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Maersk negotiating to develop South Pars

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) announced that negotiations with Denmark's Maersk Group over the development of South Pars oil production project is underway.

"Parallel talks have started with other multinationals to undertake the megaproject," said Karim Zobeidi, the head of a special department at NIOC that oversees the performance of reservoirs, ISNA reported.

Pointing to the \$7.45 billion deal between the French energy major Total and the Copenhagen-based giant that was concluded last month, Zobeidi said, "Because Total has purchased Maersk's oil and gas business, we should follow the talks more prudently."

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Iran sends aid to Rohingya

UN seeks 'massive' aid boost amid Rohingya crisis

Aid agencies have to step up operations "massively" in response to the arrival in Bangladesh of about 400,000 refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar, and the amount of money needed to help them has risen sharply, a senior UN official said on Wednesday.

The influx of Muslim Rohingya to Bangladesh began on Aug. 25 with a sweeping military crackdown in Buddhist-majority Myanmar which the UN rights agency said was a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing", Reuters reported.

"We will all have to ramp up our response massively, from food to shelter," George William Okoth-Obbo, assistant high commissioner for operations at the UN refugee agency said during a visit to the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.

The United Nations said Wednesday some 379,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled Myanmar's troubled Rakhine state for Bangladesh since new violence erupted.

But Okoth-Obbo estimated the figure was now 400,000.

Bangladesh was already home to about 400,000 Rohingya, who fled earlier conflict in Myanmar including a

similar security crackdown in western Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Many of the new arrivals are hungry and sick, without shelter or clean water in the middle of the rainy season.

"We have an emergency within an emergency with conditions in existing camps," he said, pointing to a mud-clogged road in the camp.

Last week, the United Nations appealed for \$77 million to cope with the crisis but Okoth-Obbo said that would not now be enough.

"The appeal that was issued of \$77 million on behalf of the aid agencies was based on the situation as it was roughly about two weeks ago," he said.

"There were only 100,000 people then. We are already four times that figure now. The funds need clearly is going to continue."

He declined to say if he thought aid agencies were getting proper access to the conflict zone in Myanmar, though he said it was important to ensure that people were safe where they were.

"Of course, also that access is provided to all the responders to provide humanitarian assistance," he added.

Myanmar has restricted most aid

agency access to the north of Rakhine.

Iranian aid

Iran said it will send a diplomatic delegation and humanitarian aid to Bangladesh on Thursday to be sent to the Muslims in Myanmar.

"The delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Oceania Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour, along with a team of Iran's Red Crescent Society which carries the Islamic Republic of Iran's humanitarian aid to the Myanmar Muslims is due to travel to Bangladesh on Thursday and provide the aid to the Myanmar refugees via Bangladesh," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday.

He also added that Iran's envoy to Thailand who is the country's accredited ambassador to Myanmar will also meet the Myanmar foreign ministry officials and inform them of Iran's positions on the current developments in the country.

According to Qassemi, the Iranian envoy will also inform the Myanmar officials of Iran's concerns about the situation of Rohingya Muslims.

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French PM shrugs off labor protests, truckers call strike

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe shrugged off nationwide protests against planned reforms to France's strict labor regulations, saying on Wednesday he was "listening" but would nonetheless press ahead with the bill.

In a sign that popular protest could gain momentum, truck drivers belonging to France's second and third largest unions said they would launch a rolling strike on Sept. 25 to force the government into a reversal. Truckers strike previously brought large parts of France to a halt, hurting the economy, Reuters wrote.

More than 200,000 trade unionists turned out on Tuesday for the first mass protests against the labor market reforms on Tuesday, part of a series of measures on Macron's agenda for change. Others, including reform to the unemployment benefits and pension systems, are likely to be even more contested.

The government plans to adopt the decrees on Sept. 22.

"I am listening and I am paying attention. But let me state that the French, when they vote, also have a right to be treated with respect," Philippe told France 2 television. "And the reform that we are putting in place was announced by the president at the time of his election."

Labor unions have thwarted previous attempts by governments on the political right and left to weaken France's strict labor code. In a change of tack, Macron's administration spent weeks negotiating its proposals with union bosses over the summer.

Last month, the government set out measures including a cap on payouts for dismissals judged unfair and greater freedom for companies to hire and fire. The reform makes no direct reference to the 35-hour week, a totem of the labor code, though it hands firms more flexibility to set pay and working conditions.

Macron, a 39-year-old former banker, inadvertently fueled worker anger when he declared on a trip to Athens that he "would cede no ground to slackers, cynics and hardliners."

The Elysee Palace said his comments were aimed at political leaders who had shirked ambitious reform in the past, but union leaders and political opponents on the left accused him of treating workers with contempt.

Protesters in cities across France hit back too. In Paris some carried placards reading "Slacker on Strike" while in Bordeaux demonstrators chanted: "Macron you're screwed, the slackers are in the streets."

Milad Ebadipour boosted the confidence of Iran to record a 3-2 (20-25, 17-25, 27-25, 25-21, 15-12) win over USA in the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup at the Nippon Gaiishi Hall on Wednesday.

Having been contained by USA in the first two sets, Ebadipour stepped up on offence and finished with 18 points, fivb.com reported.

Amir Ghafour and Mohammad-Javad Manavinejad were among the Iranian players who played a vital role in the comeback, scored 15 and 11 points, respectively. Matthew Anderson and Taylor Sander made 17 points apiece on a losing effort.

Iran maintained its clean win-record, while USA dropped to 1-1 in the 2017 edition of the World Grand Champions Cup. Five of Iran's six wins at the tournament have come in five sets.

USA fielded in a powerful combination of players led by Sander and Anderson who dominated in attacks to overwhelm Iran in the first two sets. USA led in the third set but lost its grip as Iran setter Saied Marouf



made brilliant assists for his hitters. Ebadipour made up for his previous attack mistake to put Iran ahead at 27-26, until Manavinejad's strong spike closed the set in the Asian giant's favor.

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UK gov't wins Parliament vote to ease Brexit agenda

After navigating the first hurdle of a key Brexit bill, British Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday won another Parliamentary vote which will help prevent opposition MPs from blocking future legislation.

