Libya, which resulted in a semi-failed state, tens of thousands killed, and a foothold for Al Qaeda and other radical Islamists in the Maghreb. He also could not prevent the arming of Islamist rebels in Syria after he had the CIA provide lethal arms strictly to "moderate rebels." Unable or unwilling to disengage from Afghanistan, Obama acquiesced in a series of Pentagon strategies with fluctuating troop levels before bequeathing to his successor an open ended, unresolved war.

Rumors floating through official Washington suggest the neocons now want to replace Tillerson at State with Trump critic and Neocon darling Nikki Haley, currently pursuing a one-person bellicose foreign policy from her exalted post at the United Nations. Not surprisingly, Haley and Romney go way back. As a firm neocon partisan, she endorsed his presidential bid in 2011.

As UN ambassador, Haley has articulated a nearly incoherent jumble of statements that seem more in line with her own neocon worldview than with Trump's America First policies. Some samples:

"I think that, you know, Russia is full of themselves. They've always been full of themselves. But that's – it's more of a façade that they try and show as opposed to anything else."

"What we are serious. And you see us in action, so its not in personas. Its in actions and its what we do."

"The United States ...calls for an immediate end to the Russian occupation of Crimea. Crimea is a part of Ukraine. Our Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns control over the peninsula to Ukraine."

One must ask: Is Ambassador Haley speaking on behalf of the Trump administration when she says it is official U.S. policy that Russia, having annexed Crimea, must return it to Ukraine? Is the Russo-American geopolitical relationship to be held hostage indefinitely because in 2014 the people of Crimea voted for their political reintegration into Russia, which they had been part of since 1776?

Since there is as much chance of Russia ceding Crimea back to Ukraine as there is of the United States ceding Texas back to Mexico, does this mean there is no possibility of any meaningful cooperation with Russia on anything else? Not even in fighting the common ominous threat from Islamist radicalism? Has Haley committed the American people to this dead-end policy on her own or in consultation with the President?

On July 14, the Washington Examiner wrote that "Haley's remarks...set the tone for Trump's reversal from the less interventionist, 'America First' foreign policy he campaigned on." Little wonder, then, that in a little-noticed victory lap of her own, coinciding with the release of her book, Condoleezza Rice acknowledged the near complete takeover of Trump's foreign policy team. "The current national security team is terrific," she said. She even gave Trump her anointed blessing following their recent White House meeting, during which the septuagenarian schoolboy received the schoolmarm's pat on the head: "He was engaging," she said. "I found him on top of his brief... asking really good questions." That's a far cry from her campaign-season comment about Trump that he "doesn't have the dignity and stature to be president."

American foreign policy seems to be on auto-pilot, immune to elections and impervious to the will of the people. It is perpetuated by an entrenched contingent of neocon and establishment zealots and bureaucratic drones in both the public and private sector, whose careers, livelihoods, and very raison d'être depend on an unchallenged policy of military confrontation with the prestige, power, and cash flow it generates. Those who play the game by establishment rules are waived in. Those who would challenge the status quo are kept out. This is the so-called Deep State, thwarting the will of President Trump and the people who voted for him.

This isn't merely a story of palace intrigue and revolving chairs in the corridors of power. Brave Americans in the uniform of their country will continue to be sent into far-off lands to intercede in internecine conflicts that have little if anything to do with U.S. national security. Many will return physically shattered or mentally maimed. Others will be returned to Andrews Air Force Base in flag-draped coffins, to be saluted by serial presidents of both parties, helpless to stop the needless carnage.

(Source: American Conservative)

Who ate Republicans' brains?

By Paul Krugman

When the tweeter-in-chief castigated Senate Republicans as "total quitters" for failing to repeal the Affordable Care Act, he couldn't have been more wrong. In fact, they showed zombie-like relentlessness in their determination to take health care away from millions of Americans, shuffling forward despite devastating analyses by the Congressional Budget Office, denunciations of their

plans by every major medical group, and overwhelming public disapproval. Put it this way: Senator Lindsey Graham was entirely correct when he described the final effort at repeal as "terrible policy and horrible politics," a "disaster" and a "fraud." He voted for it anyway — and so did 48 of his colleagues.

As many people have pointed out, when it came to health care Republicans were basically caught in their own web of lies. They fought against the idea of universal coverage, then denounced

the Affordable Care Act for failing to cover enough people; they made "skin in the game," i.e., high out-of-pocket costs, the centerpiece of their health care ideology, then denounced the act for high deductibles. When they finally got their chance at repeal, the contrast between what they had promised and their actual proposals produced widespread and justified public revulsion. But the stark dishonesty of the Republican jihad against Obamacare itself demands an explanation. For it went well beyond normal political

spin: for seven years a whole party kept insisting that black was white and up was down.

And that kind of behavior doesn't come out of nowhere. The Republican health care debacle was the culmination of a process of intellectual and moral deterioration that began four decades ago, at the very dawn of modern movement conservatism — that is, during the very era anti-Trump conservatives now point to as the golden age of conservative thought. →13

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Experts say detoxing while pregnant can be safe

By Nadia Kounang

Due to the ongoing opioid crisis plaguing the nation, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said Wednesday that an approach to treating babies born with addiction that was once thought to be harmful should now be considered.

In 2012, an estimated 21,732 babies were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, or NAS. That's a baby born addicted to opioids every 25 minutes, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. And as soon as the infant is out of the womb, it begins detoxing from the drugs that were passed through the mother's placenta. According to the March of Dimes, most often those drugs are opioids. Between 2000 and 2009 the number of delivering mothers using or dependent on opioids increased nearly fivefold. It's a harsh reality that is part of the opioid epidemic that has wreaked havoc across the nation.

Conventional wisdom has been that stopping opioids or detoxing mothers during pregnancy was too risky for the fetus as well as the mother, but ACOG has taken another look at this practice in light of the overdose crisis. Those risks include stillbirth and fetal stress.

Medically assisted treatment, or MAT as it's referred to, slowly weans someone who is addicted to opioids off the drugs they are using with the aid of other medications such as buprenorphine or methadone, along with behavioral therapy. This, too, is not without risk to the mother, or the unborn baby, who can eventually be born with NAS. However, MAT has been associated with improved prenatal care, lower rates of complications during pregnancy and higher rates of compliance to addiction treatment. Unlike MAT, medically supervised withdrawal is the tapering off an opioid without the aid of a medication, but still coupled with the other support services.

Dr. Maria Mascola, who leads ACOG's committee on obstetric practice, said that while MAT remains the gold standard to help a mother taper down her use of opioids, there was some recognition that withdrawing with the help of a physician and other support services could be effective. "There is a growing body [of studies] that says it can be safe, but the data is still limited," said Mascola.

"For this to be successful it often requires prolonged inpatient care and intensive outpatient behavioral health follow up," said Dr. Mark Turrentine, OB/GYN at Texas Children's Pavilion for Women. Turrentine was not involved



Conventional wisdom has been that stopping opioids or detoxing mothers during pregnancy was too risky for the fetus as well as the mother, but ACOG has taken another look at this practice in light of the overdose crisis. Those risks include stillbirth and fetal stress.

with the committee's decision.

Support is key

Dr. Alfred Abuhamad, president of the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine, said, "If you have the resources and you have the support, and the expertise on the health care team, the psychosocial support ... this is an option that doesn't seem to be associated with complications as we thought in the past. It is an option viable for a pregnant woman if she chooses to do so, but it is really important to support those interventions." Abuhamad is also not part of the committee.

Mascola agreed, pointing to studies showing high relapse rates ranging from 59% to more than 90% in some cases -- the distinction in these situations being a lack of long term followup. "If they relapse, it can be dangerous ... they could go back to illicit drug use or overdose," said Mascola.

Dr. Craig Towers, who specializes in high-risk pregnancies at The University of Tennessee Medical Center, says medically assisted detoxing can be very successful. Towers has helped detox more than 500 mothers. He was not involved in the committee's decision-making. "I am glad to hear ACOG is recognizing

that medically supervised withdrawal under the care of an experienced physician can be offered to pregnant women with opioid use disorder as an additional option beyond MAT (medically assisted treatment). This approach is very successful when connected with behavioral health and results in [babies] born who do not suffer from NAS," said Towers.

Long-term outcomes of babies born with NAS are still unclear, even though it has been linked to poorer outcomes in school and increased risk of ADHD.

Still more research needed

Mascola said the change in thinking was driven both by patient conversations and new data looking at medically supervised withdrawal that not only saw success for the mothers, but also positive outcomes for the infants. "There wasn't really any data to support that and we wanted to adhere to what we knew," said Mascola, referring to stillbirth and fetal stress.

However, she cautioned that the data was limited and there are still a lot of questions about who this protocol may work for. "We're still learning that, we would love to determine who it is successful for. Those who maybe don't have easy access [to MAT]? Those who are

highly motivated?" said Mascola.

"Abstinence-based approaches don't do well for most patients ... and being pregnant doesn't necessarily change that equation" said Dr. Andrew Kolodny, former chief medical officer of the Phoenix House Foundation. Kolodny was not involved in the committee's decision but pointed out that pregnancy can be a particularly stressful time for women, who then are also dealing with addiction. He said that while this may be a good option for women with mild opioid addiction and dependency issues, he was doubtful about this approach for patients who were severely dependent on prescription painkillers or heroin.

But in areas where access to buprenorphine or methadone are limited because the availability of the drugs is limited to specific providers or clinics, Mascola says medically supervised withdrawal could be an option. However, as Abuhamad questions, "If [mothers] don't have access to methadone or buprenorphine -- will they have access to [the resources needed for] medically supervised withdrawal?"

(Source: CNN)

Does more sweat mean a better workout?

By Robert J. Davis

The sweatiest workouts can feel like the hardest workouts. Surely walking out of a hot yoga class or a steamy Spin session completely drenched means you got a good workout, right? Well, not exactly. How much you sweat doesn't necessarily correlate with how intense your workout is or how many calories you burn. Here's the deal.

Why do we sweat?

When your body temperature rises, your eccrine glands secrete sweat, and the evaporation of moisture from your skin helps you cool down. (Of course, sweating can occur for other reasons, such as stress or fear. Awkward first date? That type of sweat comes from the apocrine glands, which are located mainly in the underarm and groin.)

How much we sweat during exercise is due to a number of factors, including gender (men tend to sweat more than women) and age (younger people sweat more than older people), as well as genetics, temperature, and humidity. Weight plays a role as well: Larger people tend to sweat more because their bodies generate more heat.

Another contributor is fitness level. Surprisingly, fit people tend to sweat more than those who are less fit. Research suggests that as your fitness level improves, your body's heat-regulating system kicks in sooner, cooling you down faster and allowing you to work harder, which translates to a lot more sweat.

And don't be misled by the loss of a few pounds after a super sweaty workout. This is simply water weight you gain back when you rehydrate



and doesn't necessarily mean you've burned lots of calories.

On the flip side, don't assume a low-sweat workout means you aren't working hard enough or burning enough calories. It could be that your sweat is evaporating quickly, because you're exercising in air-conditioning, near a fan, or outdoors on a windy day. Or maybe you just don't sweat much in general.

How to stay dry

Wearing clothing made of synthetic

fabrics such as polyester or Lycra can help you feel less sweaty. These pull (or wick) sweat from your skin to the outer layers of the clothes, where the moisture evaporates. Cotton, on the other hand, absorbs moisture but doesn't promote evaporation. As a result, your shirt or other clothing can feel soaked and heavy during and after a workout. Ick.

A drawback of polyester is that it tends to stink more than cotton after exercise. In one study, researchers col-

lected the sweaty shirts of 26 subjects after an hour of intensive spinning. The next day, trained sniffers determined the polyester shirts smelled worse than the cotton ones. (It's unclear who exactly agreed to do this job or why.) Micrococci, a type of bacteria that break down sweat and cause unpleasant odor, grew only on the polyester garments. That's important because sweat itself is generally odor free; it's the combination of sweat and certain bacteria that literally raises a stink.

You can find odor-resistant synthetic fabrics, which are treated with various antibacterial compounds. Among the most prevalent are silver (like Lululemon's Silverscent technology) and gold (like Rhone's Goldfusion technology), typically applied in tiny amounts known as nanoparticles. But some research suggests silver-treated clothing may not work as well to reduce bacteria and odor. What's more, a significant amount of the silver (or gold) may come out in the wash, reducing the effectiveness of the garments and potentially harming the environment.

The bottom line

Unfortunately for hot yogis and tropical climate dwellers, sweat is not a sign of intensity. Perspiration rate is personal and highly affected by other factors such as fitness level, heat, humidity, weight, and even age and gender. No matter how much you sweat, be sure to drink enough H₂O to replace the water you lose. (Source: greatist.com)

Over-the-counter drugs may be linked to memory decline

In the Journals

A class of drugs commonly used in over-the-counter medication may be associated with cognitive impairment, according to a study published online April 18, 2016, by JAMA Neurology. The research involved 451 people, ages 56 to 92. Sixty of them had, for at least one month, taken at least one medication with a medium or high anticholinergic effect, which means the drug blocks the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which helps brain and nerve cells process information.

