

Rouhani endorsed by Leader as Iran president



Hassan Rouhani was formally endorsed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as Iran's president to start his second term in office.

During a ceremony in Tehran on Thursday, Ayatollah Khamenei gave Rouhani a decree to assign him his duties, Press TV reported.

Handing the presidential mandate to Rouhani, Ayatollah Khamenei kissed him on the cheek and the president kissed the Leader on his shoulder.

In May, Rouhani won re-election in a landslide after securing 57 percent of the votes. Under Iran's election law, the president-elect is required to gain the Leader's

"The sanctions, of course, caused problems for the country, but [made us] open our eyes to our own capabilities," the Leader said. "We used all the enemies to our own benefit."

Fighting poverty

Rouhani also delivered a speech after receiving the endorsement decree, elaborating on his future plans as the chief executive. He said "social justice" and "poverty alleviation" were among the main ideals of the Islamic establishment, adding that the eradication of absolute poverty is one of the objectives of his new government.

The government, he said, seeks to set the stage for people to exercise their rights, adding that his cabinet would make efforts to "uproot poverty and corruption, contain inflation and [facilitate] economic growth."

"The government's aim is to improve Iran's image in the world... to safeguard people's rights... to end poverty... to protect the religious democracy and our people's votes," Rouhani said.

Rouhani further called for more investment and access to advanced technologies, stressing that sustainable development is not achievable without reliable plans.

Iran paid the price for its independence and will stand



official approval before being sworn in before the Parliament. Through this process, the Leader affirms the outcome of the presidential election.

Symbol of democracy

Addressing the ceremony, the Leader hailed the election process as the symbol of democracy in post-Revolution Iran.

Prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, people were sidelined and prevented from playing a role in running the country's affairs, Ayatollah Khamenei said.

The Leader urged the new government to focus its efforts on "establishing justice, siding with the poor and implementing the rules of pure Islam," adding that authorities should also work to strengthen "national unity."

Ayatollah Khamenei further said Iranian officials have succeeded to cooperate with the world despite enemy attempts to isolate the nation.

The Leader also called for "extensive interactions with the world as well as broad relations with nations and governments."

The sanctions imposed on Iran helped the country to grow powerful and self-reliant as the nation turned to the resources and capabilities at home, he added.



against enemy attempts to isolate the nation, he added, "We will never accept isolation."

He said the country has stood against the "toughest of the sanctions" by taking advantage of a combination of its "diplomatic power" and "deterrence might."

The president also pointed to the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers and said "the JCPOA has shown Iran's goodwill to engage in constructive and effective interactions on the international stage."

He was referring to the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, by its acronym. The accord lifted the nuclear-related sanctions against Iran in exchange for certain restrictions on its nuclear activities.



World leaders in Tehran

Rouhani will take the oath of office in Iran's Parliament on Saturday and then will have two weeks to present his cabinet to the Parliament for a vote of confidence.

Leaders and senior politicians from around the world are arriving in the Iranian capital, Tehran, to attend Rouhani's inauguration.



Aircraft carrying dozens of delegations touched down in Tehran's Imam Khomeini and Mehrabad airports.

Madagascar's Parliament Speaker Jean Max Rakotonamony, his Cambodian counterpart Nguon Nhel, Lesotho's King Letsie III, First Ghanaian Deputy President Alhaji Bawumia, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, his Moldovan counterpart Igor Dodon, and Chairman of the Britain-Iran Parliamentary Friendship Group Richard Bacon reached Tehran.

Also among the dignitaries were the President of the Republic of the Supreme People's Assembly of North Korea, Kim Yong-nam, and other North Korean political figures.

The other notables arrived for the inaugural ceremony were Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem, Pope Francis' Nuncio to Iraq and Jordan Alberto Ortega, and Secretariat of the UN Conference on Trade and Development's Secretary General Mukhisa Kituyi.

Some other dignitaries were from Ireland, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, Malaysia, Ugandan, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Swaziland, and Namibia.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini is also set to take part in the ceremony.

Iran's oil exports to China to rise to 11-month high in August

Iran's oil exports to China is expected to rise to the highest in 11 months in August as demand for heavier Iranian crude increased, two sources with knowledge of the matter said on Thursday.

Iran may continue to win Chinese market share in the second half of 2017 as production cuts by Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and falling Latin American output have tightened heavy crude supplies, reported Reuters.

Chinese buyers are also importing more Middle East crude as the Dubai price benchmark has weakened against Brent, one of the sources said.

To attract buyers, Iran cut the official selling prices of heavier grades Iranian Heavy and Foruzan Blend in the third quarter by two cents a barrel from the previous three months, Reuters calculations showed.

However, overall Iranian crude exports in August for Asia are set to fall to 1.3 million barrels per day (mbd) — down 0.3 percent from July — the second source said.

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Kremlin agrees with Trump that Russia-US ties at dangerous low

The Kremlin on Friday said it agreed with President Donald Trump's assessment that Russia-US ties were at an all-time and very dangerous low.

"We fully share this opinion," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists over Trump's view, expressed on Twitter on Thursday, AFP reported.

Peskov said that the danger facing the countries "may lie in a lack of mutual collaboration and cooperation over the topics that are vitally important for both our countries and their people."

Trump, writing after he reluctantly signed a bill approved by Congress for strengthening sanctions against Russia, tweeted: "Our relationship with Russia is at an all-time & very dangerous low."

"You can thank Congress, the same people that can't even give us HCare!", Trump said, referring to the Republican-dominated legislature's failure to implement a campaign pledge to change the US health care system.

Moscow has reacted furiously to the sanctions. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Wednesday said they amounted to a "full-fledged economic war" and demonstrated Trump's "total weakness by handing over executive power to Congress in the most humiliating way."

The Kremlin spokesman on Friday also slammed the ongoing investigation into Trump's alleged collusion with Russia during the election campaign, calling this "Russiagate," a reference to the Watergate scandal that led to the resignation of Richard Nixon.



"We have many times talked about the complete absurdity and lack of basis for so-called Russiagate," Peskov said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is set to meet US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Manila at the weekend to discuss bilateral ties, the Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed Thursday after the diplomatic chiefs spoke by phone.

Total fabrication

Trump described Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 presidential election as a "total fabrication" Thursday amid reports that a special prosecutor has impaneled a grand jury to investigate the issue — a step toward possible criminal indictments.

"We didn't win because of Russia. We won because of you," Trump said at a campaign-style rally in West Virginia.

Trying to build support among his core supporters, he said his enemies were "trying to cheat you out of the leadership you want with a fake story that is demeaning to all of us and most importantly, demeaning to our country and demeaning to our constitution." "The reason why Democrats only talk about the totally made-up Russia story is because they have no message, no agenda, and no vision," he said. "The Russia story is total fabrication. It's just an excuse for the greatest loss in the history of American politics." His comments came after the Wall Street Journal revealed that special counsel Robert Mueller has impaneled a grand jury to investigate Russia's interference with the 2016 presidential election.

Pakistan's new PM forms cabinet

Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Friday formed a cabinet filled with allies of toppled predecessor Nawaz Sharif, in a reshuffle that appears aimed at bolstering support ahead of general elections due in mid-2018.

Ishaq Dar, a powerful finance minister, returned in the same role, despite a criminal investigation ordered against him by the Supreme Court. Another staunch Sharif ally, Khawaja Asif, will be Foreign Minister after having simultaneously run the ministries of defense and power, Reuters reported.

The cabinet has almost doubled in size to 47 members, sworn in during a televised ceremony after a reading from the Qur'an holy

book in the mainly Muslim nation of 190 million people.

But no decision appears to have yet been made by the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party over whether Abbasi will stay as premier or step down after a brief period to make way for Sharif's brother Shahbaz, as outlined previously.

Nawaz Sharif resigned last week after the Supreme Court disqualified him for not declaring a source of income he denies receiving. But he retains control of PML-N and put forward Abbasi as temporary prime minister until Shahbaz becomes eligible to take over by winning a parliamentary by-election.

Since Abbasi's election, however, the party

leadership no longer seems sure about that plan, as some fear Shahbaz's departure from his position as chief minister of eastern Punjab state could weaken the party's grip on a core base of voters.

Pakistan's mix of political parties means that whoever wins Punjab, which is home to more than half the country's population, is likely to form the next government. Former petroleum minister Abbasi, the co-founder of a budget airline, has vowed to run an efficient government but has indicated major decisions will flow from Nawaz, cementing the view of the toppled leader as the power behind the throne. Abbasi is a staunch Nawaz ally, having been by his side for most of his political career.

The cabinet was formed after several discussions between them, and Nawaz's allies.

There are 28 federal ministers and 19 state ministers in the new cabinet, almost double Sharif's 25-strong cabinet when he swept the 2013 polls. Abbasi will also head a new energy ministry that merges the petroleum and power portfolios.

Ahsan Iqbal, head of a commission tasked with building the Beijing-funded \$57 billion China-Pakistan Economic corridor, has been appointed Interior Minister.

The opposition has criticised the PML-N's focus on large infrastructure projects as vote-focused measures that saddle Pakistan with debt, at the expense of schools and hospitals.

British minister: Rouhani's reelection "good sign" for Tehran-London ties

Political Desk

British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt called the reelection of President Hassan Rouhani a good sign for development of relations between Tehran and London.

He made the comments upon his arrival at Imam Khomeini Airport in Tehran on Friday, where he is scheduled to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President Rouhani on Saturday, IRNA reported.

He added that Britain is ready to enhance ties with Iran and would take necessary measures in this regard.

Another British politician Richard Bacon said, "I am delighted and honored to be attending the inauguration ceremony for Dr. Rouhani's second term as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Before heading for Tehran on Friday, Bacon, who is chairman of the British All Party Parliamentary Group on Iran, stressed on improving bilateral relationship between the two countries.

"Britain's bilateral relations with Iran are very important for both countries," he said.

Adding that the "history between the two countries has not always been easy," he said, "For me this represents an obligation to work harder at achieving better relations through patience, understanding and hard work."

"I believe," said Bacon, "steadily improving bilateral relations between our two countries will be to the benefit of all."



IRNA

Qassemi: Iran reserves right to respond to US moves

Iran's Foreign Ministry said Tehran reserves the right for itself to respond to US measures against the Islamic Republic.

The ministry's spokesman Bahram Qassemi stressed that Tehran will not keep silent in the face of Washington's violation of the 2015 multilateral nuclear agreement and "will take the necessary countermeasures in due time" in line with people's interests and national security," IRNA reported.

He made the remarks after US President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed into law a bill that targets Iran with new bans over its national missile program. The new legislation had already been passed by both the US House of Representatives and Senate with overwhelming support.

Qassemi said that the sanctions' approval was a "retrogressive, illegitimate, illogical move, which runs contrary to all human rights principles and international regulations."

US hostility

This is the latest example of "hostility towards the civilized Iranian people and an insult to all freedom-seeking people

in the world," Qassemi pointed out. The "hawks, extremist elements and ill-wishers" ruling the US had once again demonstrated their "unilateralism and illogical enmity" towards Iran, he said.

Touching on the recent session of the Iranian committee for monitoring the implementation of the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Qassemi also said, Iran "won't remain silent in the face of the JCPOA violation and will soon announce a range of countermeasures by the Parliament and Iran's administration," Press TV reported.

JCPOA commitment

However, the European Union, which supervises the implementation of the JCPOA, said on Thursday all parties to the agreement remain committed to its implementation.

Qassemi added that Iran is determined to keep up its fight against terrorism as well as its efforts to restore stability and calm to the region, adding that the Islamic Republic will never allow others to advance their "expansionist and destabilizing policies" in the region.



IRNA

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman further advised American officials to stay focused on resolving their country's domestic crises instead of spreading Iranophobia.

Separately, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi described Trump's approval of the new anti-Iran sanctions as an attempt to destroy the nuclear deal, saying "We will react very intelligently to these measures."

Predictable move

Noting that Trump's move was pre-

dictable as Congress had almost unanimously voted for the new sanctions, Araqchi stressed that it showed the US believes the JCPOA has empowered Iran in the region. "Based on this perspective, the general belief in Washington is that this situation must be reversed and Iran must be put under pressure," he said, adding that the nuclear deal is a hindrance for such measures.

The JCPOA was inked between Iran and the P5+1 countries — namely the US, Russia, China, France, Britain, and Germany — in July 2015 and took effect in January 2016.

Under the deal, which was later endorsed by a United Nations Security Council resolution, limits were put on Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for the removal of all nuclear-related bans imposed on the Islamic Republic, among other things.

The UN nuclear watchdog has invariably certified Iran's commitment to its obligations under the accord.