MPs in the House of Commons voted by 320 to 301 in support of a government motion to guarantee that it holds the majority of places on public bill committees, AFP reported on Wednesday.

The move by the ruling Conservative Party was aimed at wresting control of key committees which scrutinize draft laws, which could define how Britain withdraws from the European Union.

Membership of the committees normally reflects the composition of the Commons, meaning that any majority government should be guaranteed control, assuming none of their own MPs rebel.



But the Conservatives lost their majority in a June snap election, requiring them to reach an informal deal with a smaller party in order to govern, but this does not extend to committee membership.

Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn said the government's attempt to change the rules was an "unprecedented attempt to rig Parliament."

Had the government lost Tuesday's vote, Labour would have been able to block future legislation in the committee stage, regardless of whether it could pass on the floor of the Commons.

Commons Leader Andrea Leadsom said the change to the membership of committees would enable the government to push ahead with Brexit.

"If the government has a working majority to pass legislation on the floor of the House, then the government should also be able to make progress with legislation in committees," she told Parliament.

"We're getting on with the task set for us by voters, honoring the result of both the EU referendum and the general election," Leadsom said.

But for the Liberal Democrat MP Alistair Carmichael, the vote amounted to the Conservatives "hijacking Parliament."

"It is a bitter irony that Brexiters who spent their careers championing parliamentary sovereignty have now chosen to set it down the river," he said.

"This willful eroding of Parliament's ability to scrutinize legislation sets a deeply worrying precedent."

The government has repeatedly been accused of trying to bypass Parliament in implementing Brexit.

It failed, for instance, in a court bid to give ministers, rather than MPs, the power to trigger the withdrawal process. Critics have also accused May of trying to expand executive powers with a landmark bill to transfer EU law into British legislation.

The so-called Repeal Bill passed its first stage in the Commons on Tuesday, but is likely to face further opposition as it enters the line-by-line scrutiny of the committee stage later this year.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani plans to travel to New York City to attend the United Nations General Assembly, to be held next week, the president's Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi said on Wednesday.

President stresses importance of attracting expatriate investment

New governors general appointed

Political Desk

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani stressed the importance of attracting investments by Iran's expatriates and foreigners to accelerate the country's development.

The obstacles on the way of investment by expatriates and foreigners as well as hindrances to attracting private sectors should be removed, Rouhani said at the cabinet session held on Wednesday morning, IRNA reported.

Rouhani also called for turning the economic growth in the country into "tangible economic growth."

"According to the figures of the first three months of the current [Iranian] year, we have been on the right track; therefore, we must attempt to have a tangible economic growth in the country."

"Production and economic prosperity in the provinces must rely on the provinces' potentials, and the governor generals can remove the obstacles to show the best performance in attracting investment and creating employment and economic growth," the president added.

New appointments

Also on Wednesday, seven new governors general were appointed by the government during the cabinet session.

"Accepting a responsibility like governor general, who is the highest-ranking governmental official in the provinces, is undoubtedly a heavy responsibility," said the president.

"Our legitimacy comes from the people's votes; that means 24 million votes are considered the legitimacy of the administration, and 42 million others [the total who voted] indicate the legitimacy of our Islamic establishment," Rouhani said.

"People voiced their wishes and demands during the elections in various circles and gatherings, and we must pay more attention to these demands in managing the provinces."

Pursuing policy of "moderation"

The president stressed the need for pursuing a policy of moderation by governors general and all authorities in different managerial levels.

He also urged all governors general in the provinces to make selections based on merit.

UN seeks 'massive' aid boost...

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Suu Kyi to miss UN meeting

Meanwhile, Myanmar's national leader Aung San Suu Kyi will not attend the upcoming UN General Assembly because of the Rohingya crisis, her office said on Wednesday.

Critics have called for her to be stripped of her Nobel Peace Prize for failing to do more to halt the violence.

Suu Kyi, in her first address to the UN General Assembly as leader in September last year, defended her government's efforts to resolve the crisis over treatment of the Muslim minority.

Sympathizers say her hands are tied by the army, which still runs a chunk of the government and has complete control over all security matters.

Suu Kyi will give a public address next week on the crisis, her spokesman said.



Leader: Expediency Council should act according to principles of revolution

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday that the Expediency Council should remain committed to the principles of the Islamic revolution and fully pursue its goals.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with the newly appointed chairman and members of the council in Tehran on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

He said that the body is the heritage of the late Found-

er of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini and founded based on his ideas.

Ayatollah Khamenei described the three most important duties of the council as: "Discerning the expediency of the system, advice on charting general policies for the country, and offering solutions to problems the country deals with."

The Expediency Council's main task is to mediate in disputes between the country's Parliament and the

Guardian Council, a body that checks parliamentary ratifications for consistency with the Constitution and Islamic law.

The council, chaired by Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, also serves as an advisory body to the Leader in shaping the general policies of the Islamic Republic.

Born in Iraq, the 69-year-old Ayatollah Shahroudi is well known for his 10-year tenure as judiciary chief, from 1999 to 2009.

Brazilian National Day marked in Tehran

By Farzam Vanaki

Brazilian National Day was celebrated in a ceremony held at the residence of the country's ambassador to Iran, Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos, in Tehran on September 12.

Every year on September 7, Brazil celebrates its independence from the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves which was declared on the same day in 1822.

However, for certain reasons, this year's function was held a few days later.

In 1808, French troops commanded by Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Portugal as a retaliation for the Iberian country's refusal to participate in the trade embargo against the UK. Fleeing persecution, the Portuguese monarchs transferred the Portuguese Court from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro, then capital of Colonial Brazil. In 1815, Prince Regent John VI created the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves, elevating Brazil to the rank of kingdom and increasing its administrative independence. Brazil, Portugal, and Great Britain were the three major contributors to the Independence of Brazil, all three motivated by the circumstances peculiar to each.

Brazil's independence was ultimately won through diplomacy after three years of war against Portugal.

The ceremony was attended by a number of top Brazilian and Iranian officials, representatives of the two countries' private sectors, other ambassadors to Iran, and military attachés from the South American country.

Among the high-ranking officials from the two countries present at the ceremony were Brazilian Vice-Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Eumar Novacki and Director General for the Americas at Iran's Foreign Ministry Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh.