Drugs like this are sold both over the counter and by prescription to help with sleep, allergies, diarrhea, motion sickness, and heartburn, as well as conditions like high blood pressure, depression, urinary incontinence, and irritable bowel syndrome. (The most common ingredients on the label are diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine, dimenhydrinate, meclizine/buclicizine, loperamide, and ranitidine.)

The researchers found that people who took the drugs performed worse than non-users on tests of short-term memory and executive function skills, such as verbal reasoning, planning, and problem solving. MRI scans also showed they had lower levels of glucose metabolism (a biomarker for brain activity) in the hippocampus, a brain region linked with memory.

It is important to note that the study demonstrated only an association between taking these drugs and cognitive decline, and does not prove that the drugs themselves were the cause.

Yet, research going back 10 years has shown a strong link between these types of drugs and cognitive impairment and an increased risk of dementia, says lead researcher Dr. Shannon Risacher, assistant professor of radiology and imaging sciences at Indiana University.

"Their effect on cognition is likely due to their influence on acetylcholine in the brain," she says. "Decreased acetylcholine has been linked to accumulation of amyloid-beta plaques and neurofibrillary tangles in animal models, which are the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease." She suggests men who take such drugs consult their doctor to determine whether they should change medications.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Follow professional advice on antibiotics

The idea that patients should stop taking antibiotics 'when they feel better' is too subjective, say representatives of the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC) is keen to safely reduce the overall use of antibiotics, given that "overuse" is helping to drive the alarming rise in so-called superbugs.

We, like others, suspect that a significant number of antibiotics are being prescribed for longer than is necessary. However, the idea that patients should stop taking antibiotics "when they feel better" is too subjective and risks treatment failure or relapse. Most patients simply will not know if the cause of their infection has been eradicated -- or not. Two things need to happen urgently: research to identify (1) all those infections that do not need to be treated with antibiotics, and (2) the most effective length of treatment for those infections that do.

For these reasons, we cannot currently support dropping the message "complete the course of antibiotics" because the evidence in support of it is sparse and the advice is potentially confusing. We also need a robust assessment of the harm that stopping antibiotics early might cause in higher-risk or vulnerable patients. Doctors and patients should always discuss the pros and cons of antibiotics and, if prescribed, what course length is appropriate. For that reason, BSAC recommends that the message to the public should remain: "Follow the advice of the healthcare professional." (Source: [The Guardian](http://TheGuardian))

Having a baby in your 30s means you 'live longer'

Women who have a baby in their 30s may live longer.

As the average age for a first-time mother hits 30 in the UK, fertility experts have warned that the trend for women to delay pregnancy may leave them childless.

But a new study by scientists at Portugal's Coimbra University brings older mothers some good news.

It compared the life expectancies of mothers in European countries at 65 to the age they were when they had children.

Women who became mothers later in life were more likely to live longer than those who gave birth in their teens and 20s, according to a paper published in the Journal of Public Health.

"The most relevant result shows that women tend to live longer the older they are when they get pregnant (in particular, for the first child)," it said.

Of several factors which determine women's life expectancy, it said: "The most surprising factor is the age of women at pregnancy, which may provide evidence to promote pregnancy in the early 30s." A second study, published in the journal menopause Menopause journal, also found that mothers who gave birth at 33 or older were three times more likely to have certain DNA markers for longevity than mothers who gave birth younger.

But neither study provided an explanation as to why older mothers may live longer.

Women who conceive later in life tend to be well-off and educated, fertility expert Lord Winston told The Mail on Sunday. Such women have longer life expectancies because they can afford healthier lifestyles, he added.

The average age of a first-time mother in the UK is 30. One in 25 UK births are to women over 40. (Source: Independent)

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 When Sony nominated Kaz Hirai to lead the corporation, he laid out an ambitious strategy that he titled One Sony. Hirai identified three key markets where he wanted Sony to be a leader: digital imaging, gaming and mobile, with the trio pushed accordingly. Five years later, and Hirai's managed to hit two out of three targets, with Sony's most recent financial reports vindicating his plan.
- 2 CNN reports that a person described as a "prankster" from the UK emailed several White House officials and successfully fooled them into believing he was a colleague. That included a message claiming to be from senior adviser Jared Kushner to Homeland Security advisor Tom Bossert, which teased out a response from Bossert that included his personal email address. The emailer tweets under the handle SINON_REBORN, where he has posted screenshots of the emails.
- 3 Netflix isn't the only video service suffering from a hack: HBO has been breached as well. Hackers have gotten their mitts on 1.5 terabytes of data according to Entertainment Weekly, which apparently includes an episode of Ballers and Room 104 in addition to what may or may not be text related to next week's Game of Thrones installment. The hackers promise more will be leaked.
- 4 Sony Pictures is currently in the process of buying 95 percent of Funimation for \$143 million, putting the anime distributor's value at around \$150 million. Funimation's streaming website, which launched earlier this year, has over 400 titles on offer, including Dragon Ball Z, Cowboy Bebop, One Piece and Attack on Titan.
- 5 Android apps can find nearby devices even when they're offline. Nearby Connections doesn't need an internet connection to start talking.
- 6 Watchdog asks FTC to look into how Google collects shopping data. The search titan is connecting online browsing to in-store purchasing, but won't elaborate how.
- 7 FCC says sharing DDoS attack details undermines security. Chairman Pai wants ranking members of congress to just trust that things are under control.
- 8 Lyft's 'Minnie Vans' will drive guests around Disney World. They're driven by Disney cast members and painted to look like Minnie's dress.
- 9 According to a report from XDA-Developers, Google is finally including support to get battery information from a Bluetooth device in an API that would be part of a future version of Android, perhaps Android 8.1. Google has added a new "method" called "getBatteryLevel()" as part of the "BluetoothDevice" class.
- 10 Google has updated its Gboard keyboard app for iOS today, adding three big features. The keyboard is now integrated with Google Maps and YouTube. So after you tap the G icon you can choose from three actions - perform a web search like before, look up a video on YouTube, or share your location or the address of a specific place through Maps.

Galaxy Note 8 from all four sides

Samsung is slated to unveil the next iteration in its Galaxy Note line on August 23rd, but a crisp image of the handset was just leaked to VentureBeat's Evan Blass and posted to Twitter. The Galaxy Note 8, which Samsung hinted at in its New York City launch event invite with the phrase "do bigger things," looks in the product image like a monstrous smartphone, thanks largely to the edge-to-edge Infinity Display technology of the Galaxy S8. Stretched to fit the Note's larger frame, the screen looks even bigger and the bezels almost nonexistent.



The star of the show is the S Pen, which — well, it looks exactly like the S Pen found in last year's Galaxy Note 7. It seems Samsung is strictly following the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" mantra there, and we can't say we're complaining. As a reminder, the Galaxy Note 8 is expected to keep the Galaxy S8's Snapdragon 835/Exynos 8895 SoC, but combined with an upgraded 6 GB of RAM. That tall Infinity Display seen above will be a large 6.3 inches in size — just barely bigger than the Galaxy S8+.

there's the new color itself: while previous rumors have suggested only three color variants, namely Midnight Black, Orchid Grey and Deep Blue, this appears to be a fourth one we haven't heard of until now.

(Source: phonearena)

Nvidia uses AI to create 3D graphics better than human artists can

By Dean Takahashi

Nvidia spans both gaming graphics and artificial intelligence, and it is showing that with its announcements this week at the Siggraph computer graphics event in Los Angeles.

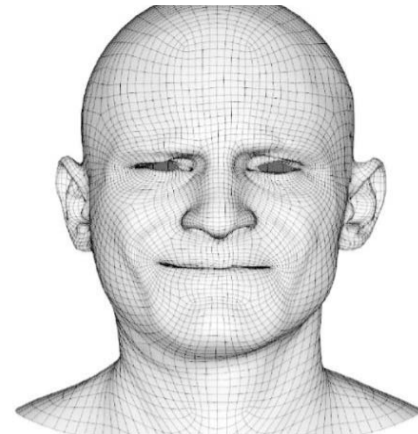
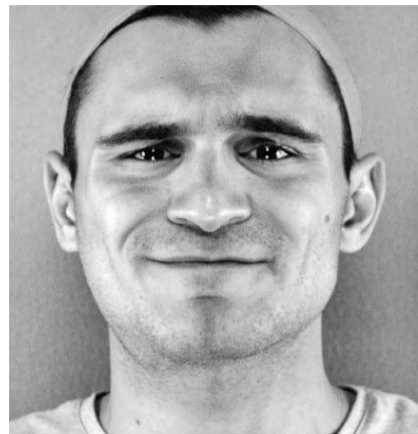
Those announcements range from providing external graphics processing for content creators to testing AI robotics technology inside a virtual environment known as the Holodeck, named after the virtual reality simulator in the Star Trek series. In fact, Nvidia's researchers have created a way for AI to create realistic human facial animations in a fraction of the time it takes human artists to do the same thing.

"We are bringing artificial intelligence to computer graphics," said Greg Estes, vice president of developer marketing at Nvidia, in an interview with GamesBeat. "It's bringing things full circle. If you look at our history in graphics, we took that into high-performance computing and took that into a dominant position in deep learning and AI. Now we are closing that loop and bringing AI into graphics."

"Our strategy is to lead with research and break new ground," he said. "Then we take that lead in research and take it into software development kits for developers."

Nvidia has 10 research papers this year at the Siggraph event, Estes said. And some of that will be relevant to Nvidia's developers, which number about 550,000 now. About half of those developers are in games, while the rest are in high-performance computing, robotics, and AI.

Among the announcements, one is particularly cool. Estes said that Nvidia will show off its Isaac robots in a new environment. These robots, which are being



used to vet AI algorithms, will be brought inside the virtual environment that Nvidia calls Project Holodeck. Project Holodeck is a virtual space for collaboration, where full simulations of things like cars and robots are possible. By putting the Isaac robots inside that world, they can learn how to behave, without causing havoc in the real world.

"A robot will be able to learn things in VR," Estes said. "We can train it in a simulated environment."

Nvidia is providing external Titan X or Quadro graphics cards through an external graphics processing unit (eGPU) chassis. That will boost workflows for people who use their laptop computers for video

editing, interactive rendering, VR content creation, AI development and more, Estes said.

To ensure professionals can enjoy great performance with applications such as Autodesk Maya and Adobe Premier Pro, Nvidia is releasing a new performance driver for Titan X hardware to make it faster. The Quadro eGPU solutions will be available in September through partners such as Bizon, Sonnet, and One Stop Systems/Magma.

Nvidia also said it was launching its Optix 5.0 SDK on the Nvidia DGX AI workstation. That will give designers, artists, and other content-creation professionals the rendering capability of 150 standard

central processing unit (CPU) servers. The tech could be used by millions of people, Estes said. And that kind of system would cost \$75,000 over three years, compared to \$4 million for a CPU-based system, the company said.

OptiX 5.0's new ray tracing capabilities will speed up the process required to visualize designs or characters, thereby increasing a creative professional's ability to interact with their content. It features new AI "de-noising" capability to accelerate the removal of graininess from images, and brings GPU-accelerated motion blur for realistic animation effects. It will be available for free in November.

By running Nvidia Optix 5.0 on a DGX Station, content creators can significantly accelerate training, inference and rendering (meaning both AI and graphics tasks).

"AI is transforming industries everywhere," said Steve May, vice president and chief technology officer of Pixar, in a statement. "We're excited to see how Nvidia's new AI technologies will improve the filmmaking process."

On the research side, Nvidia is showing how it can animate realistic human faces and simulate how light interacts with surfaces. It will tap AI technology to improve the realism of the facial animations. Right now, it takes human artists hundreds of hours to create digital faces that more closely match the faces of human actors.

Nvidia Research partnered with Remedy Entertainment, maker of games such as Quantum Break, Max Payne and Alan Wake, to help game makers produce more realistic faces with less effort and at lower cost.

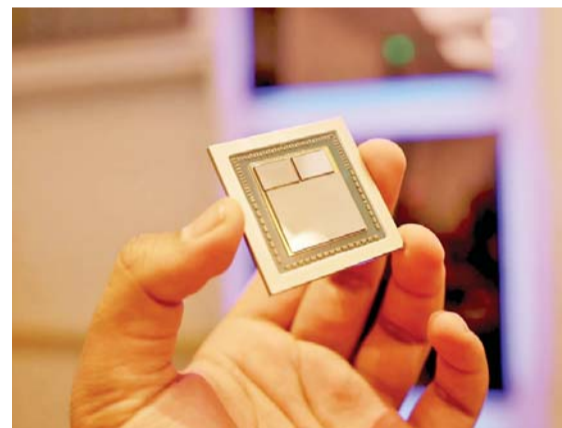
(Source: venturebeat)

AMD introduced two new product lines against Intel and Nvidia

In the high-end computer hardware space, Intel and Nvidia have been dominant for years, while AMD has been a distant third-place competitor — mainly because AMD hardware has been considered underpowered for high-end professional workstations and gaming PCs. Indeed, if money weren't a factor, most people would go for an Intel Core i7 processor and a high-end Nvidia GTX graphics card.