On the contrary, the Trump administration, which took over in January 2017, one year after the JCPOA came into force, has taken a hostile stance toward the deal, repeatedly threatening to tear it up.

Zarif meets top Zimbabwe, Ghana, Ecuador officials

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday held separate talks with the vice-president of Ghana and the Ecuadorian president's special envoy on a range of issues, including the latest efforts to strengthen bilateral ties.

In the meeting between Zarif and Ghanaian Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia in Tehran on Friday, the two sides exchanged views on ways to boost Tehran-Accra relations in diverse areas, including industry, energy, banking, and agriculture, Tasnim News Agency reported.

In a separate meeting, the top Iranian diplomat and Zimbabwe's Minister of Foreign Affairs Simbarashe Mumbengegwi discussed bilateral relations and efforts to combat terrorism.

Zarif also held talks with Cesar Navas, the Ecuadorian president's special envoy, on issues of mutual interest.

The high-ranking officials arrived in Tehran to attend today's swearing-in ceremony for Iranian President Hassan Rouhani who won a second term in the May election by securing an absolute majority of the votes.



Photos by IRNA

OPINION

Trump's options on the nuclear deal with Iran

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian

While President Donald Trump's State Department has twice now certified Iranian compliance with the July 2015 nuclear deal, there are indications that Trump is intent on scuttling his predecessor's signature foreign policy achievement.

However, the conundrum for the White House and its allies is that withdrawing from the deal — known officially as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA — when Iran is fully complying with its obligations according to all objective observers cannot be done without isolating the United States. "You want the breakup of this deal to be about Iran. You don't want it to be about the United States, because we want our allies with us," Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee chairman and a prominent JCPOA critic, said.

Notably, Trump has already tasked a team in the White House with presenting him with an option to not recertify Iranian compliance at the next review in September, and he has said that he "personally" believes Iran will be found "noncompliant."

An informed source in Washington who asked to remain anonymous told Al-Monitor that the White House is seeking ways to accuse Iran of technical noncompliance and material breaches of the deal, such as pressuring the International Atomic Energy Agency into demanding access to sensitive military facilities in Iran and using an Iranian rejection as a pretext for withdrawing from the deal, renegotiating the deal to get zero uranium enrichment in Iran or make the current limits on the Iranian nuclear program permanent, and trying to validate a 2016 German intelligence report claiming Iran continued "illegal proliferation-sensitive procurement activities," despite the fact it was already dismissed by the Barack Obama administration and independent experts.

US regional allies led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have begun lobbying Congress for the right to enrich uranium themselves, citing that the JCPOA allows "Shiite Iran" to do so. Corker has also touched on this issue, stating that "we've got to ultimately get to a place where we renegotiate this deal and they never have the right to enrich." Meanwhile, a senior US official who spoke on condition of anonymity confirmed that the Trump administration is pushing for inspections of Iranian military sites.

During the G-20 summit in Hamburg, Trump also called on foreign leaders to stop doing business with Iran, in direct contravention of the nuclear deal's text prohibiting actions that "adversely" affect Iran establishing normal economic relations. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described Trump's comments as a violation of "not the spirit but of the letter" of the JCPOA. He added that Iran has "available" the option to withdraw from the deal in the event of "significant nonperformance" by the United States.

The Trump White House is on the brink of an action that will have major consequences for peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond. However, Trump's options are not limited.

The root of the Trump administration's qualms with Iran has to do with US-Iran differences on regional issues. Therefore, the Trump White House must recognize that the JCPOA is a multilateral agreement involving five other global powers that is focused only on the nuclear dispute, and it is an agreement that met each side's bottom lines — not their maximalist demands.

At a recent joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini significantly stated, "We will ensure that engagement with Iran will continue and that the deal will be implemented in all its parts by all. This means the nuclear part; this means also all the rest like the lifting of sanctions, as you know, and the gradual re-engagement in all sectors."

To this end, the most prudent option for the Trump administration would be to uphold America's credibility and UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses the deal, by remaining committed to the JCPOA and simultaneously seeking to resolve differences with Iran over the region through pragmatic diplomacy.

The source of US contention with Iran has little to do with where the Islamic Republic stands on human rights or terrorism of the flavor that has ravaged Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya and killed countless innocents in the West. It is well-known that on human rights, Iran is light-years ahead of some of America's closest regional allies such as Saudi Arabia. Moreover, both Hillary Clinton and Trump lambasted Saudi Arabia as the world's biggest funder of terrorism. A former Qatari prime minister has also recently admitted how the United States, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey all made "mistakes" in supporting extremist groups in Syria. The fact is that Iran is the only regional power directly fighting the Daesh and Al-Qaeda, who likely would have captured Baghdad and Damascus if not for Iran's intervention.

However, a number of realities cannot be denied. First, the United States and Iran have sharply clashing interests in the region. While the United States views Iran's regional influence as destabilizing, Iran sees America's decades-long underwriting of regional autocracies and its wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and complicity in the Yemeni-Saudi conflict as spurring instability and fostering terrorism. Second, the United States is at odds with other global powers such as Russia, China and even some of its European allies over its Middle East policy. Third, the United States also currently has serious differences with some of its traditional allies among the Arab Persian Gulf states as well as Turkey.

If Trump continues with his policies of all-out confrontation and regime change in Iran, increasing America's military presence in Afghanistan, supporting Saudi Arabia's brutal war in Yemen and flooding the region with hundreds of billions of dollars more of US arms, he will only add more fuel to regional fires, which will also sooner or later gravely harm US security. Furthermore, while international diplomacy achieved success in peacefully resolving the Iranian nuclear dispute, its track record on the crises in Syria, Libya, Yemen and Palestine is of failure.

As such, before settling on an Iran policy, Trump must take a holistic view of the US footprint in the region and decide on a comprehensive regional strategy. His administration must take note of past failures, especially in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya; take to heart their lessons; and make the appropriate reforms to ensure such mistakes never occur again. If this occurs, then when it comes to Iran, Trump will not be fated to repeat the counterproductive policies of the past decades.

The article was earlier published by Al-Monitor.



OIC tells Myanmar to protect rights of Rohingya minority

Myanmar must protect the rights of its Rohingya Muslim minority, the chief of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) said on Thursday, urging the government to work with neighboring Muslim-majority countries to tackle a refugee crisis.

About 75,000 people have fled to Bangladesh after a military crackdown, with accompanying allegations of rape, torture and extrajudicial killings by security forces, followed an attack on a Myanmar border guard post on Oct. 9, Reuters reported.

Aung San Suu Kyi's fledgling administration has denied most of the allegations and is refusing access to a United Nations panel of experts, saying its mission will aggravate the situation on the ground in the western state of Rakhine.

"Myanmar should sit with Bangladesh, Indonesia and Malaysia to find a roadmap for the solution of the crisis," said Yousef bin Ahmad al-Othaimen of the OIC, which represents 57 states and acts as the collective voice of the Muslim world.

"We call on the Myanmar government to ensure human rights for the Rohingya," Othaimen told reporters during a four-day visit to Bangladesh's capital of Dhaka.

"Myanmar can't deny the human rights of Rohingya. We also call on the Myanmar government to ensure citizenship for the Rohingya," he said.

In a separate meeting with Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he said that a solution must be found through discussions between Buddhist



Rohingya villagers watch as international media visits Maung Hna Ma village, Butthidaung township, northern Rakhine state, Myanmar, on July 14, 2017.

leaders from Myanmar and Muslim leaders from Bangladesh.

"Religious leaders from both the countries should attend in such discussions to help solve the Rohingya issue," he said.

The prime minister reiterated her

government's persistent plea that Myanmar take back its citizens. Almost 400,000 Rohingya refugees live in Bangladesh, she said.

Othaimen is also expected to visit Rakhine Muslims in the Kutupalong camp and surrounding areas in the southern re-

sort town of Cox's Bazar on Friday, Bangladesh Foreign Ministry officials said.

Many in Myanmar see the Rohingya as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, although about 1.1 million of them live in Rakhine state and say their roots go back generations.

US ban on visiting North Korea a 'sordid' limit on exchanges: KCNA

North Korea criticized Washington's decision to ban US passport holders from visiting the North, with state media describing it on Friday as a "sordid" attempt to limit human exchanges.

The North's KCNA news agency, citing an unidentified spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, said there was no reason for foreigners to feel threatened while in North Korea and that citizens from around the world were encouraged to visit, Reuters reported.

"Our doors are always open for all Americans who visit our country out of good will and wish to see our reality," the spokesman said.

The US State Department said earlier this week the ban would take effect on Sept. 1, although some, including journalists and humanitarian workers, may apply for exceptions.

The ban will make reclusive North Korea the only country to which US citizens are banned from traveling.

It follows the death in June of US student Otto Warmbier, who was sentenced in North Korea last year to 15 years' hard labor for trying to steal an item bearing a propaganda item from his hotel.

Warmbier was in a coma when he was released by the North on humanitarian grounds and circumstances of his death remain unclear.

KCNA did not name Warmbier in Friday's report but said the North had delivered "just punishment" to some US citizens who had carried out acts against the regime.

North Korea is currently holding two Korean-American academics and a missionary in addition to a Canadian pastor and three South Korean nationals

who were doing missionary work.

"There is no country in the world that would let foreigners who commit this sort of crime be," the spokesman said. "Ruling criminals by the law is exercising our confident right as a sovereign state."

The report said the ban reflects



Washington's view of Pyongyang as an enemy and reiterated that President Donald Trump's administration should abandon its hostile policies toward the North.

Republican US representative Joe Wilson, who introduced the bill to ban Americans from traveling to North Korea this year, said hundreds of Americans are among the roughly 4,000 to 5,000 Western tourists who visit the North each year.

Aside from the threat of incarceration, North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threat is perhaps Trump's most serious security challenge.

The North test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile last month that experts believe had the range to reach Alaska and Hawaii, and perhaps the US Pacific Northwest.

Venezuelan opposition leader released from jail

Compiled from Dispatches

An imprisoned political opponent of President Nicolas Maduro was released hours before Venezuela's new legislative body plans to take office Friday.

Antonio Ledezma, a former Caracas mayor, was placed back under house arrest early Friday, his wife Mitzy Capriles said in a series of tweets, CNN reported.

The politician was detained Tuesday after his house arrest status was revoked, the Supreme Court had said.

Ledezma's release came amid voter fraud claims, protests and the lack of support that the international community has shown Maduro since Sunday's vote.

The National Constituent Assembly, all nominated by President Maduro, was elected during an election last Sunday. The new assembly has the power to rewrite the country's constitution and dissolve state institutions.

Members of the opposition-led National Assembly said they will continue fulfilling their duties as usual.

"The National Assembly will continue doing their work in the Federal Legislative Palace as 14 million of Venezuelans ordered it on December 6, 2015," the National Assembly tweeted.

French mediation

French President Emmanuel Macron is pushing for mediation efforts in Venezuela and condemning violence amid the president's efforts to consolidate power through the new assembly.

In a statement Friday Macron decried the arrest of two top opposition members and said France will "support any mediation that would allow the resumption of credible, sincere and serious dialogue ... and to end the spiral of violence," AP reported.

Macron recently sent a letter to Maduro proposing mediation, and French Ambassador Romain Nadal has been meeting with Venezuelan government and opposition members.

While some are calling for sanctions, France is hoping for a negotiated solution to the political crisis around Maduro's leadership.

Voter fraud claims

As the National Electoral Council announced that more than 8 million people — about 41.53% of registered voters — went to the polls on Sunday, allegations of voter fraud quickly emerged.

London-based Smartmatic's CEO Antonio Mugica said the company has stood by all previous results but this time, they noticed a discrepancy of at least one million votes between the officially declared tally and what his company had recorded.

Claims disputed

Maduro disputed the claims blasting Mugica as Venezuela's attorney general launched an investigation into potential voter fraud within hours.

Vatican's stance

The Vatican on Friday urged Venezuela not to go ahead with installing the powerful new assembly but challenged by Maduro's opponents, AFP reported.

It called in a statement on "all political actors, and in particular the government, to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the existing constitution".

Japan PM Abe's support rebounds after cabinet reshuffle

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's support bounced up after a cabinet reshuffle, media polls showed on Friday, a development likely to help tighten his grip on power, shaken by recent scandals and a crushing loss in Tokyo elections.

Abe opted for safe hands over fresh faces in Thursday's cabinet reshuffle after gaffes and missteps by some in his previous cabinet, such as former Defense Minister Tomomi Inada, sent his support ratings tumbling, Reuters reported.

Many of those in the new lineup, which Abe dubbed the "result-oriented cabinet of professionals", were reappointed, such as Finance Minister Taro Aso, or returned to posts held before, including Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera.