Addressing the ceremony, de Azeredo Santos thanked the Iranian Foreign Ministry for the assistance it had provided his embassy in expanding relations between the two countries.

He added, "Brazil and Iran have a long history of friendly bilateral relations.

More than a hundred years ago, in 1903, the two countries established diplomatic relations, which have always been based on mutual friendship, admiration and respect."

Despite the geographical distance between the two countries, he added, both societies have a great deal in common.

"Brazil and Iran are blessed with vi-

isolation."

In that sense, Brazil was very happy with the successful signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is a big success for Iranian diplomacy, he added.

"The implementation of the JCPOA, which we fully support, offers a very promising way for Iran's international relations. Trade between the two countries has grown quickly over the past years, reaching \$2.3 billion in 2016."

In the past few years, the Brazilian envoy said, the two sides have witnessed an important increase in the number of trade and government missions from both countries.

"Last week, our Minister of Mines and Energy Fernando Coelho Filho paid a visit to Iran and had important meetings with Iranian authorities. The Brazilian Ministry of Industry, Development and Commerce Marcos Pereira is also scheduled to visit Tehran soon, in the context of our bilateral Economic and Commercial Commission."

He said in the cultural sector, his embassy will hold a Brazilian film week in Iran in October, with the participation of the renowned director, Cacá Diegues, who is considered to be one of the founding fathers of Brazil's modern cinema.

Speaking at the ceremony, Keshavarz-Zadeh said relations between Iran and Brazil are historical, which shows the two countries' willingness to strengthen their balanced, growing and sustainable ties.

He added that as forerunners in South America and the Middle East, Brazil and Iran can act as links to facilitate expansion of each other's foreign relations in respective regions.

"The two sides can improve political and economic relations in many fields and sectors including energy, transportation, aviation, shipping and making investments to begin joint production in Iran's free trade zones. The large number of senior political and economic officials exchanged between the two states in the past four years is indicative of the two governments' willingness to forge economic ties."



IRAN DAILY
Brazilian Ambassador to Iran Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos (L) and Director General for the Americas at Iran's Foreign Ministry Mohammad Keshavarz-Zadeh pose for a photo in a ceremony in Tehran on September 12, 2017 to celebrate Brazilian National Day.

Iran arrests Daesh-linked terrorist near capital

A division of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday it has arrested a Takfiri terrorist linked to a Daesh-affiliated ring, which planned to carry out terror attacks in the capital, Tehran.

The Daesh element was apprehended in the Andisheh town in Shahrivar County, Tehran Province, Colonel Amin Yaamini, the commander of the local IRGC division said, Press TV reported.

The arrestee, he said, belonged to the Daesh-affiliated Ajnad al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant) group, which is mainly active in the western Syrian provinces of Idlib and Hama.

"So far, very important information has been collected from the Daesh element's phone, and he remains under investigation," he said.



The commander said the terrorist group has been intending to conduct terror operations in Tehran during the holy lunar month of Muharram - when Shia Muslims gather in throngs to mourn the martyrdom of the Third Shia Imam, Imam Hussein and his companions.

He, however, did not specify whether the IRGC had discovered the plans by examining the detainee's cell phone or had found out about them otherwise.

On June 7, gunmen mounted almost simultaneous assaults on Iran's Parliament and the mausoleum of the late Founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini. Daesh claimed responsibility for the strikes. The twin attacks killed 17 people and injured over 15 more. In response, the IRGC fired six ballistic missiles into Daesh bases in the eastern Syrian later in June, leaving at least 65 terrorists dead.

Halimah Yacob named Singapore's first Malay president

An establishment figure has been named Singapore's first female president after a "walkover" election that saw no vote after no other contenders ran for the position.

Halimah Yacob, a former speaker of Parliament from the Muslim Malay minority, did not have to face an election for the largely ceremonial post originally due this month after authorities decided her rivals did not meet strict eligibility criteria, *aljazeera.com* reported.

Yacob, 63, is expected to be sworn into office on Thursday.

Yacob is Singapore's first ethnic Malay president in 47 years. Authorities had decided to allow only candidates from the Malay community to put themselves forward for the presidency, a bid to foster harmony in the city-state of 5.5 million people which is dominated by ethnic Chinese.

The other two contenders, Salleh Marican and Farid Khan, were both denied eligibility, having fallen short of a constitutional rule that required any candidate from the private sector to have led a company with shareholder equity of at least 500 million Singapore dollars (\$372m).

'Proud moment'

Following the announcement, Yacob thanked her supporters in a speech, calling it "a proud moment for Singapore, for multiculturalism and multi-racialism."

It was not the first time in the affluent city-state — which is tightly controlled



en.netralnews.com

and has been ruled by the same political party for decades — that the government has disqualified candidates for the presidency, making an election unnecessary.

While some have applauded the historic moment, the election has also drawn public criticism due to what was seen as a

lack of democratic process.

Yacob, who wears a headscarf, addressed these concerns, saying: "I am a president for everyone, regardless of race, language, religion or creed."

"Although there's no election, my commitment to serve you remains the same."

The president is vested with the responsibility of overseeing the country's national asset reserves, but does not hold any of the executive powers of the prime minister or members of the cabinet.

Netanyahu supports Kurdish independence vote

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voiced support for the formation of a Kurdish state in the lead-up to a planned independence referendum in Iraq's Kurdistan region, which has sparked strong criticisms from the central government as well as Iraq's neighbors.

In a Wednesday announcement, Netanyahu's office said Israel supports the "legitimate efforts of the Kurdish people to attain a state of its own," *Press TV* reported.

The statement, however, noted that Tel Aviv opposes the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has long been fighting for autonomy in Turkey.

"Israel opposes the PKK and considers it a terrorist organization," it said. During a meeting with a delegation of 33 US Republican congressmen in mid-August, Netanyahu expressed interest in partitioning Iraq and establishing an independent Kurdish state in the country.

Netanyahu does not frequently speak publicly about the highly sensitive issue which also worries Turkey.

The last time Netanyahu addressed the issue publicly was in 2014 when he said in a speech that Israel should "support the Kurdish aspiration for independence."