But now, it looks like AMD may finally offer products that could compete with Intel and Nvidia's high-end products.

AMD announced the pricing and release dates of two new product lines that could prove to be worthy alternatives to Intel's Core i7 processor and Nvidia's high-end GTX graphics card. AMD's two new product lines include a new line of high-end Ryzen Threadripper processors



and Radeon RX Vega graphics cards. AMD claims its Radeon RX Vega 64 graphics card can match Nvidia's powerful GTX 1080 graphics cards in the peak frame rates during gameplay. The higher the frame rate, the smoother the gameplay, and the better the experience.

Ever since AMD's release of its Ryzen 5 and 7 processors in early 2017, the company has gained more attention from consumers and press alike as a competitor for Intel's processors, which have been the top choice for most high-end computers.

AMD's new product lineup hasn't gone through third-party benchmark testing yet, so the verdict is still out whether or not its claims sound true. We'll have to wait and see whether the new hardware is worthy of a high-end PCs when the new hardware is properly tested.

(Source: Businessinsider)

LG V30 design confirmed, camera could also have f/1.6 aperture



There are a couple of new pieces of news pertaining to the LG V30. The first of which is that the user manual was allegedly leaked. The thing is... we don't have access to the supposed manual. @OnLeaks has released an image of the LG V30 in its 2D drawing goodness.

The new image shows us that the LG V30 looks a lot like the LG G6. In fact, the LG V30 looks like a larger version of the LG G6. Like the G6, the V30 will have a 2:1 FullVision OLED Display and a rear mounted fingerprint scanner which doubles as the power key.

Another report claims that one of the cameras on the LG V30 will feature an aperture of f/1.6, potentially the widest of any smartphone camera.

(Source: slashgear)

Asus will unveil the ZenFone 4 on August 19th



Asus will unveil its newest ZenFone — the ZenFone 4 — on August 19th in the Philippines. The invitation is transparent about the fact that we can expect the new phone to include a dual-camera system and better sensors. A version of the ZenFone 4 already exists in Russia under the name ZenFone 4 Max. That phone includes dual rear-facing cameras and is powered by either a Snapdragon 430 or 425 processor. It isn't clear whether Asus will just reintroduce this phone for other markets or release a similar device.

Now, while the ZenFone 4 is likely the same as the one already released in Russia, Asus' head of marketing, Marcel Campos, is posting photos to Instagram using the hashtag "ZenFone X." He's clearly showing off what these new cameras can do, particularly with wide shots.

(Source: theverge)

Spotify now owns twice the number of paying subscribers as Apple Music has



Streaming music service Spotify announced that it has 60 million paid subscribers to its premium offering. That is more than twice the amount of paying subscribers that Apple has for its Apple Music service. Both Spotify and Apple charge \$9.99 for their top tier plans. Spotify does have a free ad-supported tier, which is something that Apple doesn't have.

On the other hand, Apple Music does have a free 3-month trial for all new subscribers, which is something that its rival does not offer.

Spotify has added 10 million new subscribers to its premium service since it announced last March that it had 50 million paying customers.

Including those subscribers using the free tier, last month Spotify announced that it had 140 million members using its service.

(Source: CNET)

Google Play Services now boasts 5 billion installs

Google Play Services come pre-installed on just about every Android phone (well, except those sold in China). They are an essential mix of high and low-level stuff, everything from contact syncing to geo-positioning goes through these Services.

Play Services became the first mobile "app" (if you can call them that) to reach 5 billion installs. That's 5 with nine zeroes. Granted, a good chunk of those are probably on devices no longer used, but as we said, there are also Androids not included in this count.

Whichever way you look at it, it is an impressive number.



(Source: androidpolice)

There's a 95% chance the world will warm beyond a crucial tipping point

A newly published study estimates that there's a 95% chance global temperatures will rise more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. That's the level that's frequently considered the tipping point beyond which the consequences of climate change become catastrophic.

The goal of the Paris Agreement was to set emissions standards that could keep the world from hitting that point — ideally less than a 1.5-degree increase — though experts noted that global reductions would have to be even more aggressive to truly accomplish that aim.

But according to the authors of the new study, it's extremely unlikely that we'll be able to stay below the 2-degree threshold.

Action on emissions

Even if we do take action on emissions, the authors suggest, we'll still probably see a median temperature rise of 3.2 degrees Celsius. That's based on their expectations for global population growth, rising GDP per capita, and the amount of carbon dioxide that can be expected to be emitted based on those GDP levels.

That's significantly higher than the temperature rise that many experts said would lead to drastic consequences.



"Huge swaths of the world will be living in places that by the end of the century will have heat waves so deep that people won't be able to deal with them," the author says.

"Huge swaths of the world will be living in places that by the end of the century will have heat waves so deep that people won't be able to deal with them," the author says.

drowning, the ocean turning into a hot, sour, breathless soup as it acidifies and warms," environmentalist and author Bill McKibben recently told Business Insider.

"If not hell, then a place with a similar temperature," he said. "We have in the

Earth's geological record some sense of what happens when you run carbon levels up to the levels we're running them now — it gets a lot hotter."

Burning fossil fuels

The gases we've put into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels so far already guarantee that the world will continue to get warmer.

Another paper published July 31 argued that it's fairly likely we've already "committed to" around 1 degree C of warming — and that there's a 13% chance we've already guaranteed 1.5 degrees. Even if the world stopped emitting carbon dioxide today, that course might already be set.

"Our estimates are based on things that have already happened, things we can observe, and they point to the part of future warming that is already committed to by past emissions," Thorsten Mauritsen, lead author of that paper, said in a press release. "Future carbon dioxide emissions will then add extra warming on top of that commitment."

It might be tempting to respond to these predictions by throwing up our hands, further condemning future generations to suffer the consequences.

(Source: Business Insider)

Big-headed gecko shows human actions are messing with evolution

Evolution doesn't have to take millions of years. New research shows that a type of lizard living on man-made islands in Brazil has developed a larger head than its mainland cousins in a period of only 15 years.

The group of insect-eating geckos from the species *Gymnodactylus amarali* was isolated from the rest of the population when areas of the countryside were flooded to provide hydro-electric power. This caused the extinction of some larger species of lizards on the new islands, leaving the geckos to eat insects that would normally have been mopped up by the bigger species. As a result, the geckos have evolved bigger mouths, and so bigger heads, that enable them to eat their larger prey more easily.

We've actually seen rapid evolution like this before, but usually in response to a natural disaster such as drought or climate change. What's different about the geckos is that they've evolved in direct response to an environmental change enacted by humans, demonstrating just how much impact we can have on the natural world.

The gecko study, published in PNAS, gives us an interesting demonstration of how evolution works, not just because the change has happened within our lifetimes. Those geckos among the original colony that had larger heads (and mouths) could eat a wider range of prey and so had more energy to put into survival and reproduction. As a result, they had more children and their genes for larger heads spread to a greater proportion of the next generation. This continued until larger heads had become a common feature of the group.

(Source: The Conversation)

SpaceX shoots for the moon in 2018: How feasible is it?

Elon Musk is wasting no time. In 2018, his spaceflight agency SpaceX plans to fly people around the moon through the Falcon Heavy rocket and on board the Dragon V2 crew capsule.

The news came from Musk himself, who last Feb. 27 announced that SpaceX had been approached to fly two private citizens on a trip around the moon late next year. The passengers, the CEO said, had already provided a "significant deposit" for the said moon mission, which was likened to the Apollo mission that brought astronauts to the lunar surface.

In the second quarter of 2018, the mission will fly the two unnamed passengers, which will undergo health and fitness testing as well as spaceflight training this year. The trip around the moon is anticipated to last one week.

Apollo missions

The spacecraft is projected to be launched from the Kennedy Space Center's Launch Complex 39A, the same launch pad deployed by NASA for its Apollo missions. The spacecraft, according to Musk, will be autonomous that no specially trained astronauts will be required on board.

For the deep-space mission, the capsule will potentially be upgraded for improved communications. It is

expected to involve a skimming on the lunar surface instead of an actual landing, with the spacecraft traveling a bit into deep space before going back to Earth in its projected 400,000-mile journey.

Wayne Hale, a former manager of NASA's space shuttle program, said it could be "extraordinarily difficult" and "extraordinarily dangerous" to undertake Musk's task even with modern space capabilities.

"I think their schedule is so aggressive as to not be believable," Hale told Space.com, who added that while he wishes them well, he is glad that no taxpayers' money is involved in the mission.

Both the Falcon Heavy rocket and Dragon V2 spacecraft are still in pre-launch: the former has its maiden flight scheduled for the summer, while the latter remains in development. SpaceX has not had the success of launching any manned mission, Hale noted.

International space station

The missions to bring astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) that SpaceX inked with NASA, too, involve Falcon 9 and not Falcon Heavy rockets.

For space policy and SpaceX veteran Phil Larson, however, "challenging" does not necessarily translate to "impossible."



The moonshot getting moved to 2019 would remain historic, and a couple of months' delay would not drastically alter the magnitude of the mission, Larson explained.

He went further that while Musk has the tendency to set ambitious timeframes, SpaceX has a track record of getting things done, including becoming the first private firm to launch a capsule Earth orbit and return it to the planet in one piece back in 2010.

(Source: Tech Times)

Earth will have its last total solar eclipse in about 600m years

During the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21, skywatchers will direct most of their attention to the sun, but don't forget about the moon: Its slow progress away from Earth means these celestial events won't keep happening forever.

Next month's total solar eclipse will sweep across the continental U.S. from Oregon to South Carolina along a stretch of land about 70 miles (113 kilometers) wide.

A total solar eclipse occurs only when the disk of the moon passes between the Earth and the sun, briefly blocking

the sun's bright light and casting a long shadow on the planet.

A "total eclipse is a dance with three partners: the moon, the sun and Earth," Richard Vondrak, a lunar scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, said in a statement. "It can only happen when there is an exquisite alignment of the moon and the sun in our sky."

Total solar eclipses

Total solar eclipses occur because the moon and the sun have the same apparent size in Earth's sky — the sun is about

400 times wider than the moon, but the moon is about 400 times closer.

But the moon is slowly moving away from Earth by about 1-1/2 inches (4 centimeters) per year, according to the NASA statement. As a result, total solar eclipses will cease to exist in the very distant future, because the apparent size of the moon in Earth's sky will be too small to cover the sun completely.

"Over time, the number and frequency of total solar eclipses will decrease," Vondrak said in the statement. "About

600 million years from now, Earth will experience the beauty and drama of a total solar eclipse for the last time."

For now, a total solar eclipse is visible from somewhere on the Earth's surface about once every 18 months, on average. However, seeing a total solar eclipse from a specific location is rare, because the moon's inner shadow is relatively small, which limits the total area from which the total eclipse is visible, according to a video from NASA about the moon's role in a solar eclipse.

(Source: space.com)

"CHAKAVAK" Vessel Compensated by Moallem Insurance Co.

On July 25, 2017, CHAKAVAK Vessel, covered by Moallem Insurance Company's P&I (Protection & Indemnity) insurance collided with pier in Jetty No. 7 based in Qatari "Ruweis" Port and caused serious damages to the fenders alongside the pier, Public Relations Dept. of Moallem Insurance Company reported.

Shortly after the incident, insurance experts of Mwani Company specified the compensation and severity of the damage and then, embarked on seizing the aforementioned vessel.

Given the request of the mentioned port, insurer should take necessary measures to issue Bank Guarantees in order to remove banning the vessel.

After several talks, seizure of CHAKAVAK Vessel was removed by the Moallem Insurance Company, as approved and confirmed by the Qatari government, on Friday July 28, 2017 using substitution of LU instead of Bank Guarantee.

MIC to Promote Marketing Standards

Moallem Insurance Company (MIC) organized a grand Marketing Conference in order to promote and boost marketing standards, the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

At the condition of increased competition in the insurance market of country and the necessity of improv-

ing marketing techniques and strategies, observing requirements of international standards, Moallem Insurance Company embarked on planning to organize Grand Marketing Conference in the presence of world's leading insurance instructors.

It should be noted that MIC's Mar-

keting Conference will be held in IRIB Conferences Center on August 10-11, 2017 in the presence of Marcos Kramer Marketing Manager of Stone Martin and Harley Davidson companies and also Powell Archer Senior Advisor in UK ING Insurance Company, the Public Relations Dept. of the company ended.