A poll by the Mainichi newspaper showed 35 percent of respondents support Abe's government, up nine points from a month ago, while a Kyodo news agency survey showed a rise in support of 8.6 points from the previous poll, to 44.4 percent.

Abe apologized for recent scandals at the outset of a nationally televised news conference following the reshuffle, bowing his head for about eight seconds, and then reiterated that his top priority is reviving the economy.

Inada, an Abe protégé, stepped down as defense minister last week after a series of gaffes and a cover-up at her ministry.

Appearing on a television program on Friday, Abe expressed resolve to work hard to win back the people's trust.

"What's been asked of us is to firmly show results," he added.

Major tasks ahead are putting an end to deflation and working closely with the United States and regional nations to defuse the threat from North Korea's nuclear and missile development.

Hundreds go on strike at Indonesia's largest cargo terminal

Hundreds of workers have gone on strike at Indonesia's largest container terminal, a union official said Friday, paralyzing operations and forcing incoming shipments to be diverted.

said the strike would damage the country's reputation as an export and import hub.

"This uncertainty will hurt Indonesia's exports as foreign buyers could



Port equipment load and unload containers at Tanjung Priok Port in North Jakarta.

Nearly 700 employees at the Jakarta International Container Terminal (JICT), the bulk of the workforce, stopped work Thursday for a strike intended to last a week, the company's labor union said.

"The strike has paralyzed the loading and unloading process as well as the terminal's activity," Mokhammad Firmansyah, the union's secretary general, told AFP.

Workers are demanding to be paid last year's production bonus in full, after it was cut by more than 40 percent, Firmansyah said.

The Indonesian Logistics Association

turn to other countries," the association's chairman, Zaldy Masita, told AFP. Indonesia's government denied the strike had disrupted the flow of containers and vessels to Tanjung Priok port, which accounts for 70 percent of the country's container capacity.

However, incoming vessels have been diverted to four other terminals at the port, said Bay Hasani, a sea traffic and transport official at the Transport Ministry.

JICT, whose controlling shareholder is Hong Kong's Hutchison Ports, handles about 40 percent of the containers at the Jakarta port.

Irish PM calls for 'unique solutions' to UK-EU ties

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar on Friday called for "unique solutions" to relations between Britain and the European Union after Brexit, including a possible bilateral customs union between Britain and the EU and an alternative to the European Court of Justice to oversee any deal.

Ireland, which after Brexit will have

the EU's only land border with the United Kingdom, is widely seen as the EU country most exposed to the fallout from Brexit, according to Reuters.

Speaking during his first visit to Northern Ireland since his appointment as prime minister in June, Varadkar said Britain and the EU would need "unique

solutions" if we are to avoid a damaging breakdown in trade.

"Perhaps there can be an EU-UK customs union. After all, we have one with Turkey. Surely we can have one with the United Kingdom?" Varadkar said in a speech at Queen's University in Belfast.

Varadkar said it was not yet clear if

enough progress had been made by a summit in October to move on to talks about a free trade deal.

He said one question was whether it would be possible to find an alternative to the European Court of Justice to oversee any future deal between Britain and the EU.

SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

Turkey, Qatar, Iran to discuss overland trade routes

Ankara, Doha and Tehran are to discuss overland trade routes on the sidelines of the oath-taking ceremony of Iran's president-elect Hassan Rouhani on Saturday, said Turkish economy minister.

Nihat Zeybekci told Anadolu Agency on Friday, "We're thinking about alternatives for land trade routes with Qatar but the easiest way is passing through Iran."



IRNA

In early June, a handful of Arab states — led by Saudi Arabia — abruptly severed diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed a blockade on the Persian Gulf country.

The Qatari government blasted the blockade as unjustified and a violation of international law.

"We want to meet all of Qatar's needs. We want all goods providers in Turkey to sell products, including cleaning materials, domestic appliances [...] and textile, in Qatar," Zeybekci stated.

Trade between Turkey and Qatar increased in June and July, Zeybekci said, adding: "We have to make this increase permanent."

Turkey's exports to Qatar totaled \$52.4 million in June 2017, while they reached \$36.2 million in May 2017.

Turkey's imports from Qatar amounted to \$23.7 million in June against \$19.6 million in May.

Zeybekci said the use of cargo planes to transport products was not sustainable. "We want to make it [transportation] economic, sustainable and reliable," he added.

"Shipment by sea will gain importance. We foresee that at least four large tonnage ships would go to Qatar monthly but the land route is an alternative for carrying flexible and smaller packages," Zeybekci concluded.

Central banks of Russia, Iran ink cooperation deal

Central Bank of Russia (CBR) signed a memorandum of understanding with Central Bank (CBI) at a meeting of the working group for financial and banking cooperation of the Russia-Iran permanent commission on trade and economic



IRAN DAILY

cooperation, reported TASS quoting CBR message.

The meeting discussed a wide range of issues, including the development of banking infrastructure and mutual opening of correspondent accounts by the two countries' credit or-

ganizations.

The meeting was chaired by CBR Deputy Chairman Dmitry Skobelkin and his CBI counterpart Gholamali Kamayab. Representatives of both countries' central banks, major (Russian and Iranian) credit organizations, Ministry of Economic Development and Foreign Ministry of Russia also took part in the meeting.

Iran exported agro machinery worth \$6m in three months

Iran exported agricultural machinery worth \$6 million in the three months to June 21, 2017.

Announcing this, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Mojtaba Khosrowtaj pointed to the important role played by the machinery industry and stated that the country meets over 90 percent of its demand in the sector from domestic companies, Mehr News Agency reported.

The official said that during the three months from March 21-June 21, \$38 million of machinery products were exported to target markets of which \$6 million pertained to agricultural machinery.

He said that, if the present growth rate is maintained, a significant increase in exports will be witnessed by mid-March 2108 compared to the figure for the year earlier.

Khosrowtaj added that TPO has placed importance on developing machinery industry and seeks to eliminate major barriers to exports.

The official urged the banking system to provide exporters with guarantees upon receiving advance payments from foreign buyers.

He further noted that marketing for industrial machineries calls for participation in specialized exhibitions and sought state support for domestic manufacturers.

Shell closer to major Iranian oil awards

Iran has received proposals from the global energy giant Royal Dutch Shell to develop two major oilfields.

Shana reported that Shell had submitted the outcome of feasibility studies on the fields — South Azadegan and Yadavaran — to National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Both are located in Iran's oil-rich southwestern province of Khuzestan. Shell had signed a preliminary agreement with NIOC in December 2016 to study the investment potentials in South Azadegan and Yadavaran as well as Kish gas field.

South Azadegan was discovered in 2001 and was described at the time as the world's biggest oil find in decades.

It has recoverable reserves of about two billion barrels. Azadegan is believed to be connected with Iraq's supergiant Majnoon oilfield which has recoverable reserves of 13 billion barrels which was also being developed by Shell and is now producing 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil for Iraq.

Yadavaran — which was once described as the crown jewel of Iran's oil projects — has recoverable reserves of three billion barrels.

Both South Azadegan and Yadavaran are located in Iran's southwestern oil-rich province of Khuzestan and their early production is currently yielding 40,000 bpd and \$5,000 bpd, respectively.

The two oilfields are expected to boost



SHANA

Iran's oil production capacity by above 600,000 bpd once fully developed within the next three years.

Kish gas field is located in the Persian

Gulf island of Kish and is considered the country's second biggest gas field after South Pars. With reserves of 70 trillion cubic feet, Iran plans to use Kish output

to feed a pipeline to Oman where a section of the supplies will be turned into liquefied natural gas (LNG) for export to international markets.

Iran's Chabahar port to be boon for India: Official

Chabahar port in southeastern Iran will be a boon for India, said the country's minister of road transport and highways on Friday.

Nitin Gadkari said earlier that things were more difficult for India as it had to follow the route through Pakistan, but once the port is operational then business will become easy from Kandla port in Gujarat, business-standard.com reported.

"Chabahar and Kandla ports are not very far from each other and earlier we followed the route through Pakistan but now we have an easy route," said Gadkari.

He further said that Chabahar port will start operating within 12 to 18 months, which will open the doors for business in Iran and Afghanistan.

Gadkari will be visiting Iran as India's representative for President Hassan Rouhani's oath-taking ceremony in Tehran on Saturday during which he will meet the president.

Earlier, Gadkari had visited Tehran in May 2015 and both the nations had inked a pact to develop the Chabahar Port.

On Wednesday, participants at a tripartite meeting of



IRNA

Iranian, Afghan and Indian officials underlined the importance of Iran's Chabahar port for broadening trade relations.

Iran to raise iron ore production capacity to 100m tons

Iran's annual crude iron ore production capacity will be raised to 100 million tons from the current 75 million tons by March 20, 2018.

Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh announced this while inaugurating a Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) plant, Platts reported on Friday.



IRNA

The country's annual iron ore pellet making capacity is 31 million tons now, but this capacity will be increased to 45 million tons by mid-March, Nematzadeh said.

Current capacity for concentrated iron ore of 46.5 million tons was to be increased to 55 million tons per while the production capacity for direct-reduced iron (DRI), or sponge iron, was planned to be increased to 34.5 million tons per year from the present 30 million tons per year, he noted.

Some 22.5 million tons per year of iron ore concentrates and 17.5 million tons per year of pellets is to be produced from the Sangan deposits but, because of water shortages in this area, there is no plan for steel making, Nematzadeh said.

Iran's oil exports to China to rise to 11-month high in August

From Page 1

Iran's global combined crude oil and condensate exports may total 2.37 mbd this month — down four percent from a year earlier — the source said, which would mark the first year-on-year decline in four months.

Crude and condensate exports to Asia are rising five percent from July to almost 1.65

retaliation for Tehran not awarding a gas field development to Indian companies.

Iran plans to raise oil output by about 200,000 bpd to around 4 mbd by the end of 2017. It was exempted from the OPEC deal to reduce output to regain market share after Western sanctions were lifted in January 2016.

In August, South Korea will overtake India as the second-biggest lifter of Iranian crude for the first time since January 2016, taking nearly 380,000 bpd, the source said.

Taiwan is lifting Iranian oil this month for the first time since April, totaling two million barrels, said the source.

Other Asian lifters include Japan at 157,000 bpd, up six percent from July.

In Europe, Turkey will take 258,000 bpd, up seven percent from July, while Italy will take 129,000 bpd, steady from last month.

In the Middle East, the United Arab Emirates will take 111,000 bpd — up three percent from July.

In addition to this month's exports, Iran is also putting two million barrels into its off-shore storage, according to the source.



IRNA

mbd while those to Europe will fall 15 percent from the previous month to 613,000 bpd. Exports to the Middle East are staying little changed at 111,000 bpd.

Loadings to India will drop by 25 percent from July to 310,000 bpd this month — the lowest since February 2016 — in a possible

Oil prices dip

Oil markets dipped on Friday, with US crude remaining below \$50 per barrel, restrained by rising output from the United States as well as OPEC.

UK business chiefs call for delaying Brexit



British business chiefs have said Prime Minister Theresa May must consider delaying Brexit beyond March 2019, to avoid the chaos of an EU withdrawal for which the country is unprepared.

A report from one of the UK's foremost business organizations said extending the negotiation period would be the "simplest solution", to avoiding a disorderly Brexit that could do untold damage to the economy, The Independent wrote.

The proposal from the Institute of Directors (IoD) directly contradicts the premier's goal of a clean break in two years, but was immediately backed by one of the country's foremost business figures, WPP Chief Executive Sir Martin Sorrell.

The IoD also proposed a string of other measures which fly in the face of May's plans, including a transition period in which the UK stays in the single market, remains under EU law and maintains existing customs arrangements.

It came as the Bank of England downgraded its forecasts for the British economy this year, as Governor Mark Carney warned GDP growth and take-home wages are being dragged down by fear of what will come after Brexit.

The IoD's report on how the government should manage the move to new trading arrangements also follows reports of major Cabinet divisions over what kind of transition have.

But even before any transition period begins, the IoD's report suggested extending the two-year period for negotiations set out in Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty.

While the organization accepts it would be "politically contentious" for a prime minister who has promised to pull the UK out of Europe by March 2019, it added: "This is the simplest way of allowing sufficient time for full negotiations to include a comprehensive free trade agreement, and ensuring one single period of adjustment/

implementation for business, negotiators and government machinery to grapple with."

The move would also mean that freedom of movement of EU citizens in the UK would continue beyond March 2019, which the government has also ruled out.

Martin said he would be "happy to endorse this to reduce the level of uncertainty".