Israel has a longstanding relationship with the Kurds, whom it regards as one of the few non-Arab allies in the area.

A report published in the New Yorker magazine in 2004 said Israeli military and intelligence operatives were active in Kurdistan areas and providing training for commando units.

According to the report, Israel has been expanding its presence in Kurdistan and encouraging Kurds, its allies in the region, to create an independent state. The Kurdish referendum is scheduled for September 25, despite the strong opposition from the central government in Baghdad and Iraq's neighboring countries.

On Tuesday Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi rejected the planned Kurdish referendum on independence from the Arab country as "unconstitutional," warning that the Kurds are "illegally" exporting Iraq's oil.

The comments came a few hours after the country's parliament overwhelmingly voted against the plebiscite, which has been planned by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The vote prompted Kurdish lawmakers to quit the parliament floor.

Several regional countries, including Iran and Turkey, are concerned that such a referendum could ignite a fresh conflict with Baghdad and possibly neighboring countries, diverting attention from the ongoing war against Daesh Takfiri terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

Spain prosecutors threaten to arrest Catalan pro-referendum mayors

Spain's state prosecutor on Wednesday ordered a criminal probe of Catalan mayors who cooperate with an October 1 independence referendum deemed illegal by Madrid and threatened to arrest those who do not comply.

The prosecutors' office ordered the mayors who have agreed to help stage the vote to be summoned to court as official suspects and if they do not appear to "order their arrest," according to a copy of the ruling obtained by AFP.

Catalonia's pro-separatist government has asked the wealthy northeastern region's 948 mayors to provide facilities for polling stations for the plebiscite.



AFP

So far over 700 mostly smaller municipalities have agreed to participate.

The ruling comes a day after prosecutors ordered police in Catalonia to seize ballot boxes, election flyers and any other item that could be used in the referendum.

Prosecutors have already launched an official complaint against Catalan president Carles Puigdemont and members of his government over their referendum plans, accusing them of civil disobedience, misfeasance and misappropriation of public funds — the latter carrying jail sentences of up to eight years.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's conservative government has vowed to do everything in his power to stop the referendum. It argues Spain's 1978 constitution stipulates that regional governments cannot call an independence referendum.

Spain's Constitutional Court has suspended a referendum law that was fast-tracked through Catalonia's regional parliament last week but the Catalan government has vowed to go ahead with the vote nonetheless. The court has since 2015 declared regional independence referendums to be unconstitutional.

Catalan authorities routinely ignore the court's decisions as they do not recognize its legitimacy.

Catalonia, which is roughly the size of Belgium and accounts for about one-fifth of Spain's economic output, already has significant powers over matters such as education and healthcare.

But Spain's economic worries, coupled with a perception that the region pays more in taxes than it receives in investments and transfers from Madrid, have helped push the cause of secession from the fringes of Catalan politics to center stage.

Adding to the rise in separatist sentiment was a 2010 ruling by the Constitutional Court striking down parts of a 2006 autonomy charter which granted new powers to Catalonia and recognized it as "a nation".

Hundreds of thousands of Catalans rallied on Monday in Barcelona on their national day to demand their region's secession from Spain and support the right to vote.

Saudis say time not ripe for int'l Yemen probe

The time is not right for an independent international inquiry into human rights violations in Yemen, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the UN in Geneva said on Wednesday, responding to calls from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Netherlands and Canada are backing a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council, mandating an international inquiry, but Saudi Ambassador Abdulaziz Alwasil said a national Yemeni commission would be in a better position to investigate, according to Reuters.

Saudi Arabia and its allies have been carrying out airstrikes against Yemen since March 2015 in support of the country's former government which stepped down.



lbtimes.co.uk

The aggression has killed over 10,000 people. "We are working together to hopefully come to a compromise," Alwasil said.

"We have no objection to the inquiry itself, we just have a discussion about the timing, whether this is the right time to establish an international commission, with the difficulties on the ground," Alwasil said.

UN human rights chief, Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, has long called for an independent international inquiry into the conflict and says Yemen's National Commission is not up to the job of investigating the situation.

Zeid said on Monday there had been only "minimal" efforts at holding people to account in what the United Nations has branded the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

For the past two years the 47-member Human Rights Council has rejected the Dutch demand for an international probe and backed the Saudi view that favors a Yemeni commission.

Alwasil said he again expected the council to back its stance, adding that a locally formed commission would have better access and connections around the country.

The Saudi envoy said the international community should focus its efforts on gaining access for humanitarian personnel.

The Saudi-led coalition has also set up a team to investigate civilian casualties. On Tuesday, it said it had found a series of deadly airstrikes had been largely justified.

Hundreds of Afghans demonstrate against 'offensive' US leaflets

Hundreds of demonstrators rallied near the Afghan capital on Tuesday to denounce a propaganda leaflet drop by US forces last week that caused widespread offense and forced American commanders to issue an apology, Reuters reported.

The leaflet drop near Bagram Air Field, one of the biggest US bases in Afghanistan, which was supposed to encourage people in the fight against the Taliban, had images depicting dogs carrying a flag of the group, which contained religious verses.

"The Americans have insulted Muslims through this action and their beliefs and we will not sit quietly by," said Mir Rahman, a protester at the rally in Qarabagh District near Bagram. "If the Americans and NATO continue to insult Islam, they will face the same fate that the Russians faced in Afghanistan."

US commanders apologized for the leaflet and promised to hold those responsible to account but the affair has caused



aa.com.tr

severe embarrassment at a time of heightened sensitivity over the separate issue of civilian casualties caused by airstrikes.

While the NATO-led Resolute Support coalition has generally taken pains to avoid cultural insensitivities, there have been several other examples where international forces, most of which come from non-Muslim cultures, have caused offense.

In a previous incident in 2012, when copies of the

Qur'an were mistakenly burned, a number of people died in the following protests. So far, demonstrations have been on a much smaller scale but some protesters said they might continue.

"Apologies on their own will never cure any wound," said Mehrauddin, another protester, who like many Afghans, goes by one name. "If the Americans repeat such an insult in future we will keep up our demonstrations and, if needed, attack Bagram base," he said.