1st Pelletizing Factory Goes on Stream in Country

The First Pelletizing Factory was inaugurated in east part of country in Sangan Mining and Mineral Complex in the presence of the Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Eng. Ne'matzadeh, Public Relations Dept. of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) reported.

Sangan Steel Pelletizing Factory enjoys the production capacity of 5 million tons/year, benefitted from the new technology and technical knowhow in the field of reducing energy consumption.

He put the investment volume spent for launching



this industrial and production unit at €103 million, constructed in 36 months.

The report put the total weight of parts, equipment and steel structure installed at 23,450 tons.

Once this giant project is put into operation, it is predicted that 2,000 new employment opportunities will be generated, the report added.

According to the scheduled program, OPAL PARSIAN Pelletizing Factory will become operational with the production capacity of 5 million tons/year, IMIDRO ended.

Genetic engineering creates an unnaturally blue flower

Blue flowers are rare in nature, and for good reason: the color is usually the result of mutations and quirks of acidity levels rather than an actual blue pigment. That makes genetically engineering a blue flower tricky, since you can't just make a straightforward tweak and expect a garden full of unnatural hues.

Scientists have just managed a breakthrough, though. They've produced the first truly blue chrysanthemum (above) by splicing in genes from two naturally blue flowers, the butterfly pea and Canterbury bell. The modifications shifted the plant's acidity level, turning normally reddish pigments to the blue you see above.

The approach is generic enough that you could theoretically apply it to other flowering plants. Blue roses, anyone? There are broader possibilities, too. While the exact techniques clearly won't translate to other life forms, this might hint at what's required to produce blue eyes or feathers. And these color changes would be useful for more than just cosmetics.

Pollinating insects tend to prefer blue, so this could help spread plant life that has trouble competing in a given habitat.

(Source: Engadget)

Early warning system created for algae blooms in lakes

Satellites in space and a robot under Lake Erie's surface are part of a network of scientific tools trying to keep algae toxins out of drinking water supplies in the shallowest of the Great Lakes.



It's one of the most wide-ranging freshwater monitoring systems in the U.S., researchers say, and some of its pieces soon will be watching for harmful algae on hundreds of lakes nationwide.

Researchers are creating an early warning system using real-time data from satellites that in recent years have tracked algae bloom hotspots such as Florida's Lake Okeechobee and the East Coast's Chesapeake Bay.

The plan is to have it in place within two years so that states in the continental U.S. can be alerted to where toxic algae is appearing before they might detect it on the surface, said Blake Schaeffer, a researcher with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"You don't have to wait until someone gets sick," said Schaeffer, one of the leaders of the project.

Across the nation, farm runoff, sewage overflows and lawn fertilizers have washed into lakes and rivers and left behind unsightly algae blooms that can sicken people and pets and harm wildlife.

But often the first reports of harmful algae on a lake come from boaters seeing something strange in the water, said Rick Stumpf, of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

He began using satellites in 2008 to monitor algae on Lake Erie. That work took on a new urgency after a bloom near Toledo's shoreline contaminated the drinking water for more than 400,000 people three years ago.

(Source: sfgate.com)

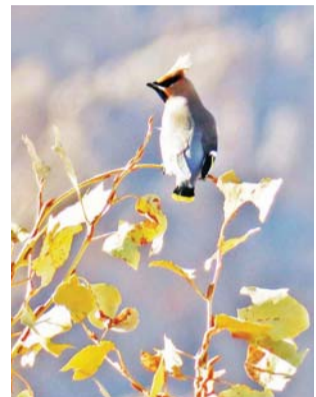
Waxwing poaching in Iran on the rise

By Farnaz Heidari

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Pardisan Park have been facing an immense number of wildlife illegal trades; unfortunately poaching and illegal trade is all-encompassing. Many species are added to the list of poaching currently, but waxwing poaching is unprecedented and the species is doomed to extinction.

Characteristics

Waxwing (*Bombicilla garrulous*) often breeds in remote, lichen-rich, mature forest in damp, mossy terrain. They nest high up on branch, often in pine trees. In winter it can eat frostbitten and semi-fermented berries, which may intoxicate the bird and render it temporarily incapable of flight. Waxwings have apparently developed a highly efficient liver (better than humans) to cope with this, since it usually recovers quickly. They eat insects in summer, and in winter as mentioned before use berries, preferably rowan berries, or some insects which they often catch in flight.



Waxwings get their name from the long glossy red tips to the feather shafts in the middle of their wings. They have large crest on crown combined with reddish-buff color eliminates all other species. It has narrow black eye-mask and black bib, yellow tail-tip plus yellow and white pattern on wing combine to make it unmistakable. In their first winter the male only have pale yellow straight lines but adult males have a broad yellow ribbon at the end of their tails. Adult males have sharp black edge below their necks but adult females have diffuse edge.

Pleasant song

The contact call of waxwings is silvery, high, metallic trill on even pitch, trrrreee or siirr. It is similar to a small bell, often in pealing chorus from flock before rising and in flight sounds like a surging ring. Waxwings sometimes song slow and halting, a series of call notes mixed with hard, raucous sounds.

Waxwings are migratory birds in Iran and observed in small numbers especially in north east and south. The numbers that reach us depend on fruit and especially berry trees. Last year a waxwing observed in Abbasabad Chupanan wildlife refuge, Isfahan province, which was a new record for this region. Some hypotheses suggest that lack of food, because in years when berries are low in abundance, birds have to move away to find food elsewhere.

Berries are incredibly important for waxwings in winter and they typically eat 800-1000 berries a day, roughly twice their body weight!

Conservation status

International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) pinpointed to extremely large range of waxwings (*Bombicilla garrulous*) and classified them as Least Concern (LC) because they do not meet the thresholds for vulnerable under the range size criterion (extent of occurrence <20,000 km2 combined with a declining or fluctuating range size, habitat extent/quality, or population size and a small number of locations or severe fragmentation).

Waxwings are native to Iran and there is no sufficient data or evaluation to confirm the number of population or even population trend. Food supply and other factors explain that it appears in greatly fluctuating numbers from year to year.

Illegal trade and poaching

Wildlife trade is a business which has led to omission of some important species from their natural habitat. Raising public awareness can successfully leverage more support for wildlife protection in a particular context. Many waxwings have been transferred recently to Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Pardisan Park. Unfortunately, many people love waxwings because of their beauty and they don't know that waxwings are native wild species in Iran hence they cannot be kept as pets. Bird shops are as well a threat to wild species. All buyers should also make sure that the birds they want to buy are not wild species. →13

Mobile dental clinics to offer free services in deprived areas

SOCIETY TEHRAN — In a ceremony held on Monday, eighty mobile dental clinics started to be dispatched to underprivileged areas across the country with the goal of providing people with free-of-charge services.

Each clinic is accompanied by a dentist and a technician and is equipped with dental x-ray and autoclave units.

The project is in line with the national healthcare reform plan. Funded by universities of medical sciences and philanthropies, some 2.7 billion rials (about \$67,500) has been expended to set up each clinic.

"About 1,100 centers in rural areas are offering dental care and 1,200 dentists are working in these centers. Adults under 14 years of age, pregnant women, and breastfeeding moms can benefit from free dental care in rural areas and cities with less than 20 thousands population," Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi said on the sidelines of the ceremony.



In the previous Iranian calendar year (March 2016-March 2017) NGOs donated 15 billion rials (about \$375,000) to boost infrastructures in the field of healthcare, the deputy health minister Mohammad-Hadi Ayyazi has said.

The healthcare reform plan, aiming at decreasing the out-of-pocket expenses for the patients, promoting natural birth, and supporting underprivileged patients suffering from rare or incurable diseases, was launched in the country in May 2014.

One of the most important changes occurred within the framework of the healthcare reform plan was the reduction of out-of-pocket expenses for those living in rural areas to less than 3 percent and their insurance coverage free of charge.

Some 11 million people living in underprivileged areas are now under the coverage of health insurance services.

Melancholic temperament: Specifications and lifestyle



ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

part 2

TEHRAN — According to the Iranian Islamic traditional medicine if one could identify the patient's temper, they would predict his/her health-related behaviors rather than predisposition and prognosis to different diseases, and select the best treatment.

In the Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine the excess or lack of warmth and humidity define four essential temperaments of "Warm and Wet (sanguine or *Damawiyi*)", "Warm and Dry (choleric or *Safrawiyi*)", "Cold and Dry (melancholic or *Saudawiyi*)" and "Cold and Wet (phlegmatic or *Balghamiy*)" respectively. The terms in the parentheses refer to four groups of material in the body (called "humors" or 'Akhlal') including blood which is hot and moist, phlegm which is cold and moist, bilious or yellow bile which is hot and dry and atrabillious or black bile which is cold and dry. Words written in italic show original Persian terms in the ancient literature.

Temperament of the body is specific for each individual fluctuating between certain minimum and maximum limits. Any change in the temperament of a person brings about a change in persons' state of health. Thus, preservation of balanced temperament under the differing conditions of life is vital for the maintenance of health and avoidance of disease in an individual.

To put it briefly people with melancholic temperament are usually thin and don't gain much weight. They have dark complexion and rough and dry skin as well as coarse, curly and coily hair. They tend to be introspective and introvert and are more likely to develop mental disorders such as depression. They are not in favor of change. They act and speak unhurriedly. They don't



Consuming lamb, sweet fruits, cardamom, cinnamon, and nuts, especially pistachio and almond, is advantageous to people with cold and dry Mizaj.

sleep much and are much more likely to suffer constipation. Body waste discharged from their bodies might become dark in color.

They are sensitive to food stuff and drinks with cold and dry temperament.

Lifestyle tips fitting people with melancholic temperament are listed below.

Lifestyle

People with melancholic temperament should not stay in dark and dim places for long.

They should not take cold showers and stand in front of an air cooler. Living in warm and humid areas suit these people.

Watching thrillers, tragedies and horror movies and reading tragedies might have some adverse effects on them.

They had better to spend their lives by visiting family and friends, going to picnics, watching comedies and wearing colorful clothes and in general have fun.

Wet cupping therapy is not recommended to this group as they usually suffer mild anemia and weakness to some extent.

They should abstain from fast food, vinegar, pickled food with vinegar content, eggplant, cabbage, and mushroom. Consuming meat with moderate Mizaj (not warm or cold) such as lamb, fresh wheat bread, sweet fruits, cardamom, cinnamon, and nuts especially pistachio and almond is advantageous to them.

Taking regular but gentle and light exercise is of benefits for them, however exercising in a cold gym or under strong sun is not good for them.

People with cold and dry temperament should not wear perfumes with cooling characteristics such as violet or lilac, but wearing rosewater perfume is agreeable to their temperament.

To decorate their houses they can use colorful tableaus.

China mall offers 'man pod' havens for husbands wary of shopping

At a Shanghai mall, rows of "man pods" equipped with video games are proving a big hit, providing a refuge for hundreds of weary husbands as their other halves shop until they drop.

The first pods were launched at the Global Harbor shopping mall in Shanghai in June, and since then over 1,000 men have used the facilities, according

to Ruwo Smart Technology, the company behind the scheme.

"Man pod" users can recline in a chair with a large screen and play video games while enclosed behind clear glass walls that shut out the bustle of other shoppers.

"I think this idea is pretty good because nowadays many boys like me are not willing to go shopping with their wives," said

Yao Lei, a 26-year old man using one of the new booths on Saturday.

With retail spending increasing another 10 percent in the second quarter of 2017, there could be huge demand for such facilities and the firm said it plans to expand the service to other shopping malls in the future.

"We found in most malls men and women go shopping together but men

cannot accept spending a long time shopping," said Zhao Wei, an operator of one of the pods.

"Sometimes they'll even start having arguments. So we think in this situation, we can have a product that gives a man something to do and the girls can go shopping at ease."

(Source: Reuters)

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Life - Lending Money

A: Can I **borrow** five **bucks**?

B: No!

A: Come on! I'll pay you back on Tuesday.

B: Last time I **lent** you money, you never paid me back.

A: I promise if you lend me five dollars today, I will **repay** you in full next week.

B: Ok, but I'm taking your skateboard as **collateral**.

A: Fine! I can't believe you don't **trust** me.

B: It's nothing personal, just business.

Key Vocabulary

borrow: to take or have something temporarily

bucks: dollar (slang)

lend: to give something to someone temporarily

repay: pay back

trust: confident expectation of something; hope.

Collateral: security pledged for the payment of a loan

Supplementary Vocabulary

barter: the act of exchanging goods for other goods

mooch: a person that is always asking to borrow money or food

loan: Something lent for temporary use

interest: a percentage added to a loan as a fee for lending money

past due: the status of a scheduled loan payment that has not been paid on time.

(Source: irlanguage.com)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran, Kyrgyzstan boost health ties

Iran's Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi and his Kyrgyz counterpart Talantbek Batyraliev discussed boosting cooperation during a meeting in Bishkek on Monday.