Meanwhile, CEO of Dixons Carphone Sebastian James said: "For me, there are a great many issues that seem to be very far from resolution, and these almost certainly need much more time to sort out, one way or

another, than we have."

The IoD also proposed maintaining membership of the European Economic Area during a transition period leading up to a new free trade deal with Europe — something which could see the country stay in the single market as long as 2022.

The suggestion from a major business group piles pressure onto May, who in September is set to face a cross-party push to make continued membership of the EEA a part of her Brexit plan.

Head of EU and Trade Policy at the IoD, Allie Renison, said: "Prioritizing interim arrangements and thereby mitigating

the risks of EU exit means the eventual opportunities aren't diminished by short-term chaotic cliff edges."

Maintaining customs arrangements similar to those currently in operation under the EU's customs union was another proposal, including the Common External Tariff and continuing to transpose EU customs and VAT legislation into British law.

The IoD also said the government should consider prolonging the application of EU law, again contrary to May's plan to move the UK out of the European Court of Justice's jurisdiction on the day of Brexit.

Exxon mulls Beaumont refinery crude unit addition

ExxonMobil Corp is considering expanding light crude processing capacity at its Beaumont, Texas, refinery with the addition of a third crude distillation unit, a company spokeswoman said.

If approved, construction could begin on Unit C in 2019 and be completed in 2022, said Exxon spokeswoman Charlotte Huffaker, Reuters reported.

She declined to disclose the contemplated capacity or possible cost of the Unit C expansion.

"These investments reflect the increased availability of abundant, affordable supplies of US light crude," Huffaker said.

The expansion would be part of the \$20-billion "Growing the Gulf" project announced in March by Exxon Chairman and Chief Executive Darren Woods.

While Exxon has mentioned potential expansion of light oil refining capacity at the Beaumont plant as part of that project, this is the first time the company has talked about Unit C and given a timeline



beaumontenterprise.com

for possible construction.

Since at least 2014, Exxon has been considering the addition of a large

distillation unit that would boost Beaumont's crude oil refining capacity from 362,300 barrels per day (bpd) to between

700,000 and 850,000 bpd, sources said in 2014 and 2015.

The contemplated crude capacity expansion was put on hold in early 2016 due to cuts in capital spending, sources said at the time.

On Thursday night, sources familiar with Exxon's plans said the company was now looking at adding a large crude distillation unit at the refinery.

The two crude units currently at the Beaumont refinery are Units A and B.

The last major expansion of a US refinery was the five-year, \$10-billion addition of a crude distillation unit and other units at Motiva Enterprises Port Arthur, Texas, refinery which more than doubled its size to 603,000 bpd. The expansion was completed in 2012.

The Motiva expansion was originally budgeted at \$5 billion, but went through a year-long review in 2009.

Last year, Exxon added 20,000 bpd in light crude refining capacity to Unit A at the Beaumont refinery, Huffaker said.

Domestic demand helps German industry orders beat forecast in June

German industrial orders rose twice as much as expected in June as domestic demand surged, data showed on Friday, suggesting this sector of Europe's largest economy is likely to gain traction in the coming months.



electrek.co

Factories posted a one percent increase in contracts in June after bookings for "Made in Germany" goods rose by an upwardly revised 1.1 percent in May, data from the Economy Ministry showed, nities.com wrote.

The reading for June beat the Reuters forecast for a 0.5-percent rise.

The Economy Ministry said order levels, combined with an excellent business climate, pointed to a continued slight uptick in industrial activity.

A breakdown of the June data showed domestic demand increased by 5.1 percent while foreign orders dropped by two percent.

BoE: UK better placed for rate rise

UK interest rates may have to go up by more than the market expects in the future, the Bank of England's Deputy Governor Ben Broadbent, said.

He said the drop in sterling following the Brexit vote had fueled inflation, BBC reported.

Broadbent said there was a "trade off between stabilizing inflation and keeping the economy going".

But he said Britain was "a little bit" better placed to cope with an interest rate rise.

"We think the economy will continue to grow. We think that wage growth will pick up," he added.

On Thursday, the bank kept interest rates unchanged and cut



The Bank of England's Deputy Governor, Ben Broadbent

REUTERS

its economic growth forecasts.

The bank voted 6-2 to keep interest rates on hold at 0.25 percent, a level they have been at since August last year.

Pockets of debt

The bank expects the rate of inflation to peak at about three percent in October.

Broadbent said the bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) believed there would need to be more rate rises than those expected by the financial markets. He thought "the time is likely to come when rates will go up generally".

However, he added: "One shouldn't overdo this. If and when it happens there will be a lot of talk about the first rate rise since 'x'. But it's just a rate rise and we got perfectly used to rate rises of this size in the past."

He said the objective of the MPC was not "the path of interest rates but the stability of inflation in the medium term and subject to that the stability of the economy".

The bank is concerned that

uncertainties about Brexit appear to be putting companies off new investment, despite an increase in profits for exporters following the fall in the value of the pound since last year's referendum.

He also said the bank's monetary policy makers were not too concerned about the debts of British households because consumer credit, relative to incomes, remained much lower than its level before the financial crisis.

"It is absolutely right that the prudential side of the bank ... should be concerned about pockets of debt that are growing very, very quickly."

"The MPC does not think this is a first-order macro issue for the economy."

Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2828	Chinese Yuan	0.1488
Euro	1.1881	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.3162	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3111
Australian Dollar	0.7955	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0090	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$48.97	Silver	\$16.72
Gold	\$1275.60	Platinum	\$945.30
Copper	\$2.87	Wheat	\$456.75

Handicraft markets to be set up in Kermanshah

Cultural Heritage Desk

A handicraft township is to be created in Kermanshah Province to consolidate handicraft market in the region, said the head of Kermanshah Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department.

Jalil Balaei further said Kermanshah Province lacks a versatile handicraft market, adding no information is available on the amount of handicrafts being produced in the province.

He said the officials of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization believes that a dynamic handicraft market will help strengthen the industry.

He said holding exhibitions, participating in the domestic and foreign fairs and establishing handicraft markets are among the strategies which can be taken to expand the market.



chtn.ir

Balaei said the first permanent handicraft market, with 20 pavilions, will be launched in the province within a month. "The project to renovate the old handicraft house, located at Dabir Street of Kermanshah, will be prepared by the next month," he added.

The official said the use of cyberspace for marketing handicraft products not only helps reduce the cost of the products but also makes handicrafts available to customers.

He believes that efforts should be made to improve cyberspace marketing in the field of handicrafts.

Balaei said establishment of handicraft townships will help reduce the cost of providing producers with raw materials.

Maku experiencing rapid development

Cultural Heritage Desk



binnews.ir



irna.ir

Maku Free Trade Zone is located in the northwest of Iran on the borders with Turkey and Armenia.

One of major projects in Maku is the construction of Maku Airport within 18 months.

Imam Khomeini Park in Maku is one of the recreational sites which extends over an area of 13 hectares.

Also, the International Fairgrounds of Maku Free Zone, with an area of 3,959sq.m., is located close to the park.

The city of Maku, with significant natural and historical attractions, has suitable potentials for attracting a large number of tourists to the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan.

Maku Castle and Kuh-e Qopheh (Qopheh



tasnimnews.ir

Mountain), located in a natural setting, are among the main destinations for Iranians and foreigners visiting the province.

Efforts should be made to introduce this ancient structure to UNESCO for global registration. The site also boasts appropriate potentials to absorb domestic and foreign investors.

Maku Dam and the ancient Zar Zar Church — registered on the UNESCO's World Heritage List — are the other tourist attractions of the city.

Foreign tourists can also experience

sojourn in tribal tents.

Also a border marketplace has been established on the Maku-Bazargan Road in an area of 22,000sq.m, wherein 500 shops sell garments, foodstuff and cosmetics.

The number of tourists and travelers visiting Maku Free Zone has increased significantly in recent years.

Based on statistics released by Free Zones Organization, the number of visitors to Maku which stood at less than 200,000 in the year to mid-March 2014, increased to three million in the year to March 20, 2017.

Climate change brings migration from Dry Corridor to Nicaragua's Caribbean coast

If the impact of drought and poverty in the municipalities of the so-called Dry Corridor in Nicaragua continues pushing the agricultural frontier towards the Caribbean coast, by the year 2050 this area will have lost all its forests and nature reserves, experts predict.

Denis Meléndez, facilitator of the National Board for Risk Management, told IPS that annually between 70,000 and 75,000 hectares of forests are lost in Nicaragua's northern region and along the Caribbean

coast, according to research carried out by this non-governmental organization that monitors the government's environmental record, IPS reported.

This phenomenon, he explained, occurs mainly due to the impact of climate change in the Dry Corridor, a vast area that comprises 37 municipalities in central and northern Nicaragua, which begins in the west, on the border with Honduras, and ends in the departments of Matagalpa and Jinotega, bordering the eastern North Caribbean

Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN).

The Dry Corridor in Central America is an arid strip of lowlands that runs along the Pacific coast through Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

In this Central American eco-region, which is home to 10.5 million people, according to data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the cyclical droughts have been aggravated by climate change and the gradual devastation of natural resources by the local populations.



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در مناطق شمالی تهران نیازمندیم

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت
مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیر مبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا
و مستغلات شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه‌ها و شرکت‌های خارجی نیازمندیم

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

Biosensor with a drug target

Researchers have developed a biosensor with a drug target and two fluorescent proteins to allow doctors to monitor the drug uptake process more effectively.



gettyimages.com

First hints Parkinson's can be stopped

It may be possible to stop the progression of Parkinson's disease with a drug normally used in type 2 diabetes, a clinical trial suggested.

Current drugs help manage the symptoms, but do not prevent brain cells dying, according to bbc.com.

The trial on 62 patients, published in the *Lancet*, hints the medicine halted the progression of the disease.

The University College London (UCL) team is 'excited', but it urges caution as any long-term benefit is uncertain and the drug needs more testing.

Prof. Tom Foltynie, one of the researchers, said, "There's absolutely no

doubt the most important unmet need in Parkinson's is a drug to slow down disease progression, it's unarguable."

In Parkinson's, the brain is progressively damaged and the cells that produce the hormone dopamine are lost.

It leads to a tremor, difficulty moving and eventually memory problems. Therapies help manage symptoms by boosting dopamine levels, but the death of the brain continues and the disease gets worse.

No drug stops that happening.

First In the trial, half of patients were given the diabetes drug exenatide and

the rest were given a placebo (dummy treatment). All the patients stayed on their usual medication.

As expected, those on just their usual medication declined over 48 weeks of treatment. But those given exenatide were stable.

And three months after the experimental treatment stopped, those who had been taking exenatide were still better off.

Foltynie said, "This is the first clinical trial in actual patients with Parkinson's where there has been anything like this size of effect."

"It gives us confidence exenatide is not just masking symptoms, it's doing

something to the underlying disease.

"We have to be excited and encouraged, but also cautious as we need to replicate these findings."

Early days

They also need to trial the drug for much longer periods of time.

An effective drug would need to hold back the disease for years in order to make a significant difference to patients.

Parkinson's progresses slowly and the difference in this 60-week trial was definitely there, but was 'trivial' in terms of the impact on day-to-day life, said the researchers.

The drug helps control blood sugar levels in diabetes by acting on a hormone sensor called GLP-1.

Those sensors are found in brain cells too. It is thought the drug makes those cells work more efficiently or helps them to survive.

It is why the drug is being tested in other neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's.

David Dexter, the deputy director of research at Parkinson's UK, said, "The findings offer hope that drugs like exenatide can slow the course of Parkinson's — something no current treatment can do."

"Because Parkinson's can progress quite gradually, this study was probably too small and short to tell us whether exenatide can halt the progression of the condition, but it's certainly encouraging and warrants further investigation."

Dr. Brian Fiske, from the The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, said, "The results from the exenatide studies justify continued testing, but clinicians and patients are urged not to add exenatide to their regimens until more is known about their safety and impact on Parkinson's."

Pneumonia, sepsis linked to increased risk of heart disease

A new study has identified a link between pneumonia or sepsis in adults resulting in hospital admission and an increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

Researchers conducting the study, published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*, examined whether hospital admission for pneumonia or sepsis infection was associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular disease in the years after infection, UPI reported.

Professor Scott Montgomery, director of the clinical epidemiology group, Örebro University, Sweden, said, "Severe infections in adulthood are associated with a contemporaneously raised risk of cardiovascular disease."

"Whether this raised risk persists for several years after infection is less well established."

Researchers followed 236,739 men born between 1952 and 1956 who had extensive physical and psychological examinations at the age of 18 for military conscription assessments.