Supreme Court blocks new refugees under Trump travel ban

The US Supreme Court gave a short-term win to the Trump administration Tuesday, bolstering part of a travel ban that will allow the administration to block new refugees arriving from six majority-Muslim nations.

In a brief order and with no dissents, the justices reversed rulings by a federal judge in Hawaii and the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, *latimes.com* wrote.

The 9th Circuit had cleared the way for as many as 24,000 refugees to be exempt from the ban and come to this country as long as one of several nonprofit groups had given a "formal assurance" they were prepared to receive them.

Administration lawyers argued these people did not qualify for an exemption because they had "no contact" or previous relationship with anyone in this

country, which was the criteria set under a previous Supreme Court decision.

On Monday, government lawyers filed an emergency appeal with Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who agreed to a temporary freeze.

On Tuesday, the full court said it had granted the administration's appeal. The 9th Circuit's ruling "is stayed with respect to refugees covered by a formal assurance, pending further order of this court."

Next month, the high court is scheduled to hear arguments on the legality of Trump's travel ban. It is possible the justices may decide the entire matter is moot by then. The travel ban was supposed to be in effect for 90 to 120 days. While the administration won Tuesday on the issue of refugees, it lost in seeking to limit grandparents and other close relatives from entering the country.

SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

Iran eyes opening new trade route into Europe

Deputy minister of roads and urban development said opening a new trade route into Europe other than Turkey can boost economic activities via road transportation.

Davoud Keshavarzian made the remark in a meeting with Belarusian envoy in Tehran on Wednesday, while voicing Iran's keen interest in developing transit cooperation and business and commercial relations with Belarus, Mehr News Agency reported.



IRNA

"At the moment, Iran holds extensive transactions and communication with European countries mostly carried out through Turkey. We are interested to open another pathway to Europe alongside Turkey, which will lead to further economic and commercial activities via the transportation infrastructures of Iran and Belarus."

Pointing to the efforts made to enhance the transit relations between the two countries, Keshavarzian added that the respective authorities of the two countries have agreed to review the number of bilateral traffic and transit licenses and the issue is currently on the organization's agenda.

Belarusian ambassador, for his part, expressed interest in expanding relations with the Islamic Republic, adding "there are favorable conditions and capacities to increase road transport and transit between the two countries."

He also voiced hope that serious steps be taken to promote trade transactions between the two sides.

Tehran, Yerevan to ease customs formalities

The Armenian parliament ratified an agreement on the establishment of a simplified customs corridor with Iran.

The agreement on the joint use of the Meghri-Nourduz Customs Corridor was signed in Yerevan back in 2016, with the aim of facilitating mutual trade and customs control between the two countries, ARKA news agency reported.

Under this agreement, if goods are inspected on one side of the border, there will be no need for a second and careful inspection on the other side.

The deal has already been approved by the Armenian government and Iranian Parliament.

Vice Chairman of the State Revenue Committee Vakhtang Mirumyan said the customs corridor between Armenia and Iran will ease road traffic.

"The launch of the joint gate and its operation means elimination of double control and procedures. The second part of the agreement clearly mentions the steps which facilitate the movement of goods via means of transport, as well as passenger transportation," he was quoted as saying by Armenpress.

"Customs control is carried out by the country of entry," he added.

Iran, Germany reach finance deal in mining

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Managing Director Mahdi Karbasian announced a finance agreement between Iran and Germany, saying Iran will receive good news about mining finances from a number of countries.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the ceremony for introducing the new CEO of Iran's National Steel Company, Karbasian said "there are good news awaiting Iran concerning the mines and mining industry," Mehr News Agency reported.

According to the official, two plans have been finalized which include the development of Hormuzgan Steel Company and a new development plan for Mobarakeh Steel Company.

Mobarakeh Steel Company reached an agreement with a German investor on Monday, under which the Iranian steel company will receive investments from the European country.

Karbasian said that Germany's finance for the mining company has been finalized, but the figure will be revealed after the deal is signed. According to Karbasian, Italy is also considering to offer some finances as well.

Karbasian added that Iran is also in talks with China in order to attract foreign investment.

The recent contract signed between Iran's Ministry of Economy and South Korea has also provided good opportunities to finance mines and mining industries in the country, he added.

Mercedes-Benz Trucks signs contract with Iran Khodro

Germany's Mercedes-Benz Trucks signed a contract with Tehran-based automaker Iran Khodro, parent company Daimler AG told Reuters, laying the foundation for resuming distribution of its trucks in Iran.

The deal between Iran Khodro and Mercedes-Benz Trucks includes creating a joint company that provides sales and after-sale services in the Islamic Republic.

According to the report, a second deal would be also signed next month to create a joint venture in Iran for production of heavy vehicles including Actros trucks.

French PSA – the maker of Peugeot and Citroens – and rival Renault have pushed hard into Iran since its 2015 deal with world powers that saw international sanctions lifted in return for modification on Tehran's nuclear activities.

PSA has signed production deals worth €700 million (\$768 million), while Renault has announced a new plant investment to increase its production capacity to 350,000 vehicles a year.

Daimler also plans to return as a shareholder in the former engine joint venture Iranian Diesel Engine Manufacturing Co. (IDEM) based in Tabriz to build diesel engines. The German company has said it intended to buy 30 percent of shares which it had sold in IDEM.

The company has a long track record in Iran with a business dating back to the 1950s, where it sold up to 10,000 vehicles



REUTERS

a year. There is a high pent-up demand in the Iranian truck market, where the country is

estimated to replace 56,000 commercial vehicles over the next three to five years.

According to Iran's Ministry of Indus-

try, Mine and Trade plan, about 200,000 commercial vehicles will be replaced in the coming years.

Iran top exporter of goods to Afghanistan

Afghan Ambassador to Iran Nasir Ahmad Nour said on Wednesday that in the current year Afghanistan has imported the highest amounts of goods from Iran.

He made the remarks at the 4th Iran's National Pistachio Festival in Damghan, IRNA reported.

Ahmad Nour said that in the preceding years, Pakistan had the first rank in exporting goods to Afghanistan, but this year Iran allocated the position to itself.