Working groups were established to follow up on three agreements signed in the field of health, Qazizadeh-Hashemi said in an interview with the Kyrgyz National TV, IRNA reported.

Treatment and hospital service fields, laboratory equipment and laboratory supplies, medical education and research, healthcare, preventing infectious and non-contagious diseases and development of healthcare networks were included in the agreements.

وزیر بهداشت: کارگروه همکاری سلامت بین ایران و قرقیزستان تشکیل شد

سیدحسین هاشمی وزیر بهداشت، درمان و آموزش پزشکی امروز (سه شنبه) در مصاحبه با تلویزیون ملی قرقیزستان در شهر بیشکک گفت: کارگروههای تخصصی برای اجرای سه سند همکاری دو کشور در حوزه سلامت تشکیل شده است.

محورهای همکاری های پیش بینی شده در مذاکرات ایران و قرقیزستان حوزه های درمان و خدمات بیمارستانی، دارو، تجهیزات پزشکی و آزمایشگاهی، آموزش و تحقیقات علوم پزشکی، مراقبت های بهداشتی، پیشگیری از بیماری های واگیر و غیرواگیر و توسعه شبکه های بهداشتی درمانی است. در برنامه کاری وزیر بهداشت رئیس هیات ایرانی بازدید از دانشگاه بیشکک، چند مرکز بهداشتی درمانی و فناوری پزشکی در پایتخت قرقیزستان و مذاکره با مسئولان این مراکز برای گسترش همکاری ها از دیگر برنامه های سفر هیات ایرانی به سرپرستی وزیر بهداشت به بیشکک است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

(A) watched pot never boils

■ **Explanation**: If you wait anxiously for something to happen, it seems to take a long time

■ **For example**: When Roberta was waiting for her friends to arrive at the airport, they took forever. A watched pot never boils.

PHRASAL VERB

Work over

■ **Meaning**: assault, beat up

■ **For example**: They worked him over and robbed him.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Walk and chew gum

■ **Explanation**: If you can walk and chew gum, you are able to do more than one thing at a time.

■ **For example**: Why did you hire that guy? He can't walk and chew gum at the same time!

Hundreds face judges in Turkey's biggest coup trial

Turkey is holding its largest trial over the July 2016 coup attempt, with nearly 500 people appearing in court.

The suspects, who are standing trial on Tuesday, are accused of conspiring to overthrow the government from an airbase seen as the plotters' hub.

A total of 486 suspects are going on trial in a purpose-built courtroom outside the capital Ankara, charged with crimes ranging from murder, violating the constitution and attempting to kill President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, state-run news agency Anadolu reported.

They are accused of running the coup bid from the Akinci airbase northwest of the capital, which the authorities regard as plotters' headquarters.

From there, commands were given for F-16 fighter jets to attack and fly above the capital.

The Turkish parliament was bombed three times by F-16s.

Gülen among suspects

A total of 461 suspects are held in custody, while seven are still on the run. The



remainder are charged but not in jail.

Fethullah Gulen, the United States-based Muslim cleric-turned-businessman accused of ordering the attempted July 15 attempt, is among the main suspects named in the indictment.

He remains in the United States under self-imposed exile in a secluded compound in the U.S. state of Pennsylvania, and strongly denies the charges against him.

Those held in custody include Akin

Ozturk, a former air force chief who - like several suspects - is also on trial in another case related to the coup bid.

Theology lecturer Adil Oksuz, whom Turkish officials allege was the so-called "imam" of the plot, is accused coordinating the action on the ground in Turkey with Gulen.

Businessman Kemal Batmaz, meanwhile, is accused of assisting Oksuz.

Oksuz was detained following the coup's defeat, but was subsequently released and is now on the run. Batmaz is in custody in Sincan prison outside Ankara.

Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar and other senior commanders were held hostage at the base during the coup attempt, before they were freed on the morning on July 16.

Around 300 people were killed during the coup attempt, which also led to purges targeting tens of thousands of civil servants among other people.

(Source: agencies)

Civilian killed as Indian troops slay LeT's Abu Dujana

Indian troops in Indian-administered Kashmir killed a top rebel commander in a gun battle and another fighter, sparking violent protests that resulted in the death of at least one civilian.

Abu Dujana, a senior leader of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) group, was killed early on Tuesday by government troops in Harkipora village of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Pulwama resident and fighter Arif Ahmed was also killed.

"The target house was cordoned and the fighters were requested to surrender, but they preferred to fight ... two fighters belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba were killed including Abu Dujana," Munir Khan, Kashmir police chief, told Al Jazeera.

Abu Dujana, a resident of Gilgit Baltistan, had a bounty of \$23,000 on his head. India blames the LeT group for a 2008 attack that left 166 people dead in India's Mumbai.

As the gun battle raged, residents defied the security lockdown and clashed with government forces near the site of the battle in an attempt to help the trapped fighters escape, according to police.

A civilian, Firdous Ahmad, was killed and dozens of others were injured in the violence.

Khan said Ahmad was caught in crossfire.

But residents and doctors told Al Jazeera that the troops fired shotgun pellets and tear gas and blocked roads with razor wire and steel barricades.

At least 17 people are being treated for injuries following the protests.

"Four of them were hit in their eyes with either pellets or teargas shells. Three people are in critical condition," Nazir Chowdhary, a doctor at Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS), told Al Jazeera.

Fearing more tension, the government has suspended mobile internet in Kashmir.

"The internet has been shut as a precautionary measure so that the anti-national elements and terrorists don't take the advantage of the situation," police chief Khan said.

Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the Himalayan territory in its entirety.

Rebel groups have been fighting since 1989 for the Indian-administered portion to become independent or merge with Pakistan.

Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown.

India maintains roughly 500,000 soldiers in the ter-



ritory.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among Kashmir's mostly Muslim population and most support the rebels' cause against Indian rule despite a decades-long military crackdown to fight the armed rebellion.

India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, which Pakistan denies.

Rebel groups have largely been suppressed by Indian forces in recent years and public opposition to Indian rule is now principally expressed through street protests.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

DRC police arrest over 100 in anti-Kabila protests

Police in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) arrested more than 100 people as they cracked down on protesters demanding that President Joseph Kabila leave power by the end of the year, according to two rights groups.

A series of marches across the country called on Monday by pro-democracy group Lucha, and backed by several leading opposition politicians, were mostly snuffed out by heavy police deployments.

Congolese authorities have banned opposition demonstrations since last September because of security fears.

Kabila's refusal to step down when his mandate expired last December has fuelled rising violence and insecurity in the DRC but organized opposition has faltered since the death of his main opponent, Etienne Tshisekedi, in February.

Ida Sawyer, Central Africa director at the United States-based Human Rights Watch, said in a statement that the group had confirmed 57 arrests in the eastern

city of Goma, 24 in the capital Kinshasa and dozens more in seven other cities.

At least 22 of those detained had been released by Monday evening, Sawyer said.

Another rights group, Britain-based Amnesty International, said later that more than 100 people had been arrested.

The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC also condemned the arrests on its Twitter account.

"Arbitrary arrests are incompatible with the right to information [and] right of freedom of assembly guaranteed in DRC Constitution," the office said.

The Association of Online Media in DRC (MILRDC) meanwhile said in a statement that seven journalists had been briefly arrested in Kinshasa while covering the aborted march there.

The DRC's electoral commission said earlier this month that a vote to replace Kabila will probably not be possible this year.

That would violate a deal struck with the opposition in December that allowed Kabila,



whose father Laurent preceded him as president, to stay in office past the end of his second and final constitutional mandate.

Security forces killed dozens of anti-Kabila protesters last year and recent

bouts of unrest have raised fears of a resurgence of the civil wars that led to the deaths of millions in the DRC between 1996 and 2003.

(Source: agencies)

Iranian envoy hopes for growing tourism ties with Russia

1 → Besides, Iranians take much interest in unique historic landmarks, including the Red Square in Moscow and the rivers of St. Petersburg," Mohammadi went on to say. "People in Iran always say they wish to see the white nights in St. Petersburg, they always ask questions about it," the Iranian consul general noted.

He was confident that in the near future, other Russian regions would also attract Iranian tourists' attention.

Cruise ship for Caspian Sea

Cruises in the Caspian Sea could give

impetus to the development of tourism industry, the Iranian consul general said adding that this sphere looked promising not only for Iran and Russia but also for all other Caspian counties. However, such cruises will require special cruise ships that would be able of withstanding big waves.

"Experts say that waves in the Caspian Sea could rival ocean waves as far as their height goes," Mohammadi noted. "Today, the Caspian countries do not possess

proper cruise liners. But, according to the governor of the [Russian] Astrakhan region, there are plans to start building such ships in Astrakhan. I hope that these plans will become a reality," the Iranian diplomat added.

He pointed out that in the Iranian harbor town of Bandar-e Anzali, a modern terminal had been built for passenger cruise ships.

A project PV300VD cruise ship, planned to be used for travels in the

Caspian Sea, was laid down at the Astrakhan-based Lotus shipyard in 2016 in the presence of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The four-deck vessel capable of carrying 300 passengers will equal a five-star hotel. There will be restaurants, gyms, spa salons and saunas on board. The project, initiated by the Moscow River Shipping company, is estimated at a total of 2.5 billion rubles (\$41.5m). The cruise liner is expected to be launched in April 2018.

(Source: TASS)

'Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty supporters eyeing nuclear-weapons-free world'

1 → This treaty, however, sends an unambiguous political commitment by some 122 countries that voted for it that achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world is a goal supported by the vast majority of UN members. This may prove to be an illusory goal because none of the nuclear weapons states participated in the negotiations and the voting process. In addition, with the exception of the Netherlands, which voted against this treaty, all other NATO members did not participate in the voting process and the Netherlands cast a negative vote.

Supporters say the treaty will put pressure on nuclear armed states. Please explain.

A: Supporters of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons have argued that this treaty has strongly stigmatized nuclear weapons and thus will serve as a catalyst to finally move towards adopting further measures to eliminate nuclear weapons. The supporters of this treaty do not see the treaty as an end but as a first

IAEA will remain incapable of undertaking any meaningful measures towards one of its major mandates, namely nuclear disarmament.

strong step towards achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Why has the IAEA failed to achieve nuclear disarmament?

A: The IAEA is an international agency, and like all international agencies, its effectiveness depends on what its member states allow it to do. Unfortunately, the IAEA has been heavily controlled by major powers, especially the nuclear ones. As long as this practice prevails, the IAEA will remain incapable of undertaking any meaningful measures towards one of its major mandates, namely nuclear disarmament.

Xi: China loves peace but won't compromise on sovereignty

China loves peace but will never compromise on defending its sovereignty, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday while marking 90 years since the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

China has rattled nerves around Asia and globally with its increasingly assertive stance in territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas and an ambitious military modernization plan.

Relations with self-ruled Taiwan have also worsened since Tsai Ing-wen from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party won presidential elections there last year. China considers Taiwan a wayward province, to be brought under Beijing's control by force if necessary.

Xi, speaking at the Great Hall of the People, made no direct reference to any particular territorial dispute, as he sought to assure that China's intentions were peaceful, but also show that China would not be bullied.

"The Chinese people love peace. We will never seek aggression or expansion, but we have the confidence to defeat all invasions," Xi said in comments carried live on state television.

"We will never allow any people, organization or political party to split any part of Chinese territory out of the country at any time, in any form," he said. "No one should expect us to swallow the bitter fruit that is harmful to our sovereignty, security or development interests."

(Source: Reuters)

Who ate Republicans' brains?

8 →

A key moment

A key moment came in the 1970s, when Irving Kristol, the godfather of neoconservatism, embraced supply-side economics — the claim, refuted by all available evidence and experience that tax cuts pay for themselves by boosting economic growth. Writing years later, he actually boasted about valuing political expediency over intellectual integrity: "I was not certain of its economic merits but quickly saw its political possibilities." In another essay, he cheerfully conceded to having had a "cavalier attitude toward the budget deficit," because it was all about creating a Republican majority — so "political effectiveness was the priority, not the accounting deficiencies of government."

The problem is that once you accept the principle that it's O.K. to lie if it helps you win elections, it gets ever harder to limit the extent of the lying — or even to remember what it's like to seek the truth.

The right's intellectual and moral collapse didn't happen all at once. For a while, conservatives still tried to grapple with real problems. In 1989, for example, The Heritage Foundation offered a health care plan strongly resembling Obamacare. That same year, George H. W. Bush proposed a cap-and-trade system to control acid rain, a proposal that eventually became law.

But looking back, it's easy to see the rot spreading. Compared with Donald Trump, the elder Bush looks like a paragon — but his administration lied relentlessly about rising inequality. His son's administration lied consistently about its tax cuts, pretending that they were targeted on the middle class, and — in case you've forgotten — took us to war on false pretenses.

And almost the entire G.O.P. either endorsed or refused to condemn the "death panels" slander against Obamacare.