A total of 46,754 men had a first diagnosis of cardiovascular disease during the follow-up period, with 9,987 hospital admissions for pneumonia or sepsis in 8,534 men who had these diagnoses.

The study revealed that infection was linked to a 6.33 times higher risk of cardiovascular disease during the first year after pneumonia or sepsis infection.

Cardiovascular disease risk was 2.47 times higher in the second year and 2.12 times higher in the third year after infection.

Even accounting for other factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, poor physical fitness and household crowding in childhood, the risk from pneumonia or sepsis infection was associated with the highest magnitude risk of cardiovascular disease, researchers said.

Dr. Cecilia Bergh, an affiliated researcher at Örebro University, said, "Our results indicate that the risk of cardiovascular disease, including coronary heart disease and stroke, was increased after hospital admission for sepsis or pneumonia."

"The risk remained notably raised for three years after infection and was still nearly two-fold after five years."

Seven foods into diet can help lower high blood pressure

High blood pressure — also known as hypertension — is when blood is forced through the arteries at an increased pressure, causing damage to your blood vessels, heart and kidneys. However adding these foods into your diet can help lower it.

There are 16 million people in the UK with high blood pressure and another seven million who are living with it undiagnosed, express.co.uk reported.

According to the British Heart Foundation, it can increase your risk of developing coronary heart disease or having a stroke.

Blood Pressure UK define it as a level consistently at or above 140mmHg and/or 90mmHg.

Being overweight, having a poor diet, not being active and stress all raise your risk of high blood pressure.

However, there are particular foods shown by science to lower it.

Mango: Research by Texas A&M University and Oklahoma State University revealed in June that eating mangos was associated with improved blood pressure, as well as blood sugar control and gut health.

Participants ate 400g of freshly frozen mango pulp a day to see the benefits.

Dark chocolate:

Research by Italian and US scientists found that a couple of pieces of dark chocolate per fortnight could reduce blood pressure.

It's thought the positive effects were due compounds it contains called flavanols.

Potatoes: A study published in the *American Journal of Physiology* in June found that increasing potassium in your diet can reduce high blood pressure.

It's found in rich amounts in potatoes, bananas and green leafy vegetables.

Blueberries: In May, Florida State University released a study revealing that eating blueberries could reduce blood pressure. Eating a handful a day lowered it by six percent.

Acai berries: Research published in the journal *Nutrition Reviews* found acai berries could reduce blood pressure by five percent in just 30 days.

It's packed with an antioxidant resveratrol which is believed to provide the benefits.

Tomatoes: A study revealed that tomatoes could lower blood pressure. Participants took a pill made from tomato concentrate for eight weeks.

Skimmed milk: Research by Wageningen University in the Netherlands showed drinking skimmed milk could ward off high blood pressure.

Regularly drinking skimmed milk or eating low-fat dairy products reduced risk of suffering in later life by about 20 percent.

New ways to develop dietary intakes based on disease

A National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report outlines how to develop dietary reference intakes to reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Half of all US adults have at least one chronic health condition such as hypertension or coronary heart disease and diet can be a contributing factor, UPI wrote.

Dietary reference intakes, or DRIs, are a set of reference intake values that include the Estimated Average Requirement, Recommended Dietary Allowance, Adequate Intake and Tolerable Upper Intake Level, or UL, for more than 40 nutrients and food substances based on age, sex and life stage.

DRIs are used in nutrition

policy like planning federal supplemental nutrition programs and is a basis for dietary guidelines in the US and Canada.

Shiriki Kumanyika, research professor at Drexel University and professor emerita at the University of Pennsylvania, said, "The extent to which a given level of a specific nutrient or other food substance contributes to the development of a chronic disease is difficult to determine, not only because the causes of chronic disease are complex, but also because the type of evidence needed to determine levels of specific nutrients associated with a chronic disease is difficult and costly to generate."

"Nevertheless, given our



UPI

universal exposure to nutrients and the continuing emergence of evidence on the relationships between nutrients and chronic diseases, now is the time to examine the relevant concepts and methods involved in determining such relationships.

"Our report is designed to guide future DRI committees in making sound judgments, as they interpret the best evidence that is available by using rigorous methodologies."

The study, published in *The National Academies Press*,

suggested DRI committees should ensure that random errors and biases of methodologies used to assess exposure to levels of nutrients or other food substances, or NOFS, considered in their evidence review.

The report states that DRIs based on chronic diseases are only warranted when there is an acceptable level of confidence of a causal relationship between a NOFS and a chronic disease.

Researchers recommend retaining ULs based on traditional toxicity endpoints and if an increased intake of a substance below the UL has proven to increase the risk of a chronic disease, then the relationship should be identified as the range where a decreased intake is beneficial.

Researchers identify way, drugs for nerve damage treatment

Research led by Chinese scientists may lead to a potential new therapy for the currently untreatable delayed neuropathy caused by acute exposure to insecticides or chemical weapons that attack the nervous system, a study published in the journal *Cell Discovery* revealed.

A research team identified a new biological mechanism responsible for the neuropathy, as well as the drugs to treat it, news.xinhuanet.com wrote.

Organophosphates (OP), the chemical compound found in insecticides, herbicides and nerve agents such as sarin, were found to damage sensory neurons by activating a channel, called TRPA1, in the neuron cell membrane.

Activation of TRPA1 caused

hyper-activation of the neuron, which is known to cause neuronal damage and symptoms including burning pains on the skin, loss of muscle control and paralysis.

Mice that were genetically engineered

not to express TRPA1 in neuronal cells did not suffer the effects of OP poisoning that were seen in normal mice and their nerves showed no signs of damage, according to the study.

Study's lead author Dr. Gao Zhaobing,

from the Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, Chinese Academy of Sciences, said, "This study provides compelling evidence that TRPA1 mediates OP-induced neuropathy and that TRPA1 can be targeted effectively with existing drugs that are approved by the Federal Drugs Administration."

"Using our expertise in drug discovery we were also able to screen a Federal Drugs Administration-approved drug library of around 2,000 drugs and identify two potent drugs, duloxetine and ketotifen, which alleviated the signs of neuropathy in an animal model."

Further research is needed to assess whether the findings are applicable to humans.



naturalsociety.com

Iran ranks 4th in Int'l Olympiad in Informatics

Iran ranked fourth in the 29th International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) winning one gold and three silver medals.

Japan won four gold medals to stand first followed by China, Russia and Iran, according to [ioi.ir](#).

Taiwan, Poland, Romania, Great Britain, Australia and Italy took the 5th to 10th spots respectively.

Teams from 82 countries participated in the 29th International Olympiad in Informatics.

The event was held in Tehran from July 28 to August 4, 2017.

The IOI is one of five international science Olympiads.

The primary objective of the IOI is to stimulate interest in informatics (computing science) and information technology.

UNESCO initiated and sponsored the first International Olympiad in Informatics in May 1989.

Scientists improve ability to measure rock stress

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have developed a more accurate method for measuring rock stress.

Their research could improve scientists' ability to predict the severity of earthquake damage or risk of a mine shaft collapse, UPI reported.

Hiroki Sone, an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering and geological engineering at Madison, said, "Rock stress — the amount of pressure experienced by underground layers of rock — can only be measured indirectly because you can't see the forces that cause it."

"But instruments for estimating rock stress are difficult to use at great depths, where the temperature and pressure increase tremendously."

Scientists used the anelastic strain recovery method to measure the stress of rock samples collected from a well bore in northwest China's Tarim Basin.

Their measurements proved consistent with visual analysis of borehole wall images.

Though accurate, visual analysis requires the use of expensive and sensitive scanning technologies under harsh conditions.

The anelastic strain recovery method allows scientists to estimate rock stress by observing the sample's physical transformation after its brought from extreme underground depths up to the surface.

Sone said, "It estimates stress indirectly by measuring how much the rock sample expands in different directions after it has been recovered."

The latest proof-of-concept tests show the anelastic strain recovery method can be used to measure rock stress at extreme depths — as deep as 6.9 km.

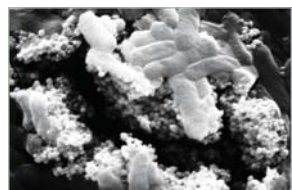
Sone added, "These new results give us confidence that we can use the anelastic strain recovery method at greater depths than we thought possible."

"As long as the rock deforms the same amount in vertical and horizontal directions, this method is much easier to apply when very high temperatures and pressures in the Earth's crust challenge the other options in our toolbox."

Researchers described their rock stress tests in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

Magnetized viruses can break through biofilms, attack bacteria

A team of scientists from the US and China have found a way to deploy viruses against biofilm-forming bacteria capable of fouling water distribution systems. The secret to their success is magnetization.



A closeup image shows nanoparticle clusters, with phase viruses attached, seeking out and killing *Escherichia coli* bacteria.

Bacteriophages are viruses that seek out and infect bacteria. But in a solution, these viruses disperse and fail to attack harmful bacteria in significant numbers. Enter magnetization, UPI wrote.

Researchers at Rice University in Texas and the University of Science and Technology of China inserted bacteriophages into magnetized nanoparticle clusters.

The technology allowed scientists to direct the viral clusters toward bacterial targets using a weak magnetic force.

Pedro Alvarez, an environmental engineer at Rice, said, "This novel approach, which arises from the convergence of nanotechnology and virology, has a great potential to treat difficult-to-eradicate biofilms in an effective manner that does not generate harmful disinfection byproducts."

In some instances, biofilms can be beneficial. They are welcomed in wastewater treatment plants, for example. But in water storage facilities, they can harbor potentially harmful microbes.

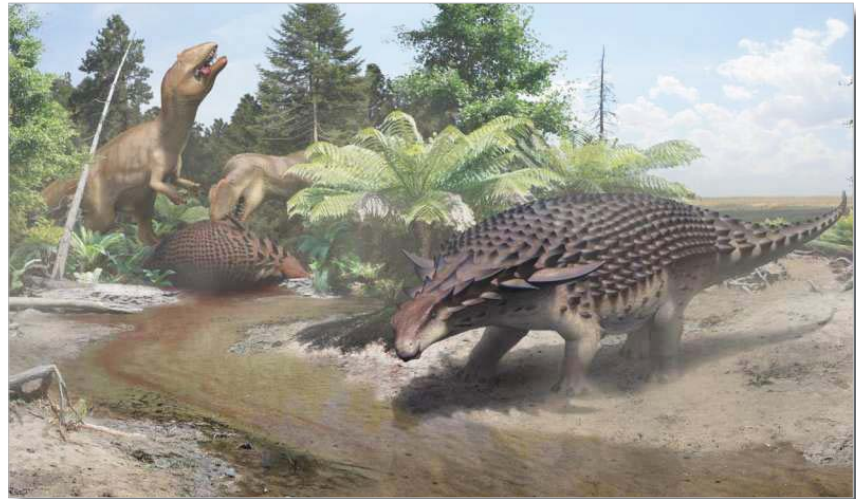
Scientists created the nanoclusters using carbon, sulfur and iron oxide molecules. A treatment of amino acids encouraged the bacteriophages to bond with the clusters.

Researchers deployed polyvalent bacteriophages, viruses capable of attacking a variety of bacteria strains, *Escherichia coli* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

In tests, plain bacteriophages killed just 40 percent of the bacteria. When the magnetized viral clusters were directed towards the biofilm using a weak magnetic force, the bacteriophages disrupted the biofilm and killed 90 percent of the bacteria.

Researchers detailed their new technology in the journal *Environmental Science: Nano*.

Despite heavy armor, new dinosaur used camouflage to hide from predators



An illustration of the 110-million-year-old *Borealeopelta markmitchelli* discovered in Alberta, Canada.

[phys.org](#)

Researchers reporting in *Current Biology* have named a new genus and species of armored dinosaur.

The 110-million-year-old *Borealeopelta markmitchelli* discovered in Alberta, Canada, on view at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, belongs to the nodosaur family, [phys.org](#) wrote.

Now, an analysis of the 505-meter-long specimen's exquisitely well-preserved form, complete with fully armored skin, suggested that the dinosaur had predators, despite the fact that it was the "dinosaur equivalent of a tank", weighing in at more than 1,300 kilograms.

The researchers came to that conclusion based on studies of the dinosaur's skin, showing that *Borealeopelta* exhibited countershading, a common form of camouflage in which an animal's underside is lighter than its back.

The scientists said the discovery suggested that the nodosaur faced predation stress from meat-eating dinosaurs.

Caleb Brown, a scientist at the Royal Tyrrell Museum, said, "Strong predation on a massive, heavily-armored

dinosaur illustrates just how dangerous the dinosaur predators of the Cretaceous must have been."