He said the two countries are two friendly and neighboring states with longstanding good relations and added that many of Afghan cabinet ministers have visited Iran and are familiar with Iranian goods.

The 4th National Pistachio Festival began its 2-day work on Wednesday.

Ambassadors of Afghanistan and Bangladesh as well as gubernatorial of Semnan province as well as other officials and a parliament vice-speaker attended the inaugural inauguration ceremony of the festival.



IRNA

It is predicted that this year 40,000 tons of pistachio will be collected from Damghan gardens.

The head of Iran Pistachio Association said in August that about 150,000 tons of pistachio worth \$1.5 billion are estimated to be exported from Iran during the current Iranian year (started March 21), to register an 11 percent and 25 percent growth in weight and value respectively compared to the previous year.

Mohsen Jalalpour, who is former president of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, said last year, 135,000 tons of the product worth around \$1.2 billion were exported from the country.

According to Deputy Minister of Industries, Mining and Trade Mostafa Khosrotaaj, Iran supplies more than 50 percent of the world pistachio market.

Close to 16,660 tons of pistachio worth \$173.66 million were exported from Iran to 56 countries, including the US, Ukraine, the UAE, Italy, Bahrain, Brazil, Bulgaria, Turkey, Canada, Qatar, Switzerland, France, Poland, Sweden, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Netherlands, Thailand, Japan, Romania and Hong Kong in the first four months of the current fiscal year (March 21-July 22).

Pistachio is cultivated in 19 Iranian provinces.

Maersk negotiating to...



SHANA

From Page 1

According to the official, the French giant is carrying out operations on Qatar's oil layer in the joint oilfield with Iran in the Persian Gulf that is why NIOC ought to conduct negotiations with tact so as to not lose ground to the Arab state.

Maersk has already drilled more than 300 wells and extracted more than 1 billion barrels of oil for Qatar from the Qatari section of South Pars, which is known as the North Dome.

According to reports, French energy major Total S.A. took over drilling and production operations in the North Dome from Maersk last year.

Highlighting the importance of collaboration with foreign firms to develop the second and third development phases of the field's oil layer, the official noted that the layer's complicated geological structure necessitates qualified companies to implement enhanced oil recovery techniques from the beginning of their operation.

"Pars Oil and Gas Company, as the contractor of South Pars oil layer, has held talks with a number of international companies, yet no agreement has been signed," Zobeidi said, adding that Schlumberger Ltd, the world's leading oilfield services provider, was also reportedly interested in drilling the South Pars oil layer, but it failed to reach agreement with NIOC.

According to Roham Qasemi, managing director of Petroiran Development

Company, cumulative crude oil output from the field's oil layer has surpassed 2.5 million barrels over roughly six months.

Iran began to extract crude oil from South Pars in March using FPSO Cyrus, a floating production storage and off-loading vessel in March. The FPSO was reportedly built in Singapore and cost \$300 million.

"Maersk's operational capacity and know-how to drill horizontal oil wells as deep as 10,000 meters are key to its success in developing the South Pars oil layer, as we are still deprived of such expertise," Qasemi said.

Underscoring the country's domestic capacity to develop the project's first phase, he added that Iranian experts drilled 39,000 meters of offshore well in addition to installing a 2,500-ton platform.

Asked about employing another FPSO in the second phase, Qasemi noted that Petroiran, POGC and the Danish conglomerate are holding technical talks about the issue.

Iran aims to stabilize production from the SP layer at 25,000 barrels per day and gradually boost output to 55,000-60,000 bpd.

NIOC plans to employ enhanced oil recovery methods to boost the extraction rate in fields by 35%. South Pars oil layer is located 130 kilometers off Iran's coast in the Persian Gulf with an estimated 7 billion barrels of oil in place, but it is hard to put an accurate estimate on the volume unless more exploratory wells are drilled.

Vietnam's automobile sales in the first eight months of this year were 177,037 units, down six percent against the same period last year, the Vietnam Automobile Manufacturers Association said on Wednesday.

South-South trade cooperation key to sustainable, inclusive model of globalization



fratinivergano.eu

Thanks to globalization and trade liberalization of commodities, services and goods, global trade has reached an unprecedented level. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, world trade in goods was valued at approximately \$16 trillion. North-North trade generates the highest trade volume at approximately six trillion; trade flows within and between countries of the Global South amount to 4.6 trillion.

Trade between the Global South and the Global North — approximately between 2.5 and 3 trillion — add up to less than the trade flows within the Earth's two main poles, IPS reported.

With a rapid population

growth on the horizon, the potential to increase South-South trade and South-North trade is crucial to maintain economic growth and promote a sustainable and inclusive model of globalization.

With more than 80 percent of the world population living in developing countries, South-South trade has the potential to increase in the years to come and to become a vector for economic growth and prosperity for a major world region whose potential has not been fully tapped during past decades.

The 2017 International Day for South-South Cooperation is an important opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of strengthening and enhancing economic cooperation between

the world's most populous regions.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, seven out of 10 countries with the highest proven oil reserves in the world are located in the Global South (Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Libya). If we look at the world's diamond producing countries, four out of seven are in the sub-Saharan Africa region (Botswana, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Namibia). Not only does the Global South account for more than 80 percent of the world population, it is also blessed with abundant natural resources.

There are numerous obstacles to unleashing the full potential

of South-South trade cooperation, notably in the Arab region. In 1997, 14 Arab countries took the initiative to establish the Greater Arab Free Trade Area — a pan-Arab free trade and economic union — to spur economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa.

This initiative can still become a success story if Arab states agree to remove and to eliminate tariffs hindering trade liberalization from taking full effect. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council is a good starting point. But even within this grouping which is one of the most successful economic trade block, setbacks occur.

In addition, the unprecedented rise of military conflicts in the Arab region has hindered trade

and economic growth. Ideological and political differences are still dividing Arab states in different sub-camps. These obstacles are also rife in many other regions in the Global South.

Another fundamental problem impeding better South-South trade cooperation is the current structure of the trade system.

Many countries in the Global South are raw material producers with a strong primary sector in which the economic backbone is built primarily on the export of raw materials and commodities.

Commodity and raw material prices are subject to volatility spurring social instability, as witnessed during the 2007-2008 world food price crisis or in the recent drop in oil prices.