Given this history, the Republican health care disaster was entirely predictable. You can't expect good or even coherent policy proposals from a party that has spent decades embracing politically useful lies and denigrating expertise.

Electoral advantage

Democrats aren't above cutting a few intellectual corners in pursuit of electoral advantage. But the Obama administration was, when all is said and done, remarkably clearheaded and honest about its policies. In particular, it was always clear what the A.C.A. was supposed to do and how it was supposed to do it — and it has, for the most part, worked as advertised.

Now what? Maybe, just maybe, Republicans will work with Democrats to make the health system work better — after all, polls suggest that voters will, rightly, blame them for any future problems. But it wouldn't be easy for them to face reality even if their president wasn't a bloviating bully.

And it's hard to imagine anything good happening on other policy fronts, either. Republicans have spent decades losing their ability to think straight, and they're not going to get it back anytime soon.

(Source: The NYT)

Waxwing poaching in Iran on the rise

12 →

A bit of a stretch

Buying wildlife species is a big challenge to the wildlife. Many of these species die and this threat appears to be particularly prevalent in our country. Wildlife conservation ambitiously striving to limit illegal trade which is driven by the concern over long-term wildlife exploitation. There are many solid evidences that confirm some of Iran's native species are still being threatened by legal and illegal exploitation. The biggest turning point is raising consciousness and changing the current trend, there would be no market if we do not buy. We should be conscious and do not fell under the spell of unknown vendors. As World Wide Fund for Nature said, it is almost impossible to obtain reliable figures for the value of illegal wildlife trade but it is considered as the largest direct threat to the future of many of the world's most threatened species. It is second only to habitat destruction in overall threats against species survival.

Lionel Messi tells friends Barcelona will sign Coutinho

The Liverpool star has been heavily linked with a move to the Nou Camp in recent months.

Reports last weekend claimed the Brazil international has agreed a five-year deal with the Spanish giants.

Barca are set to have met with the Coutinho's agent in London last month to discuss a move to La Liga.

And according to Spanish outlet Diario Gol, Barca talisman Messi reckons the 25-year-old is heading to the Nou Camp.

They even say the Argentina international has told his friends that Coutinho is joining.

The playmaker would replace Neymar should he join Barca.

The Brazilian winger has been tipped to join Paris St-Germain this summer in a record-breaking £200m move.

Liverpool are desperate to keep hold of Coutinho.

Jurgen Klopp wants to keep his squad together with Champions League football returning to Anfield next season.

(Source: Star)

Chelsea and Terry in clear with FA over substitution

Chelsea and John Terry will face no action from the Football Association over the former club captain's ceremonial substitution on the final day of last season.

Terry brought down the curtain on a career-long association with Chelsea by being replaced after 26 minutes of the 5-1 win over Sunderland at Stamford Bridge.

The ex-England skipper revealed it was his idea to make way in the same minute as the squad number he wore with distinction over the course of 19 years.

In response to reports of punters winning sizable sums of money by putting bets on the Terry substitution, the FA's Integrity Department asked betting companies to provide any relevant information on the matter.

Omnisport understands the governing body found no evidence to suggest information on the incident was provided to inform betting patterns, nor was there any attempt at so-called spot fixing. Terry, 36, has since joined Aston Villa, who he will captain for the 2017-18 Championship campaign.

(Source: Goal)

Manchester United in talks with dating app over sponsorship deal

Manchester United may have found a new advertising match – in online dating service Tinder.

The Red Devils are believed to have spoken to the Silicon Valley company about starting a relationship together.

The Daily Mail reports hook-up app Tinder – which has sparked the potential for over 8BILLION romances since its launch in 2012 – have flirted with the idea of paying United £12million a year to become their official sleeve sponsor.

The top flight granted clubs the chance to display two sponsors on their shirts this season, with company logos set to replace the Premier League badge down the left arm of kits.

So far, nine Prem sides – including Manchester City and Chelsea – have signed deals ahead of the new season.

United earn a staggering £50m a year through their existing deal with Chevrolet.

Tinder reportedly want a more mainstream image, and have taken steps in football in order to achieve this.

Serie A giants Napoli became the first club to sign a deal with the app in May this year.

Part of its terms allowed for fans to interact with Poland striker Arkadiusz Milik after he was given a private profile.

The 23-year-old later picked four supporters for a stadium tour through it.

(Source: Sun)

Navas 'kidnapped' as he seals Sevilla return

Jesus Navas has secured a return to Sevilla on a free transfer having been released by Manchester City at the end of last season.

The Spain winger joined City from Sevilla in 2013 and won the Premier League and two EFL Cups during his four years at the Etihad Stadium.



But he is now back at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan after agreeing a four-year deal, with Sevilla confirming his return in unusual fashion.

The club posted a video on Twitter of Navas becoming the victim of a faked 'kidnap', bundled into the back of a car with a bag over his head before being driven to the stadium.

Navas first joined Sevilla as a 15-year-old, making his debut in November 2003 - the first of 393 appearances.

He will be presented to the media on Wednesday.

(Source: Soccerway)

Paris 2024 Olympics nearly assured as Los Angeles agrees to 2028 Games

Paris moved within a hair's breadth on Monday of formally being chosen to host the 2024 Summer Olympics after rival candidate city Los Angeles agreed to accept the consolation prize of the 2028 Games in a rare two-way contest between the cities.

Both cities were competing for the 2024 Summer Games after several other contenders withdrew, and the stage was set for Paris to win its bid when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) confirmed that Los Angeles had officially embraced the later date of 2028.

"The IOC welcomes this decision of the Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Candidature Committee," IOC President Thomas Bach said in a statement.

The decision, subject to formal ratification by the IOC at a meeting in Peru in September, paves the way for Los Angeles and Paris to join London as the only cities ever to host the Games - summer or winter - three times since the modern Olympics began more than a century ago.

The United States last hosted the Olympics for the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. Its first was the Summer Olympiad III, staged in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904, coinciding with the World's Fair held there that summer.

"I am proud to announce that the Olympic Games are coming back to the United States of America," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti told a news conference at the StubHub Center sports complex in suburban Carson.

U.S. President Donald Trump, beleaguered by recent staff shakeups and setbacks on Capitol Hill, hailed the news in a statement of congratulations from the White House.

"I am confident that the Summer Games in Los Angeles will exemplify both the Olympic ideal and the American spirit, and we look forward to hosting them," he said.

The United States has hosted the Olympics 9 times - 5 Summer Games and 4 Winter Games. France has hosted 6 times, three each in summer and winter.

The IOC's unprecedented move of essentially awarding two Games in tandem turned the spotlight on security challenges facing the French capital while giving Los Angeles, which last hosted the Olympics 33 years ago, ample time to upgrade its public transportation system.

Residents of Los Angeles, which ranks as America's second-largest city by population, expressed a mix of enthusiasm for the Games and anxiety about placing



additional strains on the city's notoriously heavy traffic.

"It was a great thing the last time we had it here in L.A., and I think it will be a boon for business and kind of bring unity back to L.A.," Los Angeles resident Domenic Ferrante, 53, told Reuters.

The hosting agreement for Los Angeles commits the IOC to furnishing the city financial contributions totaling \$2 billion, some \$500,000 more than Rio de Janeiro received for last year's Summer Games.

The rest of the projected \$5.3 billion budget for the Los Angeles games would come from local sponsorships

and ticket sales, Garcetti said. The federal government had agreed to pick up the tab for "national security costs," he said.

An official designation of Paris for the 2024 Olympics has yet to be announced. Assuming it clinches the Summer Games for that year, it would mark the centenary of the 1924 Paris Olympics, depicted in the 1981 Oscar-winning motion picture "Chariots of Fire." Paris also hosted the second edition of the modern Summer Olympics, in 1900.

(Source: Reuters)

Monaco invite Barcelona to wreck Real Madrid's Mbappe dream

Monaco are in danger of pricing Kylian Mbappe out of a move this summer after bumping his asking price up to £178million (€200m).

The Ligue One champions have made the move because they hope Barcelona will join the race to sign Mbappe once they have their £196m (€222m) windfall from the sale of Neymar.

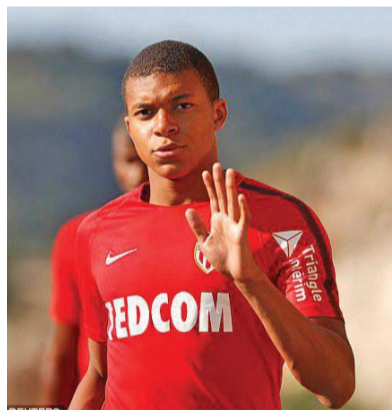
The summer saga of the Brazilian's move to Paris Saint Germain could be concluded as early as Tuesday and that could have a direct impact on the future of Monaco's 18-year-old forward.

Real Madrid made it known last week they were prepared to pay a fee of around £145m for Mbappe rising to £160m over the course of his first contract. And Manchester City were willing to throw similar resources behind a bid.

Madrid's bid was the larger of the two but Mbappe continues to be worried that his development will be stifled at Madrid and has been swayed by the prospect of the team being built around him at City under Pep Guardiola.

But Monaco have brought the bidding process to a halt having seen a potential third interested party emerge and have increased their asking price.

Neither Manchester City or Real Madrid are willing to pay such a figure for a player who has just 50 top-flight games



under his belt and are waiting to see how the Neymar saga concludes and what Barca do next.

If PSG pay the £196m buyout clause to the Spanish league for Neymar, Barcelona would have both the money to satisfy the demands of Monaco.

But gambling the Neymar millions on a teenager would be a huge risk and the board are under huge pressure not to repeat the story of Luis Figo from 2000. He was the last player they sold against their will and they wasted the fee on Marc Overmars and Emmanuel Petit who both arrived from Arsenal and flopped.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Sharapova struggles but advances on return at Stanford

Maria Sharapova shook off some rust after injury and a 15-month doping ban to beat Jennifer Brady in her first match in the United States in more than two years on Monday at the Stanford Classic.

The five-times grand slam champion, who returned to tennis in April after being banned for testing positive for meldonium, suffered a thigh injury at the Italian Open in May and struggled to put away Brady before she advanced with a 6-1 4-6 6-0 win.

"I feel like I just want to hug everyone and say thank you," Sharapova told an on-court interview after her triumph as a tournament wildcard.

"It's my first match in the States in a really long time, and it's the closest thing to home for me. The welcome has been incredible and finally playing so close to home was really special."

Sharapova was pushed by Brady who forced several long games during the match.

In the opening set, Sharapova saved three break points in the sixth game but managed to hold to take a 5-1 lead before she sealed the set in the next game.

Brady rebounded when she raced away to a 3-0 lead in the second set, before Sharapova regrouped to run away with the match in the third to set up a



clash with seventh seed Lesia Tsurenko, who beat Lara Arruabarrena-Vecino 6-3 6-3.

"I had a bit of a letdown but that's the way it is," Sharapova said of her loss of the second set.

"I feel like I face a lot of things: not competing for a long time, (and) an opponent who's able to play some great tennis."

"I feel like I'm playing catch-up against everyone."

"All that matters is that I keep playing. The more I play, the better I'll do. That's the goal."

(Source: Reuters)

Serena Williams: 'Gender pay gap hits women of color hardest'

American tennis star Serena Williams has slammed the gender pay gap, issuing a passionate call for black women to "be fearless" and demand equality.

In a personal essay, published by Fortune Magazine, the 23-time grand slam champion writes that for every dollar a man earns, black women make just 63 cents.

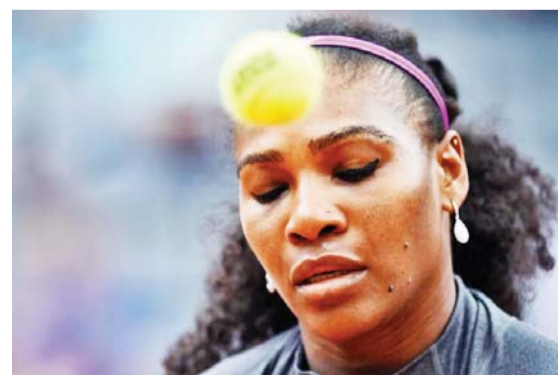
"The cycles of poverty, discrimination, and sexism are much, much harder to break than the record for Grand Slam titles," said Williams, decrying statistics showing "women of color have to work on average eight months longer to earn the same as their male counterparts do in one year."

"For every black woman that rises through the ranks to a position of power, there are too many others who are still struggling."

Though Williams was recently named the world's highest-paid female athlete by Forbes — with annual earnings exceeding \$25 million — the American is only 51st on the overall list, and far behind ATP Tour contemporaries Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Kei Nishikori, Rafa Nadal and Andy Murray.

She has previously been forced to defend how much female players receive at Grand Slam tournaments, despite Wimbledon only instituting equal pay for singles winners in 2007.