The specimen was found by accident on March 21, 2011, by mining machine operator Shawn Funk at the Suncor Millennium Mine in Alberta.

He noticed that there was something unusual about some of the rock formations.

The Royal Tyrrell Museum was notified and sent a crew, including Curator of Dinosaurs Donald Henderson, to take a look.

They soon realized that the rocks contained an armored dinosaur.

Henderson said, "Finding the remains of an armored dinosaur that was washed far out to sea was huge surprise."

"The fact that it was so well preserved was an even bigger surprise."

The real work began when the specimen arrived back at the museum. Over the last five and a half years, museum technician Mark Mitchell spent more than 7,000 hours slowly and gently removing rock from around the specimen to reveal the exceptional, fossilized dinosaur inside. The new species is named in

Mitchell's honor.

The specimen now represents the best-preserved armored dinosaur ever found, and one of the best dinosaur specimens in the world, the researchers said.

Brown added, "This nodosaur is truly remarkable in that it is completely covered in preserved scaly skin, yet is also preserved in three dimensions, retaining the original shape of the animal."

"The result is that the animal looks almost the same today as it did back in the Early Cretaceous."

"You don't need to use much imagination to reconstruct it; if you just squint your eyes a bit, you could almost believe it was sleeping... It will go down in science history as one of the most beautiful and best preserved dinosaur specimens — the Mona Lisa of dinosaurs."

The condition of the specimen made it possible for Brown, Henderson, and an international team of colleagues to document the pattern and shape of scales and armor across the body.

They also used chemical analysis of organic compounds in the scales to

infer the dinosaur's pigmentation pattern.

Those studies revealed that the dinosaur had reddish-brown-pigmented skin with countershading across its body.

Although countershading is common, the findings come as surprise because *Borealeopelta*'s size far exceeds that of countershaded animals alive today.

It suggested the dinosaur was under enough pressure from predators to select for concealment.

The remarkable specimen is sure to inspire many more studies by Brown's team and others.

For instance, researchers are examining the dinosaur's preserved gut contents to find out the nature of its last meal, and working to characterize the body armor in even greater detail.

Andrew Neuman, executive director at the Royal Tyrrell Museum, said, "This remarkable specimen illustrates just how unique and important the fossil record of Alberta is, and highlights the mandate of the Museum in the research, preservation, and education of these amazing resources."

New map of Universe's dark matter released

Researchers have released the most accurate map ever produced of the dark matter in our Universe.

The team surveyed more than 26 million galaxies in the largest study of its kind, [bbc.com](#) reported.

The map will help scientists understand what dark matter is made from and learn more about another mysterious phenomenon called dark energy.

The results have been released by the international Dark Energy Consortium (DES).

According to Professor Ofer Lahav of University College London (UCL), and chair of the DES Advisory Board, the map would provide new insights into how the Universe operates.

"Dark energy and dark matter represent probably one of the biggest mysteries in the world of science. And this has generated a lot of interest across the whole of science because it is a major shakeup. And actually we still don't know what it is."

Scientists have suspected that there is more material in the Universe than we can observe for more than 80 years.

The movement of stars and galaxies indicate that the Universe is also made up of invisible particles called dark matter.

In 1998, two teams of astronomers discovered the expansion of the Universe was accelerating, rather than slowing down, as the theory at the time suggested.

Physicists speculated that the acceleration was caused by something they named dark energy.

Since then, observations have indicated that dark energy and dark matter together account for 96 percent of the Universe.

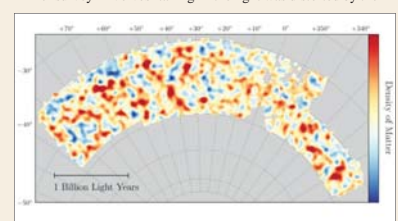
The challenge has been to find ways of studying these invisible phenomena in detail.

Lahav added, "We cannot just say we don't know what it is, we have to make an effort to see what it is."

The Dark Energy Survey is

the most ambitious effort to date. It began in 2004 and involves 400 scientists from 26 institutions in seven countries.

The survey involves taking



The map will help scientists understand what dark matter is made from.

capable of detecting light from galaxies that are eight billion light-years away.

By studying the way in which the light was distorted by the in-

The team was also able to infer the amounts of dark energy and dark matter from the density and locations of galaxies.

The results show support for previous studies that indicate the Universe is made up of four percent ordinary matter, 26 percent dark matter and 70 percent dark energy.

The hope is that a detailed study of the map will give clues about what dark matter and dark energy might be and so lead to a more complete theory of physics.

The data released today draws from just one year of observations. The researchers plan to collect data for four more years over an even larger area of the sky.

Lahav said that there is much more to come.

"Once we have the full survey, 300 million galaxies and a thousand supernovae, we may be providing input for a new Einstein to tell us what does it all mean — why is the Universe made the way it is?"

tervening dark matter, researchers were able to calculate its distribution.

And by studying the way in which the distribution changes over time they can calculate the way in which dark energy acts on it.

Global blindness set to 'triple by 2050'

The number of blind people across the world is set to triple within the next four decades, researchers suggest.

Writing in *Lancet Global Health*, they predict cases will rise from 36 million to 115 million by 2050, if treatment is not improved by better funding, according to BBC.

A growing aging population is behind the rising numbers.

Some of the highest rates of blindness and vision impairment are in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The percentage of the world's population with visual impairments is actually falling, according to the study.

But because the global population is growing and more people are living well into old age, researchers predict the number of people with sight problems will soar in the coming decades.

Analysis of data from 188 countries suggests there are more than 200 million people with moderate to severe vision impairment.

That figure is expected to rise to more than 550 million by 2050.

"Even mild visual impairment can significantly impact a person's life," said lead author Prof. Rupert Bourne, from



the-star.co.ke

Anglia Ruskin University.

"For example, reducing their independence... as it often means people are barred from driving."

He said it also limited people's educational and economic opportunities.

The worst affected areas for visual impairment are in South and East Asia. Parts

of sub-Saharan Africa also have particularly high rates.

The study calls for better investment in treatments, such as cataract surgery, and ensuring people have access to appropriate vision-correcting glasses.

Prof. Rupert Bourne said: "Interventions provide some of the largest returns on investment."

"They are some of the most easily implemented interventions in developing regions."

"They are cheap, require little infrastructure and countries recover their costs as people enter back into the workforce."

The charity Sightsavers, which works in more than thirty countries to try to eliminate avoidable blindness, says it is seeing a rise in conditions such as cataracts, where the eye's lens clouds over.

"Due to an aging population and a rise in chronic disease, we expect the burden of blindness to only grow within the world's poorest countries," said Imran Khan from the charity.

He said health systems in developing countries need to be improved, and more surgeons and nurses need to be trained to deliver sustainable eye healthcare.

Study: Women who have their first child in their 30s live longer

Studies have shown that women who give birth to their first child in their 30s live longer.

Researchers at Coimbra University in Portugal measured the life expectancy of women at the age of 65 based on three factors: average age of women at the birth of their first child, average age at childbirth and percentage of teen mothers, *globalnews.ca* reported.

They analyzed data culled from women in EU countries with an average age of 28 from 2004 to 2013.

The scientists found that the older women were when they had their first child, the longer they lived.

"The study finds that on average women who have their first child later, have a longer life expectancy," lead author Aida Isabel Tavares, invited assistant professor of economics at the University of Coimbra, said.

"So it may be deduced that on average women who have their first child in their 30s will expect to live longer than those that have their first child by their 20s." (The study also showed that teenage mothers have a shorter life expectancy.)

Tavares noted that life expectancy for women in 2013 was estimated to be 86 years of age.

This follows a study that was published in January in the *American Journal of Public Health* that found women who had children later (over the age of 25) were 11 percent more likely to live into their 90s. In addition, lead study author Aladdin H. Shadyab, a postdoctoral fellow in epidemiology at the University of California San Diego, said there's a linear relationship.

"The older these women were [at the time of giving birth to their first child], the more likely they were to live to 90," he said. "So, a 31-year-old was more likely to live longer than a 30-year-old and so forth."

Although neither study was able to zero in on why this is, scientists do have some theories.

"A lot of researchers believe that women who are able to have a child at an older age are just generally healthier," Shadyab said. "Because being older at childbirth can lead to complications for both the mother and child, those who do it and survive are likely more healthy."

He also pointed to the trend that older mothers tend to be of a higher social status.

"We know a lot of the time women are delaying having kids because they're finishing school and starting their careers, and generally more educated people of higher income live longer," he said.

In addition, a healthy reproductive system that allows women to conceive into their 30s is an indication that they may go into menopause later, which is also linked to longevity, he said.

This is further supported by a 2014 study published in the journal *Menopause* that found that women who had their last child after the age of 33 were twice as likely to live to 95 than women who had their last child by 29.

"Of course this does not mean women should wait to have children at older ages in order to improve their own chances of living longer," study author Thomas Perls, director of the New England Centenarian Study and professor of medicine at Boston University, said in a statement.

"The age at last childbirth can be a rate of aging indicator. The natural ability to have a child at an older age likely indicates that a woman's reproductive system is aging slowly and therefore so is the rest of her body."

Christians are more than twice as likely to blame a person's poverty on lack of effort

Which is generally more often to blame if a person is poor: Lack of effort on their own part, or difficult circumstances beyond their control?

The Washington Post and the Kaiser Family Foundation asked 1,686 American adults to answer that question — and found that religion is a significant predictor of how Americans perceive poverty.

Christians, especially white evangelical Christians, are much more likely than non-Christians to view poverty as the result of individual failings.

"There's a strong Christian impulse to understand poverty as deeply rooted in morality — often, as the Bible makes clear, in unwillingness to work, in bad financial decisions or in broken family structures," said Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"The Christian worldview is saying that all poverty is due to sin, though that doesn't necessarily mean the sin of the person in poverty. In the Garden of Eden, there would have been no poverty. In a fallen world, there is poverty."

In the poll, which was conducted from April 13 to May 1 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points, 46 percent of all Christians said that a lack of effort is generally to blame for a person's poverty, compared with 29 percent of all non-Christians.

The gap widens further among specific Christian groups: 53 percent of white evangelical Protestants blamed lack of effort while 41 percent blamed circumstances, and 50 percent of Catholics blamed lack of effort while 45 percent blamed circumstances. In contrast, by more than 2 to 1, Americans who are atheist, agnostic or have no particular affiliation said difficult circumstances are more to blame when a person is poor than lack of effort (65 percent to 31 percent).

A statistical analysis of the data showed that political partisanship is the most important factor in views on the causes of poverty, but religious identity stands out as one of several important demographic factors.

Survey: More than half of India's languages may die out in 50 years

More than half of the languages spoken by India's 1.3 billion people may die out over the next 50 years, scholars said on, calling for a concerted effort to preserve the tongues spoken by the nation's endangered tribal communities.

The People's Linguistic Survey of India (PSLI) raised the alarm during the launch of the latest 11 volumes in its planned 50 volume survey of the country's languages. India's people speak as many as 780 different languages, the PSLI said, according to Reuters.

"At least 400 Indian languages are at the risk of dying in coming 50 years," G.N. Devy, the chairman of PSLI, said.

Each time a language is lost, the corresponding culture is killed, Devy said, adding that India had already lost 250 languages in last five decades.

The group of scholars and teachers at PSLI documents Indian regional languages in order to conserve cultural heritage and diversity.

Most at risk are marginal tribal communities whose children receive no education or, if they do

go to school, are taught in one of India's 22 officially recognized languages.

"Maithili, which is spoken in the eastern state of Bihar, is at least 1,000 years old. Similarly there are several old languages which are surviving somehow in India, but we are hardly passing them on," said political psychologist Ashis Nandy.

Davy said the PSLI will start work on a project to document about 6,000 living languages spoken around the world. The report is scheduled to come out by 2025.



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Concern voiced over Italy's anti-migrant mission

Human Rights Watch, the rights advocacy group, has given warning that Italy's naval mission to prevent refugees and migrants from setting sail from Libya for Europe could see Italy commit human rights abuses.

Italy says its mission is backed by Libya's UN-recognized unity government based in Tripoli, *Aljazeera* wrote.

The Italian parliament on Wednesday gave the go-ahead to providing technical support to the Libyan coastguard in its fight against human traffickers in the hope it would reduce the number of people arriving on Italy's coasts.

Italy's defense minister insisted before the vote that the mission would not be a naval blockade, although legislators from the anti-migrant Northern League — an opposition party — demanded exactly that.

HRW said Italy risked preventing genuine asylum seekers from escaping from a country where migrants face detention in squalid camps and abuse at the hands of traffickers.