Main Indices of TSE

Index	Value	Change	Percent
Total Index	83504.7	2522.5	3.11
Industry Index	72531.8	2306.2	3.29
Free Float Index	91168.0	3826	4.27
First Market Index	58215.6	2388.7	4.21
Second Market Index	183617.4	2030.5	1.14

Overall Index details on 20170913

First	83469.0	Change end of year(%)	919.04%
High	83527.9	Historical highest	89500.6 (20140105)
Low	83502.7	Historical lowest	100 (1369/1/6)
Close	83504.7	Base Value	100 (1369/1/6)
Change	2522.5		

Industry Index details on 20170913

First	72487.6	Change end of year(%)	1034.32%
Max Value	72547.7	Historical highest	75181.9 (20140105)
Max Value	72675.1	Historical lowest	1226.8 (1377/8/25)
Closing	72531.8	Base Value	
Closing	2306.2		

Free Float Index details on 20170913

First	91092.1	Change end of year(%)	
Max Value	89665	Historical highest	105040 (20140105)
Max Value	89154.9	Historical lowest	
Closing	91168.0	Base Value	
Closing	3826		

Main Board Index details on 20170913

First	58197.5	Change end of year(%)	787.77%
Max Value	58236.8	Historical highest	67441.4 (20140105)
Max Value	56380.7	Historical lowest	
Closing	58215.6	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	2388.7		

Secondary Index details on 20170913

First	183524.1	Change end of year(%)	1317.58%
Max Value	183676.6	Historical highest	181353 (20170522)
Max Value	177894	Historical lowest	
Closing	183617.4	Base Value	4740.4 (1381/6/2)
Closing	2235.2		

Houses more affordable across half of UK

Homes across half of the UK are more affordable than before the financial crisis, with Birmingham, Glasgow and Leeds among the places where the gap between earnings and house prices has fallen, a study has found.

Yorkshire Building Society research shows that with a continuing affordability crisis in London, popular destinations for people leaving the capital, such

as Lewes and Exeter, have become increasingly affordable in the period since Northern Rock was bailed out 10 years ago, according to The Guardian.

The findings, based on official earnings figures and Land Registry data for house prices in 356 local authority areas, come as the number of people departing London is at a five-year high, with net outward migration of 93,300 people in the year to June 2016, 80 percent higher than five years earlier.



MATT CARDY/GETTY IMAGES

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Housing affordability graphic

Andrew McPhillips, the chief economist at Yorkshire Building Society, said: "Across London and large swaths of southern England, which were already

were before the credit crunch.

"While some northern cities, such as Manchester, are less affordable than they were in 2007, in much of the north of England, Scotland and Wales, the gap between earnings and house prices is about one-third of the average for London."

Separate figures from the property consultancy Savills show that the average house price in London rose from £286,000 in June 2007 to £482,000 in June 2017. During this period, they increased by £8,000 in Yorkshire and fell by £8,000 in the north-east.

Lucian Cook, Savills' director of residential research, said: "We are at a high-water mark in terms of the differential. London is showing signs of slowing."

As India Inc struggles to cut down debt, the economy suffers



pennyshots.com

India's cash crunch and confusion over the introduction of a national sales tax were initially blamed for pulling economic growth down to its weakest pace in more than three years. But that is masking a more debilitating factor affecting the economy — corporate debt.

Thomson Reuters data, based on the latest annual earnings reports, showed India's corporate debt rose to a seven-year high at the end of March. More than a fifth of large companies did not earn enough to pay interest on their loans and the pace of new loans fell to the lowest in more than six decades, Reuters wrote.

The Indian government reported on August 31 that annual GDP growth in the quarter ended June dropped to 5.7 percent, an envious pace for many countries but India's weakest since early 2014.

It was blamed on attempts by the government to flush out money hidden from the tax man, which caused a cash crunch, and the introduction of a general sales tax (GST), which prompted businesses and consumers to hit the pause button.

But Indian business executives said they are more concerned about the impact of soured loans on bank balance

sheets, which prevent them from getting the full benefit of central bank rate cuts. That is sapping India's economic vitality, they said.

Since January 2015, the central bank has cut policy rates by 200 basis points, or two percentage points, but commercial bank benchmark lending rates have come down less, by about 120 basis points.

A. Issac George, chief financial officer of GVK Power and Infrastructure Ltd., said, "Interest rates are still very high."

He said his firm's borrowing costs have remained unchanged at about 11 percent.

"That makes it tougher for the conglomerate to lower its net debt of around 179 billion rupees (€2.1 billion)."

GVK's earnings covered just half of its debt servicing costs, Credit Suisse data showed, below the one percent threshold typically seen as a bare minimum.

"We are not in a position to take a decision on whether we should expand our business or set up new businesses," said George.

GVK is not alone in trying to manage high debts.

Major Currencies

Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2913	Chinese Yuan	0.1531
Euro	1.1978	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.3305	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3178
Australian Dollar	0.8022	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0090	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

Major Commodities

Crude Oil	\$48.25	Silver	\$17.92
Gold	\$1334.80	Platinum	\$987.40
Copper	\$3.01	Wheat	\$442.25

Archeologists discover third horse burial from Parthian era in northern Iran

The second season of archeological excavations in the Vastmin ancient site and cemetery in Kiasar, Mazandaran Province, led to the discovery of the third horse burial from the Parthian era.



mehrnews.com

The Research Institute of Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization quoted Abdolmotaleb Sharifi, head of the archeological team, as saying, "The aim of the archeological excavations in Vastmin is to explore the 12 crypts remaining from 2015-2016 explorations and demarcate the precincts of the site", IRNA reported.

He underscored the importance of conducting probing operations for determining the limits and demarcating the precincts of the 15-hectare Vastmin area.

Following the probe, he said, it was found out that there are over 250 crypts in the area.

Pointing out that one of the burial traditions in the Parthian era was to bury the horse together with its dead owner, Sharifi said, "In this tradition, they could sacrifice the horse and bury it along with the body of its owner."

Two horse burials were discovered during the previous explorations in the site, he said.

During current excavation season, archeologists succeeded in discovering the third horse burial in the area, he noted.