"In every stage of my life, I've had to learn to stand up



for myself and speak out," said Williams, who is currently taking time out of the game to give birth to her first child.

"I have been treated unfairly, I've been disrespected by my male colleagues and—in the most painful times—I've been the subject of racist remarks on and off the tennis court."

Just this month, former world No. 1 Ilie Nastase was banned from the sport by the International Tennis Federation until 2021 for "racially insensitive" remarks made in April about Williams' unborn child.

Seven-time grand slam champion John McEnroe, meanwhile, has been widely condemned for comments

that Williams would be "like 700" in the men's world rankings — later clarifying but refusing to retract his remarks.

In every instance, Williams has refused to be silent — telling McEnroe to "respect my privacy" and drawing on a Maya Angelou poem in her condemnation of Nastase.

Last year, she addressed inequality in the game in an open letter, following comments from Indian Wells CEO Raymond Moore that the female players should "ride on the coattails" of the ATP Tour game and should "get down on their knees every night" to thank male players.

"I don't think any woman should be down on their knees thanking anybody like that," Williams told reporters. "I don't think that is a very accurate statement."

Moore later apologized for the remarks, but stepped down from his role as tournament director.

This latest essay speaks to a far wider disparity - one she argues is as prevalent "in inner cities as it is in Silicon Valley."

"Today isn't about me," writes Williams. "It's about the other 24 million black women in America. If I never picked up a tennis racket, I would be one of them; that is never lost on me."

"Black women: Be fearless. Speak out for equal pay. Every time you do, you're making it a little easier for a woman behind you."

(Source: CNN)

Iran finish 5th in Asian Volleyball Championship

S P O R T S Iran's national volleyball team finished in fifth place in the 2017 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship on Tuesday.

The Iranian team defeated China 3-1 (15-25, 25-17, 25-23, 25-21) at the Tridharma Petrochemical Sports Stadium in the Indonesian city of Surabaya.

Iran fielded a U23 squad in their final preparation for the next month's FIVB Volleyball Men's U23 World Championship in Cairo, Egypt.

"We've learned a lot from the Asian Volleyball Championship. We underestimated Indonesia and lost to the team. It was my fault," Juan Cichello said.

"From now on, we have to concentrate on winning World championship. I thank my players and satisfied with their performance," the Argentine added.

Japan won the title for the second year in a row after defeating Kazakhstan 3-1 (25-13, 25-20, 25-27, 25-23) in the final match.

Bronze medal went to South Korea who defeated Indonesia 3-0 (25-16, 25-21, 25-13).

The 2017 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship is the 19th edition of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, the biennial international men's volleyball championship of Asia organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC).

The competition was held at the Tridharma Petrochemical Sports Stadium of Gresik, East Java, Indonesia from 24 July to 1 August 2017.

It was the second time that the Indonesia hosted the tournament after the 2007 Asian Championship.



Photo by: Parisa Fourtaherian
volleyball.ir

Iran to participate at Motocross of Nations



S P O R T S Iran three-rider team will take part at the 2017 Motocross of Nations in England. Ali Borzouzadeh and Alireza Parvareh will race in the 250cc class and Amirreza Sabetifar in the 450cc class.

The three riders will hold four preparation camps in August and September in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

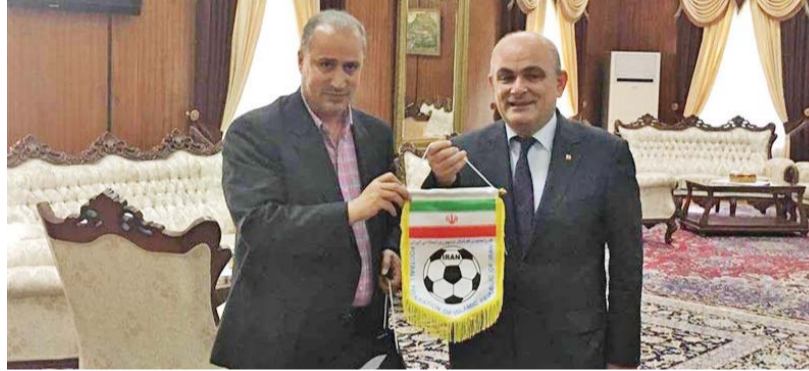
The year's event, on the first day of October, will be the 71st edition of

the great race, taking place Matterley Basin, near Winchester, in south-west England.

The Motocross of Nations is the biggest and best motocross of the year. It's expected about 40 countries to take part in the event.

Motocross is a form of off-road motorcycle racing held on enclosed off-road circuits. The sport evolved from motorcycle trials competitions held in the United Kingdom.

Iran, Russia to expand sports cooperation



S P O R T S President of Iran Football Federation (IFF) Mehdi Taj here Monday evening called for expansion of Iran-Russia sports cooperation during the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Taj made the remarks in a meeting with Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levyan Jagarian.

Holding mutual friendly matches, employing Russia's capacities for attendance of Iranian nationals in 2018 FIFA World Cup matches and facilitating the attend-

ance process of Iranian sportspeople in Russia were among the major issues discussed during the meeting.

Head coach of Iran's national football team Carlos Queiroz has recently announced that Iran men's national football team is scheduled to play a friendly fixture against Russia as part of preparations for the 2018 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup.

Queiroz added that the friendly match will be played on October 10.

Design the mascot for Tokyo 2020!

Japanese public invited to create symbol of Paralympic Games.

Tokyo 2020 has launched a competition to give the Japanese public the chance to design the mascots for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

To mark the inauguration of the competition, Tokyo 2020 held a ceremony at Kuramae Elementary School on 1 August in Asakusabashi in Tokyo, attended by over 200 schoolchildren. At the event, four-time Olympian Ai Sugiyama and three-time Paralympian Aki Taguchi mingled with schoolchildren and shared their stories and experienced of being athletes and competing at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In May, Tokyo 2020 announced an innovative method of selecting the winner of the design competition that aims to engage younger generations and give them an important role to play in the preparations for the Games.

A Tokyo 2020 mascot review panel will select a shortlist



from the submitted design sets by the beginning of December, and schoolchildren at every elementary school

across the country, including international schools, will be given the opportunity to cast their vote and select their preferred set of designs. Tokyo 2020 will select the design set which attracts the largest number of classroom votes and announce the winner in March 2018.

At the launch event, children counted down to noon, and as chairperson of the Mascot Selection Panel Ryohei Miyata beat a ceremonial gong, they cheered the announcement that the design entry website was now open. Two cheerleading squads performed in front of the schoolchildren and guests to celebrate the occasion.

"Japanese mascots are loved by many people around the world. You and your classmates will select the best mascots for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are going to ask all elementary school children in Japan to play this role. We hope many people will enter this competition starting today."

(Source: Paralympic.org)

With federation suspended, 19 Russians head to worlds as neutrals

MOSCOW (Reuters) — If Russian hurdler Sergey Shubenkov retains his world title in London next week he will not be serenaded by his national anthem when he stands on the podium.

Shubenkov and 18 compatriots will compete as neutral athletes at the World Championships, the biggest international meeting to include Russians since their country's athletics federation was suspended nearly two years ago over an independent World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report that exposed the country's widespread state-sponsored doping.

"I want everything to be like in 2015," Shubenkov said, referring to the gold medal he won in the 110-metres hurdles at the last worlds in Beijing.

With their federation still suspended, dozens of Russians have been cleared to compete internationally after demonstrating to the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) that their training environment meets the required anti-doping standards.

Although some semblance of a Russian squad is returning to the international stage after missing last year's Rio Olympics, Russian athletes in London will be barred from wearing their country's symbols and colors, down to hairbands and nail polish.

Russian authorities, who have vehemently denied the existence of state-sponsored doping, have generally accepted athletes' efforts to compete as neutrals.

"Everyone understands who they are representing," sports minister Pavel Kolobkov told reporters at Russia's national athletics championships last week. "It will be difficult for the athletes to compete because they are patriots."

Many of the Russians set to compete in London say that the absence of their flag is but a minor annoyance that neither dims their love for their country nor affects their focus.

"I try not to think about it, not to give it any importance," Shubenkov said.

World champion high jumper Ma-

ria Lasitskne -- whose personal best, a 2.06-metre jump recorded last month, is three centimeters off the world record -- said that the possibility of retaining her title was more important than the colors she would be wearing.

"I'm competing as a neutral but what's most important for me is to show results, to defend my title," she said.

Russian athletes cleared by the IAAF say the long hiatus from international competitions has hurt their development as much as their income.

"It's tough to motivate yourself when you are competing against those with whom you train every day," sprinter Kseniya Aksyonova, who was cleared to compete by the IAAF but met the entry standard for London only after the deadline, told Reuters.

The Russian federation's decision to hold the national championships after the entry deadline for the worlds ultimately deprived three athletes, including Aksyonova, of the chance to compete in London.



"I understood that the chances to qualify were gone," Aksyonova said. "That lifted a weight off my shoulders."

A return to the fold remains unlikely before 2018 after the head of the IAAF's Task Force, Rune Andersen, said on Monday that Russia had yet to meet several of the criteria for reinstatement.

Drug-testing was still insufficient and banned coaches were still operating freely, he told reporters in London after a presentation to the IAAF Council, saying: "There are still issues to be resolved."

Wushu fighters clinch 5 gold, 2 silver medals in Georgia

Iranian Wushu fighters received five gold and 2 silver medals in Eurasia martial arts competitions held in Georgia.

Iran squad with three Sanda and three Taolu fighters participated in the event.

In Sanda field, Iranian athletes in - 45 kg, - 60 kg and - 56 kg weight categories bagged gold medals.

In Taolu section also Iranian athlete Yasin Fathi Moghaddam received a gold medal.

Mohammad Soleiman Pour received a gold medal in Chang chuan field, and a silver medal in Daoshu field.

Iranian fighter Masih Keyhan Nejad bagged a silver medal.

The four-day Georgia international Wushu competitions were held with the attendance of Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Poland and Georgia on July 28-31 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

(Source: Irna)

Teymourian joins Gostaresh Foulad Tabriz Football Club

Iranian footballer Andranik Teymourian has signed with Gostaresh Foulad Tabriz Football Club, which currently competes at the highest level of the Iranian football league system known as the Persian Gulf Pro League.

The 34-year-old former captain of Iran men's national football team joined the Tabriz-based club on a one-year contract for an undisclosed fee on Monday.

Teymourian played for three English clubs, including Bolton and Fulham in the Premier League as well as Barnsley in the Football League Championship from 2006 to the end of 2010.

Teymourian signed a contract with Esteghlal in mid-July 2011, and made his debut for club against Isfahan-based Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan football club.

On July 18, 2013, Teymourian returned to Esteghlal after signing a three-year contract.

He scored a 40-yard goal in a match against the Thai professional football club Buriram United on August 12, 2014. Esteghlal won the fixture 2-1.

The Iranian footballer put an end to his appearance at the Qatari professional association football team Umm Salal, which plays at the first level Qatar Stars League, in January 2016.

Teymourian parted company with the Doha-based sport club only six months after he signed with Umm Salal on July 7, 2015. The Iranian footballer had 14 appearances in the Qatari side, but scored no goals.

On January 19, 2016, Teymourian signed a six-month deal with Saipa, and left the club in July that year.

After that, he returned to Tabriz and signed a one-year contract with newly promoted Persian Gulf Pro League club Machine Sazi.

Earlier this year, Teymourian joined Sanate Naft Tehran Football Club. He had ten appearances in the Tehran-based club, but could not tack a goal.

(Source: Press TV)

Iconic football broadcaster Les Murray passes away

Renowned Australian football journalist and broadcaster Les Murray died on Monday morning after a long-term illness.

Murray, born in Hungary in 1945 before migrating to Australia in 1957, was highly influential in popularising football in Australia, serving as the face of the game over the span of four decades on SBS television.

Spearheading the first FIFA World Cup to be broadcast on SBS in 1986, Murray would go on to cover every edition of the tournament until his retirement at the conclusion of Brazil 2014.

Murray also authored a number of successful books and served on FIFA's Ethics Committee.

(Source: AFC)

Sanchez returns to training after illness

Arsenal forward Alexis Sanchez was back in training on Tuesday after a late return from Chile following a bout of flu.

Arsenal posted a photo of a smiling Sanchez on the training ground at London Colney after the player himself had announced his return to the British capital on Instagram.

Sanchez had originally been set to return on Sunday after an extended holiday following the Confederations Cup, but that was pushed back until Tuesday after he took to social media to say he was sick.

That had led to speculation that Sanchez might be trying to force a move away from the club after a summer of speculation about his future. But his return to training could allay some of those fears, and might put him in contention to play in Sunday's Community Shield against Chelsea.

The Chilean has yet to team up with summer signings Alexandre Lacazette and Sead Kolasinac, and now has less than two weeks to get acquainted with his new teammates before the Premier League opener against Leicester.