"The Italian navy deployment in Libyan waters could effectively lead to arbitrary detention of people in abusive conditions," said Judith Sunderland, HRW's Europe and Central Asia associate director.

"After years of saving lives at sea, Italy is preparing to help Libyan forces who are known to detain people in conditions that expose them to a real risk of torture,

sexual violence, and forced labor."

Such a move "could implicate Italy in human rights abuses".

Italy is expected to begin by sending a logistics ship and patrol boat as well as mechanics to maintain equipment.

The Italian government has issued a behavioral code, which it wants the 10

The NGOs that are refusing to comply want some clarity on whether the new conditions are targeted at people smugglers or aimed at stopping the flow of migrants altogether.

Under human rights law, no one rescued or intercepted by an EU-flagged ship or under the control of an EU member



GETTY IMAGES

international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that rescue migrants in the Mediterranean Sea to sign.

"Only three out of 10 NGOs have accepted the code, which calls among other points for an armed police officer to be on board, and would forbid transporting any rescued migrant from one vessel to another vessel," she said.

her state can be sent back to a place or handed over to authorities where they face a real risk of torture or ill-treatment.

"This includes pushbacks to Libya or handovers to Libyan forces and applies even if Italy rescues or interdicts people in Libyan territorial waters," HRW's Sunderland said.

"Even if the Italian navy simply

provides intelligence to Libyan coast-guard forces that leads to the foreseeable apprehension and detention of migrants in abusive conditions, Italy could share responsibility.

"Italy could also be implicated in denying people's right to leave any country and interfering with the right to seek asylum under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights."

Libya has not ratified the international refugee convention and does not have a functioning asylum system.

For its part, the Tobruk-based Libyan House of Representatives, which is allied to General Khalifa Haftar, has voiced strong opposition to the planned deployment of Italian navy vessels in Libya's territorial waters.

The legislators said such a move would be "exporting the illegal migration crisis to Libya" and that having a foreign navy's vessels patrolling Libyan waters would be a "violation of the sovereignty of Libya".

The parliament criticized the Tripoli-based government of Fayez Serraj, prime minister in the unity government, for striking the deal with the Italians.

Hundreds of thousands of people, most of them economic migrants ineligible for asylum, have been brought ashore in Italy after rescue in the last few years.

The migrant crisis looms as a campaign issue in Italy's 2018 elections.

Meet the finalists of the first ever Comedy Pet Photography Awards ceremony

If you can get through these pictures without at least raising a smile then you have no soul.

The funniest pictures of people's pets have been compiled for the inaugural Comedy Pet Photography Awards.

Photographers Tom Sullam and Paul Johnson-Hicks MBE have collected over 2,500 entries and, after some careful consideration, they have narrowed down the photos to their favorites, metro.co.uk wrote.

Tom said: "We want primarily a laugh out loud moment. A picture that grabs us instantaneously."

"The idea of the competition is to make us appreciate our pets for their humor, and their ability to give us so much more than just company."

"The pictures that make us laugh the most are the ones that make us appreciate pets the most."

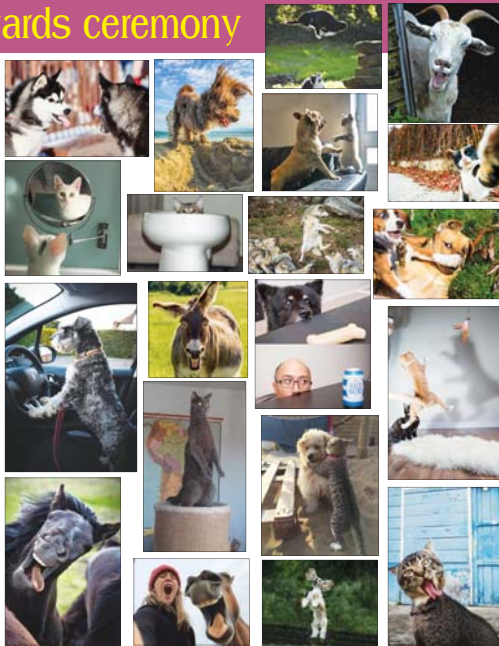
Winners will be announced in early September, once the judges have made a final decision.

A panel of expert judges are now going through the finalists to select their winner and runners up — the team includes Paul Johnson-Hicks MBE and Tom Sullam, TV wildlife presenter Kate Humble, longtime publisher of photography magazines Adam Scorey, veterinary surgeon Emma Milne, photographer Simon Pollock and Michelle Riley, director of photography at The Humane Society of the United States.

Sullam added: "It has been an absolutely fantastic response to a fledgling competition."

"There are so many wonderful images that have been entered, and many that were so close to making the final 40."

"We hope the competition will continue to raise awareness of animals and it has tied in brilliantly with the Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards, which will announce winners in December."



BARCROFT

The awards are split into five categories: Overall competition winner, junior photographer (15 and under), the ancients (70 and over), pets who look like their owners and 'Gone to the Dogs' — which is just for man's best friend.

The overall winner of the Comedy pet Photography Awards 2017 will win £2,000,

an Urban Approach 5 camera bag from the think tank people, £100 WEX Photographic gift voucher and a trophy handmade by disabled men and women in Tanzania by the Wonder Workshop.

Each category winner will also receive a camera bag and £100 gift voucher, plus certificate.

Britain's biggest freshwater fish Parrot the carp, 25, dies weighing 68lbs 1oz

The angling world was in mourning on Thursday after the death of Britain's biggest freshwater fish.

The mighty mirror carp, called 'The Parrot', which weighed a record-breaking 68lbs 1oz, was found at 6 a.m. Wednesday floating in its lake at the Wasing Estate, near Reading, Berkshire, dailymail.co.uk reported.

The fishery manager believes the 25-year-old specimen died of old age but an autopsy will be carried out to confirm the exact cause.

There are plans to stuff the fish so he can be proudly mounted on a wall at the fishery, which has a 10-year waiting list to become a member.

'The Parrot' — so called because of its narrow mouth which



BNPS

resembled a bird's beak — was so revered that fishermen traveled from all over Britain for the chance to land him.

Since news of his death was confirmed on social media, anglers have paid tribute to the fish

and shared their memories of catching him.

Leading the testimonials was greengrocer Dean Fletcher who caught 'The Parrot' at its top weight in January 2016 — a record that stands today.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Photographer Tanya Houppermans captured what she described as a one in a million shot of a sand tiger shark swimming through a bait ball of thousands of fish, South Carolina, the US.



The two travelers and the ax

Two men were journeying together. One of them picked up an ax that lay upon the path, and said, "I have found an ax."

The other replied, "Nay, my friend. Do not say 'I' but 'We' have found an ax."

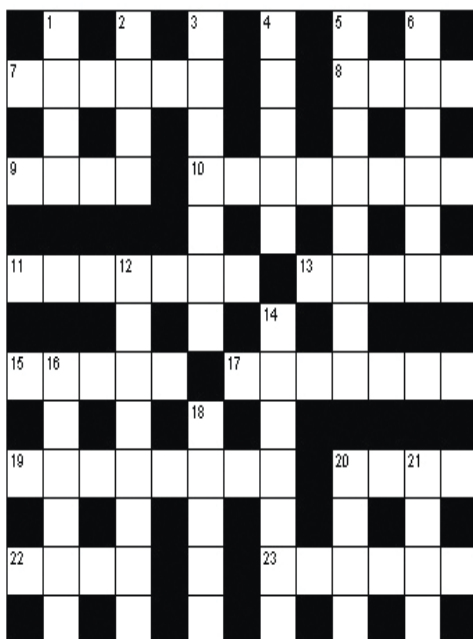
They had not gone far before they saw the owner of the ax pursuing them, and he, who had picked up

the ax, said, "We are undone."

Replied the other, "Nay. Keep to your first mode of speech, my friend; what you thought right then, think right now. Say 'I' not 'We' are undone."

He who shares the danger ought to share the prize.

Themed Crossword



DOWN

- 2003 movie, ___ Actually (4)
- Sean ___ was Jimmy Markum in the 2003 movie, Mystic River (4)
- First name of A Tale of Two Cities author (7)
- Surname of Far from the Madding Crowd author (5)
- Surname of Ben Hur actor (8)
- First name of Brief Encounter actor (6)
- First name of one of the Roosevelt presidents (8)
- Composer of the William Tell Overture (7)
- First name of The Mousetrap author (6)
- 2005 movie, The Brothers ___ (5)
- She played one of The Witches of Eastwick (4)
- ___ 'n' Andy (4)

ACROSS

- Shakespeare In Love actor ___ Fiennes (6)
- Elephant Man actor John ___ (4)
- Ex Bond actor, ___ Connery (4)
- Thespian family (8)
- Hollywood actor, Kevin ___ (7)
- Surname of former Beatle (5)
- Composer of Bolero (5)
- Miami Vice actor 1984-89, Don ___ (7)
- Once Upon a Time in Mexico actor, Antonio ___ (8)
- He was Walter in the 2003 movie Elf, James ___ (4)
- Norse god of thunder (4)
- He was Henri Ducard in Batman Begins, Liam ___ (6)

Thursday's solution



Sudoku

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

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

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

Losing life

Iranian climber, Alireza Boroujerdi Karimi, lost his life during a climb on Lenin Peak on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan due to a lack of supplementary oxygen.

Neymar held his first press conference as a Paris Saint-Germain player following his £198 million move from Barcelona, explaining that he was seeking a "bigger challenge."

The Brazil international ended his four-year stay at Barcelona on Thursday when his £222 million release clause was paid in full, with Neymar signing a five-year deal in Paris to become the most expensive player of all time, Eurosport reported.

His motivation for the move away from Barcelona, breaking up a productive union with Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez, has been the subject of much speculation, with a salary of a reported £520,000 after tax being highlighted.

But Neymar said in a packed press conference that money was not his motivation. Neither was a much-reported desire to step out of Messi's shadow and become the leading star at a club.

Instead, the 25-year-old said that he wanted a bigger challenge than playing for Barcelona could offer.

He said, "I wanted something bigger, a bigger challenge. My heart made the decision and made me follow that ambition and that is why I am here today. I want to dream bigger, to do my best and to do even better."

"No (being the big star) didn't impact at all. I wanted to come to Paris and it is only linked to me wanting to find a new challenge. Not because I didn't feel I was the big star at Barcelona. No, I felt well in Barcelona. That is not what I am looking for in Paris. I think that I have written my chapter at Barcelona. I won some trophies.... Of course you can't make everybody happy."

"I've done nothing bad. It's difficult to answer this question. I'm sad about the facts that the fans think (badly of him), I hope it's only a minority. I never lacked respect to the fans and I think that every player should be allowed to stay or leave a club."

"If I was following the money, I'd be playing for a different team in another country. I was never motivated by money, it has never been my first motivation. I am really sad people think I am motivated by money."

'One of the most difficult decisions'

Neymar said it was a difficult decision to leave his friends and colleagues behind in Barcelona, who were disappointed to lose the player commonly seen as Messi's heir at Camp Nou.

"It was one of the most difficult decisions I've ever taken... I had to think, rethink and think again about what I want to do with my life. I leave a lot of very good friends behind. I would like to thank all my friends at Barcelona, they welcomed me so well. But I felt it was the right time."

'I don't think it's expensive'

Paris Saint-Germain chairman Nasser al-Khelaifi was also on stage alongside Neymar and said that PSG felt the transfer fee paid for the Brazilian was far from excessive.

"I don't think it is expensive. I'm sure we are going to make more money. I can guarantee that Neymar did not come for the money. He could get much more money elsewhere than here. The world is going to talk about this transfer for long time. Hopefully positively, he didn't come here for money. Today it is the most expensive, but in two-three years will it be? I'm sure we will make more money than we have paid. We huge been very transparent from one day on Financial Fair Play. We are working under the regulations. For people worrying about Financial Fair Play, go have coffee, there are no problems."



Neymar (R) and PSG chairman Nasser al-Khelaifi answered questions in the Brazilian's first press conference as a PSG player in Paris on August 4, 2017. GETTY IMAGES

Neymar on £198m move: I wanted something bigger

Al-Khelaifi also denied that the pursuit of Neymar was revenge for Barcelona's interest in Marco Verratti, as has been suggested, and hailed the signing of the best player of the world as a key moment for PSG as they target the Champions League along with domestic success.

"Neymar is an idol for the whole world and those who love football and sports. As far as I am concerned Neymar is the best player in the world. Our supporters have always dreamed about Neymar and here he is today with us. With him our project becomes stronger. Together we are going to create an amazing PSG."

'I'm ready to play'

Neymar is eligible to play in PSG's season opener against Amiens today at Parc des Princes and said he was available for coach Unai Emery.

"I am really hungry for football. Yes I am ready, if I can play tomorrow, why not? I will speak with the staff and wait for the green light, but this is what I love to do. Play football."

Neymar operated on the left of Barcelona's front three during his time at Camp Nou but said he had not discussed his role with Emery yet, with Edinson Cavani installed as PSG's central striker at present. "I don't know," he said. "I haven't discussed it with the coach yet. I just want to play."

A late snag?

In Spain, a release clause can only be activated by a player buying himself out of his contract.

But when Neymar's lawyers attempted to make the deposit on Thursday, La Liga officials rejected the payment. Further statements followed from all sides as the negotiations contin-

ued, BBC reported.

La Liga believes PSG is violating UEFA's Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules and Barcelona previously said the club would report PSG to European football's governing body UEFA for an FFP breach.

PSG believes La Liga was acting unlawfully, while the French league (LFP) said it was "surprised" and urged its Spanish counterpart to

So FFP... who is right?

FFP rules, first implemented during the 2011-12 season, stipulate European clubs cannot outspend what they earn by more than €60 million.

PSG is backed by money from Gulf state Qatar, and La Liga president Javier Tebas has accused the French club of "financial doping".



People spent hours in rows in Paris to buy Neymar's PSG No. 10 shirt. GETTY IMAGES

"abide by the FIFA rules".

Unable to get La Liga to take the payment, Neymar's representatives paid the €222 million (£200 million) at Barca's offices instead.

It is the first time PSG - ranked the 11th most valuable club in the world by Forbes - has broken the global transfer record, with Real Madrid paying five of the past six highest fees.

Klitschko retires, Joshua rematch canceled

Wladimir Klitschko retired from boxing, ending any hopes of a rematch with Anthony Joshua in Las Vegas.

The Briton beat the Ukrainian at Wembley in April in a thrilling fight where both men were knocked down before the 27-year-old KO'd his opponent in the penultimate round, Eurosport reported.

The rematch was due on November 11, but Klitschko - who was undisputed heavyweight champion for nearly 10 years before losing his title to Tyson Fury - ended any chance of that fight going ahead with his decision.

Klitschko explained the reasons for his retirement in a statement on his website. It read, "I deliberately took a few weeks to make my decision, to make sure I had enough distance from the fight at Wembley Stadium."

"I would have never imagined that I would have such a long and incredibly successful boxing career. I'm very thankful for this."

"Thanks to everyone who has always supported me. Especially my family, my team and my many fans."

Klitschko's manager Bernd Bonte insisted it was a tough call for the Ukrainian to bow out after two losses. Fury had twice canceled a rematch for 2016, before being forced to vacate the WBA belt, leaving Klitschko and Joshua to fight for the world title earlier this year.

And after such a close match, Bonte said it was a question of motivation. "Especially after this terrific fight at Wembley Stadium it was a very tough decision for Wladimir to make," he said.

"Wladimir accomplished everything in his unique boxing career. He dominated the Heavyweight division for over a decade."

Joshua ordered to face Ortiz

British heavyweight Joshua has been ordered by the WBA to defend his title against

Neymar in numbers

- Since joining Barca in 2013, Neymar scored 68 goals in four full seasons - behind Cristiano Ronaldo (139), Messi (134), Luis Suarez (85), Antoine Griezmann (76) and Athletic Bilbao's Ariz Aduriz (70).
- In that same period, he had the fifth most direct assists with 38 - again behind Messi (54), Atletico Madrid's Koke (45), Suarez (43) and Ronaldo (42).
- In chances created in that time (287), he was second only to teammate Messi (326).
- He had the highest number of chances created last season (91) - more than any other PSG player (Angel di Maria had 78).
- Edinson Cavani scored almost three times as many league goals (35) than Neymar (13) last season.

History of the world transfer record

In 1975, Italian Giuseppe Savoldi became football's first £1 million player with his move from Bologna to Napoli. And Britain followed suit four years later, when Nottingham Forest paid Birmingham City £1.2 million for England forward Trevor Francis.

Only two players have broken the transfer record twice: Argentina legend Diego Maradona and Brazil great Ronaldo.

Maradona moved from Boca Juniors to Barcelona for £3 million in 1982, before joining Napoli two years later for £5 million. Ronaldo joined Barcelona for £13.2 million in 1996, but left after just one season to join Inter for £19.5 million.

Brazil winger Denilson (£21.5 million), Italy striker Christian Vieri (£32 million), Argentina forward Hernan Crespo (£35.5 million), Portugal winger Luis Figo (£37 million) and France playmaker Zinedine Zidane (£46 million) all raised the bar over the next three years.

Brazil midfielder Kaka (£56 million) breached the £50 million barrier in 2009 before his new club Real Madrid broke the record again by signing Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo from Manchester United for £80 million three weeks later.

The Bernabeu club beat its own record again with the £85 million deal with Tottenham for Wales forward Gareth Bale in 2013 - before Manchester United paid £89 million for France midfielder Paul Pogba last summer.

'The problem is the consequences'

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho said, "Expensive are the ones who get into a certain level without a certain quality. For £200 million, I don't think [Neymar] is expensive."

"I think he's expensive in the fact that now you are going to have more players at £100 million, you are going to have more players at £80 million and more players at £60 million. And I think that's the problem."

"So I think the problem is not Neymar. I think the problem is the consequences of Neymar."

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp also commented on Neymar's PSG move as saying, "I thought Fair Play was made so that situations like that can't happen. That's more of a suggestion than a real rule."

Lille director general Marc Inglea, a former Barcelona vice president said, "It's a blow for Barcelona. Neymar is an accelerator to this bright future of Ligue 1. The young talent pool we have here is the best in Europe. For sure we can still compete with PSG. Once you get on the pitch it's 11 vs. 11 and all the transfer fees and salaries narrow a bit."



Wladimir Klitschko (R) last appeared in the ring against Anthony Joshua for the WBA title in Wembley Stadium in London in April. GETTY IMAGES

Aeschylus:

There is no pain so great as the memory of joy in present grief.

15th century 'Miraculous' Gospel
donated to Armenia's Matenadaran

A 15th century manuscript, said to have healing prayers, that journeyed from Western Armenia to Yerevan, to France and then the United States — Iowa and California — found its way back in Armenia, when the Dadaian family, which was entrusted with its safe keeping a century ago, donated the rare artifact to the Matenadaran (The Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts).



During a special ceremony on July 18, Hriy Dadaian and his sister Hripsima (Helen) Dadaian-Parnagian were joined by Hriy's grandson, Rafi, to present the Gospel to Matenadaran officials, asbarez.com wrote.

The story of the manuscript is traced to the Godarich village in the Charsanjak district of Western Armenia, which was home to the St. Kevoik Church, a pilgrimage site for the local Armenians and Kurds alike.

The book was commissioned by Khjan Alexan, who dedicated it to his brother, Gabriel. The current version of the book is adorned with an ornate silver cover, which was added in 1753.

The Dadaian family resided in the village of Lusadarich in Charsanjak Province. During the years of the Genocide, the men of the family were dispersed around the world. Some were in the US, while others were fighting alongside General Antranig or had been killed during the Genocide or had perished.

Yeghsa Dadaian, the wife of Sarkis, who was the eldest of the six Dadaian brothers, became the matriarch of the family. She fearlessly gathered the five women and six children of the Dadaian clan and led them out of Lusadarich village in 1915, traveling east for three years, until they reached Yerevan in 1918 on the eve of Armenia's Independence.

While in Yerevan, Yeghsa met a man from the Godarich village who was extremely ill and asked her to care for her. During that time, he presented Yeghsa with the gospel and asked her to keep it safe until his recovery. Unfortunately, the man did not survive and Yeghsa was left with the manuscript.

Two years later, three teenage Dadaian boys, one of them Yeghsa's son John, left for America to join an uncle who had settled in Davenport, Iowa. Soon after, Yeghsa and her daughters went to France, and she took the Gospel, wrapped in silk and hand-embroidered cloth, with her. In 1934 she took the precious book with her when she crossed the Atlantic to reach America to be with her son in Iowa.

Robert Hardy, Harry Potter actor,
dies at 91

Harry Potter actor Robert Hardy has died at the age of 91, his family said.

They paid tribute to an actor whose theater, film and television career spanned 70 years, theguardian.com reported.

His children — Emma, Justine and Paul — said: "Gruff, elegant, twinkly and always dignified. He is celebrated by all who knew him and loved him, and everyone who enjoyed his work."

"We are immensely grateful to the team at Denville Hall [a London retirement home for actors] for the tender care they gave during his last weeks."

Hardy was also known for his many portrayals of Winston Churchill and as the irascible vet Siegfried Farnon in 'All Creatures Great and Small'.

His early years as an actor were at the Shakespeare Memorial theater in Stratford-upon-Avon where, while playing Henry V, he developed what became a lifelong interest in the longbow, later publishing two books on the subject.

In his later career, Hardy played Cornelius Fudge, in the Harry Potter movies about the boy wizard, but he came to national attention in 1977 when he was offered the role of the mercurial, cantankerous Siegfried in 'All Creatures Great and Small', based on the memoirs of the Yorkshire vet Alf Wright who used the pseudonym James Herriot.

His co-star Christopher Timothy paid tribute to Hardy saying: "He has left an unbelievable legacy of fantastic work for many generations to enjoy and appreciate. A fascinating man, he didn't suffer fools I can tell you, but he was a good fellow."

J.K. Rowling also shared her memories of working with Hardy on the film adaptations of her Harry Potter books. She wrote: "So very sad to hear about Robert Hardy. He was such a talented actor and everybody who worked with him on Potter loved him."

Hardy played Churchill on numerous occasions, notably in the 1981 ITV series 'Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years' for which he won a Bafta.

His family said Hardy was a "meticulous linguist, a fine artist, a lover of music and a champion of literature, as well as a highly respected historian. He was an essential part of the team that raised the great Tudor warship the Mary Rose".

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Add: Iran Cultural & Press Institute, #208 Khorramshahr Avenue Tehran/Iran

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Art & Culture Desk

Iranian cinema won three awards at the 21st Avanca Film Festival in Portugal.

Iranian short film 'AniMal', directed by Bahman and Bahram Ark, received the festival's Best Short Film Award.

The 15-minute film is about a man who wants to cross

Iranian cinema scoops
three accolades at
Portugal festival

the border illegally; so he hunts a ram and decides to escape disguised as the animal.

In addition, 'Kashitban', a film by the director Majid Esmaili-Parsa, took the Cinema Prize for the Best Feature Film.

The Best Cinematography Award of the festival went to Mohammad Fakouri for filming 'Kashitban'.

Moslem Tabatabaei's 'Light Sight' also competed in the Portuguese festival.

'Kashitban' received the award for the best feature film in Avanca 2017.

In total, four panels of jury made up of 37 panelists from 10 countries attributed 18 awards and seven honorable mentions at the event.

Avanca International Film Festival is the only European Film Festival which prepares the ground for exclusive cinematic activities. The festival's goal is to pursue the

global perspective on contemporary features of cinema, television and multimedia.

The Avanca is known as a space for workshops led by personalities of world cinema, and being more than a 'master class', has allowed a unique cinema practice. Every year it has always six or seven workshops, bringing together participants from all over Europe. The media have written that this is the largest European area of professional workshops in the field of cinema.

Avanca is the only festival that congregates a Cinema International Competition, works from the television area, video and new supports of multimedia, with a special concern of exhibit the best world productions done in each category.

The 2017 edition of the festival was held from July 26 to 30, 2017.

China cracks down on
cultural heritage crime

China's market regulator and cultural relics administration started a joint campaign to fight cultural heritage crime.

According to a circular published Friday by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the campaign will target unauthorized business activity, prohibited sales of cultural relics, and trade in counterfeit items, Xinhua reported.



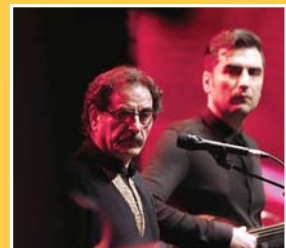
The circular said such acts seriously undermined the security of cultural heritage and disturbed market order.

Market and cultural heritage administrative agencies at all levels will set up work teams to inspect markets, shops, auctions, flea markets, tourist sites and websites, punishing those guilty of violations.

The campaign will last until the end of October, with suspected crimes transferred to police authorities.



'Persian Singing, Legend and Kindness' concert was staged by the renowned Iranian vocalist Shahram Nazeri and his son, Hafez at Tehran's Culture Ministry Hall. The concert was held to preserve Persian language in Iranian singing against Arabic words.



» Weather

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