Arsenal are expected to field a front three of Sanchez, Mesut Ozil and Lacazette this season, with Kolasinac possibly playing as a wing-back on the left flank.

However, Sanchez's future continues to be a topic of speculation as he enters the final year of his contract -- although manager Arsene Wenger has repeatedly ruled out selling his star player.

Wenger will hold a news conference on Thursday ahead of the Community Shield, when Sanchez could yet again be one of the main topics.

(Source: Soccernet)

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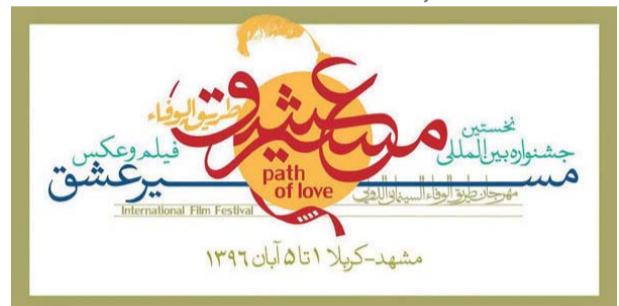
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Journey of Love intl. festival to support winning screenplays

A R T TEHRAN — The organizers of the Journey of Love International Film and Photo Festival plans to support screenplays that will win awards at the event. The festival will help the screenplays be turned into movies, the secretary of the festival, Seyyed Ahmad Miralai, said in a press conference at Tehran's Art Bureau on Tuesday.



The festival, which is on Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims, and the Arbaeen rituals, will open on October 23 in the Iranian city of Mashhad.

A large number of pilgrims head to Karbala during Arbaeen, which marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions on Ashura, the 10th of Muharram when Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred.

About 200,000 pilgrims also walk to Mashhad every year on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Reza (AS) that is ten days after Arbaeen.

Festival's categories include feature films, documentaries, animations, TV series, screenplays and photos.

The festival will come to an end on October 27 in the Iraqi city of Karbala, which is home to the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS).

NEWS IN BRIEF



"Appendix" to compete in Montreal World Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Hossein Namazi's movie "Appendix" will go on screen at the 41st edition of the Montreal World Film Festival (MWWF), Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation announced on Tuesday.

The MWWF, which is the only competitive film festival in North America recognized by the FIAPF (International Federation of Film Producers Associations), will be held at the Canadian city from August 24 to September 4.



Over 800 movies submitted to Intl. Green Film Festival

A R T TEHRAN — The 6th edition of the International Green Film Festival has received over 800 movies in various categories, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

Filmmakers from 43 countries, including the U.S., Spain, France, Italy, Mexico, Canada, England, Brazil, Germany, and Russia, submitted their latest movies to the event.

Iran's Department of Environment is the main organizer of the festival, which will take place in Tehran and several other Iranian cities from September 9 to 15.

Italian poster for "Casablanca" attracts \$478,000 at auction

DALLAS (AP) — The only known surviving Italian issue poster for the classic movie "Casablanca" has sold for \$478,000 in Dallas at a public auction of vintage movie posters.

The firm Heritage Auctions says the price ties a record for the highest amount paid for a movie poster at a public auction.

The 1946 Italian poster - four years after the Oscar-winning movie was made and first shown in the U.S. - measures 55.5 inches (1,409.7 millimeters) by 78.25 inches (1,987.55 millimeters). It previously was owned by a collector in London.

Auction spokesman Eric Bradley says the buyer Saturday chose to remain anonymous.

Bradley said Sunday the price equaled the record amount paid in 2014 for a poster for "London After Midnight," a 1927 silent movie where Lon Chaney played a vampire.

Tehran Symphony Orchestra to perform for children

A R T TEHRAN — The Tehran Symphony Orchestra is scheduled to give concerts for an audience of children and young adults.

The performances, which will be conducted by Shahrzad Rohani, will be held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on August 6, 10, 17 and 18, the organizers announced on Monday.

"Peter and the Wolf" by Sergei Prokofiev and "The Carnival of the Animals" by Camille Saint-Saëns are among the pieces selected for the concerts.

In addition, "Jaws" by John Williams and "Baroque Flamenco" by Deborah Henson will be performed.

Four teenage harpists will accompany the orchestra during the performances for the first time.



Miniature exhibit opens new art gallery at University of Tehran

A R T TEHRAN — The University of Tehran (UT) inaugurated an art gallery by showcasing a collection by the late master of miniature Ali Esfarjani on Monday.

"Esfarjani was one of the most outstanding artists who lived over the past few decades," UT Deputy Director FOR Cultural Affairs Majid Sarsangi said during the opening ceremony of the exhibition.

Before his death, Esfarjani donated the collection to the University of Tehran, which sent it to a storehouse at the Negarestan Garden Museum of the University of Tehran.

Negarestan loaned the collection for the show at the new exhibition space titled Daneshju Gallery.

Sarsangi also announced his plan to dedicate a permanent exhibition to the



collection in the near future.

"The decision to donate the 20 miniatures to the University of Tehran was a good job because father cared about the youth and the development of knowledge and cultural issues in the country," Esfarjani's daughter, Shahrzad said that the ceremony.

The exhibition will run for ten days at the gallery located at the Social and Cultural Student Center on 16 Azar Street.

Netflix to distribute "Wishbone"

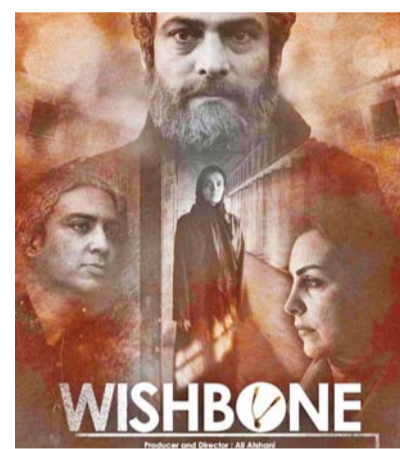
A R T TEHRAN — Netflix, an American entertainment company based in California, has received the franchise for distribution of Iranian filmmaker Ali Atshani's drama "Wishbone" across the world.

The news was announced in a press release published by the Public Relations Office of the film on Tuesday.

The film, which is based on a true story, is about a married football coach who meets his ex-girlfriend after a lengthy period of time has elapsed. The girl, who was one of his fans, once again enters his life.

"Wishbone" won the best feature film and best director of the year awards at the WIND International Film Festival in Hollywood in March.

Starring Hossein Yari and Mitra Hajjar,



A poster for "Wishbone" by Ali Atshani the film will be shown in Iranian movie theaters soon.

Actor and playwright Sam Shepard dies from ALS complications

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Actor and Pulitzer-winning playwright Sam Shepard has died from complications related to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), known as Lou Gehrig's disease, a representative for his family said on Monday.

Shepard, 73, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for his play "Buried Child", died last week at home in Kentucky on Thursday, surrounded by his family, spokesman Chris Boneau said in a statement to Reuters.

"Buried Child" was the story of a family's dark secret and, like many of his works, touched on disillusionment and broken families. His other plays included the Tony-nominated "True West", "Curse of the Starving Class" and "Fool for Love."

Shepard's stoic manner and rugged good looks made him a solid choice to play test pilot Chuck Yeager in the

1983 film "The Right Stuff" - a role that earned him an Oscar nomination. His other films included "Days of Heaven", "August: Osage County", "The Notebook", "Black Hawk Down" and "Steel Magnolias".

Shepard also wrote the script for "Paris, Texas", the 1984 film directed by Wim Wenders that won the grand prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1984, and Robert Altman's screen version of "Fool for Love".

Most recently, he played patriarch Robert Rayburn in Netflix's thriller "Bloodline", his final on-screen role, and released a novel, "The One Inside", in February.

Shepard grew up in the West and Midwest with a father he described as a violent alcoholic. After dropping out of college, he spent a few months with a traveling theater company and in 1963 at age 19 moved to New York with little money and no connections. He fell into

New York's off-off-Broadway scene while working as a bus boy at the famous jazz club the Village Gate and his first plays were staged that year.

Shepard, who shortened his playwright name from Samuel Shepard Rogers Jr., wrote more than 40 plays.

Shepard also delved into the music world, spending part of the 1960s as the drummer in the eccentric folk band the Holy Modal Rounders, living with Patti Smith, who collaborated on the play "Cowboy Mouth" with him, and writing the song "Brownsville Girl" with Bob Dylan. Music often was incorporated into his plays and he said the key to writing them was to "find all the rhythms and the melody and the harmonies and take them as they come."

Shepard was married to actress O-Lan Jones from 1969 to 1984 and they had one child.

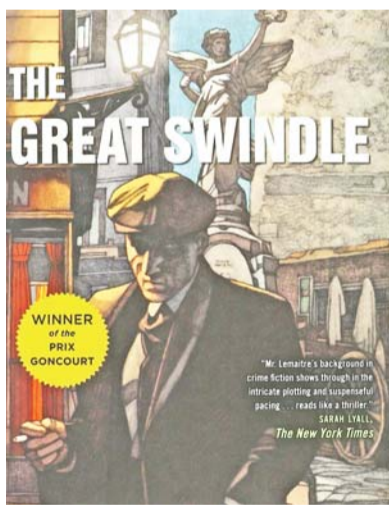
Pierre Lemaître's epic about World War I published in Persian

CULTURE TEHRAN — "The Great Swindle" (Au revoir là-haut), French author Pierre Lemaître's epic about World War I, has been recently published in Persian.

Parviz Shahdi is the translator of the book published by Beh-Sokhan Publications.

"The Great Swindle" brought Lemaître the Prix Goncourt, France's top literary prize, in November 2013.

"The year is 1918, the war on the Western Front all but over. An ambitious officer, Lieutenant Henry D'Aulnay-Pradelle, sends two soldiers over the top and then surreptitiously shoots them in the back to incite his men to attack the German lines," reads part of the book.



Sureh festival plans to dedicate section to plays from Islamic countries

A R T TEHRAN — The organizers of the Sureh Theater Festival plan to dedicate a section to plays from Muslim countries in two years.

After the usual preliminaries, theater troupes from Islamic countries would be invited to attend the festival, the director of the Art Bureau's Center for Dramatic Arts, Mojtaba Zarei, said in a press conference on Tuesday.

The 25th edition of the Sureh Theater Festival will be running in Tehran from August 6 to 11.

The City Theater Complex, Andisheh Hall and the halls of the Sureh-Mehr Institute will be playing host to troupes from across Iran. A number of street performances will also be staged during the festival.



Rahmat Amini will preside over the jury which will include Mahmud Azizi, Ayyub Aqakhani, Hossein Fadaei, and Morteza Sarhang.

The jury of the street theater section includes Amir Dejakam, Mahmud Farhang and Ardalan Shoja-Kaveh.

HBO urges critics of slavery drama to hold fire after Twitter outcry

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Cable channel HBO urged critics of its planned slavery-themed drama "Confederate" to reserve judgment until the show develops further, in response to an intense social media campaign demanding that the project be axed.

The hashtag #NoConfederate was a top-trending Twitter topic worldwide on Sunday after April Reign, the woman behind the #OscarsSoWhite campaign two years ago, urged people to send a message to HBO objecting to the show.

Critics of the concept have deemed it both offensive and inappropriate, especially coming from two white male creators, David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, the creators of HBO's medieval fantasy series "Game of Thrones."

"We believe the time to speak up is now, before the show has been written or cast. Before @hbo invests too much money into #Confederate," Reign tweeted, as #NoConfederate became a trending topic during Sunday night's episode of "Game of Thrones."

HBO announced last week that "Confederate," in the early stages of development, would be set in an imaginary world where slavery still exists in the United States and the



David Benioff (L) and Dan Weiss, creators and executive producers, arrive for the season premiere of HBO's "Game of Thrones" in San Francisco, California March 23, 2015. (Reuters/Robert Galbraith/File Photo)

nation is on the brink of a third civil war. HBO said on Sunday that while it had "great respect for the dialogue and concern being expressed around 'Confederate,' it had faith in creators Benioff, Weiss and their black writing partners, Nichelle and Malcolm Spellman. "The project is currently in its infancy so we hope that

people will reserve judgment until there is something to see," HBO said in a statement.

Responding to the backlash, the "Confederate" creators said last week that neither they nor the show endorse slavery.

Malcolm Spellman acknowledged that the premise was "weapons-grade material," but said the series would provide an opportunity to examine how racism and white supremacy are "alive and real" in the United States, more than 150 years after slavery was abolished.

Reign's Twitter campaign, however, suggested the controversy is unlikely to go away any time soon.

"We did it!!! We trended #1 nationwide & #2 worldwide for most of the hour. THIS is the power of social media, @HBO, & we say #NoConfederate," Reign tweeted late on Sunday.

The #OscarSoWhite campaign erupted over the death of black and brown actors in the 2015 and 2016 Oscar nominations. It prompted a boycott of the annual ceremony by some filmmakers, and forced the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to broaden its membership to include more women, people of color, and younger people.