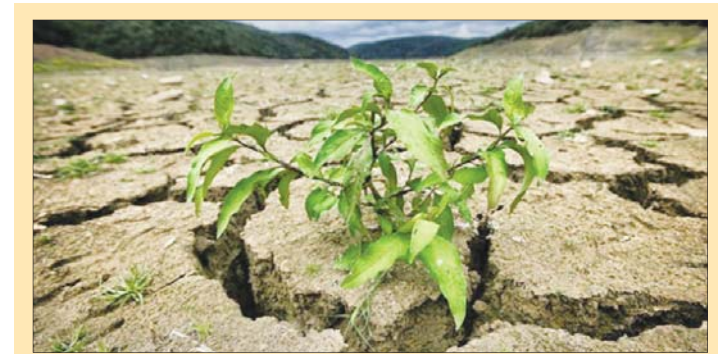
Pressures on global land resources are now greater than ever, as a rapidly increasing population coupled with rising levels of consumption is placing ever-larger demands on the world's land-based natural capital, warned a new United Nations report.

Consumption of the Earth's natural reserves has doubled in the last 30 years, with a third of the planet's land now severely degraded, adds the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) new report, launched on September 12 in Ordos, China, during the Convention's 13th summit (September 6-16, 2017), IPS reported.

The UNCCD's report "The Global Land Outlook (GLO)" said, "Each year, we lose 15 billion trees and 24 billion tons of fertile soil."

It added that a significant proportion of managed and natural ecosystems are degrading and at further risk from climate change and biodiversity loss.

"Land degradation also triggers competition for scarce resources, which can lead to migration and insecurity while exacerbating



UNCCD

Alert: Nature on the verge of bankruptcy

access and income inequalities."

In basic terms, there is increasing competition between the demand for goods and services that benefit people, like food, water, and energy, and the need to protect other ecosystem services that regulate and support all life on Earth, according to new publication.

At the same time, terrestrial biodiversity underpins all of these services and underwrites the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, such as the rights to a healthy life, nutritious food, clean water, and cultural identity, adds the report.

And a significant proportion of managed and natural ecosystems are degrading

and at further risk from climate change and biodiversity loss.

The report provides some key facts: From 1998 to 2013, approximately 20 percent of the Earth's vegetated land surface showed persistent declining trends in productivity, apparent in 20 percent of cropland, 16 percent of forest land, 19 percent of

grassland and 27 percent of rangeland.

These trends are 'especially alarming' in the face of the increased demand for land-intensive crops and livestock."

More land degradation, more climate change

Land degradation contrib-

utes to climate change and increases the vulnerability of millions of people, especially the poor, women, and children, said UNCCD, adding that current management practices in the land-use sector are responsible for about 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gases, while land degradation is both a cause and a result of poverty.

"Over 1.3 billion people, mostly in the developing countries, are trapped on degrading agricultural land, exposed to climate stress, and therefore excluded from wider infrastructure and economic development."

Land degradation also triggers competition for scarce resources, which can lead to migration and insecurity while exacerbating access and income inequalities, the report warned.

"Soil erosion, desertification, and water scarcity all contribute to societal stress and breakdown. In this regard, land degradation can be considered a 'threat amplifier', especially when it slowly reduces people's ability to use the land for food production and water storage or undermines other vital ecosystem services."

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در مناطق شمالی تهران نیازمندیم

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

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و مستغلات شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه‌ها و شرکت‌های خارجی نیازمندیم

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

'Microbiomes' may hold key to kids' ear infections

Recurrent ear infections are the bane of many children — and the parents who have to deal with their care.

Now, research suggested that naturally occurring, "helpful" bacterial colonies in the ear — called "microbiomes" by scientists — may help decide a person's vulnerability to these infections, UPI wrote.

A team of Japanese researchers led by Dr. Shujiro Minami of the National Institute of Sensory Organs in Tokyo, said, "The children and adults with normal middle ears differed significantly in terms of middle ear microbiomes."

One expert in the US said the study is an important first step in learning more about ear infections.

Dr. Sophia Jan, chief of pediatrics at Cohen Children's Medical Center in New Hyde Park, NY, said, "What this study tells us is that we have lots of bacteria living in our middle ears, regardless of whether or not we have chronic ear infections."

"The study suggested that some kinds of bacteria don't seem to cause us problems when present in our middle ear."

"However, we still have a lot to learn before we can apply this research to the treatment or prevention of chronic ear infections."

"We don't know if the bacteria found in 'healthy' ears can be problematic, for example, if present in higher quantities."

The US National Institute on



st.alexius.org

Deafness and Other Communication Disorders announced, "Ear infections are the most common reason parents bring their child to a doctor."

These bacterial infections — called otitis media — typically start in the middle ear, and five out of six kids will develop at least one ear infection by the time they turn three.

In the new study, Minami and colleagues wanted to see what role the ear's microbiome might play in these outbreaks.

To do so, they took swab samples of the middle ears of 155 children and adults who were having ear surgery

due to recurrent ear infections (88 cases) or some other condition.

Among patients with a history of ear infections, the researchers found significant differences in the makeup of microbial communities for people with active 'wet' or inactive 'dry' inflammation.

The researchers said, "In fact, people whose ear infection was dormant had similar middle ear microbiomes as the normal [no ear infection] middle ear group."

On the other hand, the researchers found that people with an active ear infection had bacterial communities that differed widely from those of

people not suffering such outbreaks.

The bottom line, Minami's team said, is that the human middle ear is inhabited by more diverse microbial communities than was previously thought. Alteration of the middle ear microbiome may contribute to the [cause] of chronic otitis media with active inflammation.

Dr. David Hiltzik is an otolaryngologist at Staten Island University Hospital in New York City.

Reading over the study findings, he said that as physicians, we continue to learn how the microbiomes in our bodies affect us.

But Hiltzik stressed that this work is in its infancy, and only further research will reveal how these findings can assist us going forward in the treatment of ear infections.

For her part, Jan agreed that the study raises many new questions.

She said, "Are specific bacteria causing wet, dry, or active inflammation? Or are different people genetically predisposed to be 'wet' with chronic ear infections, which then allows certain kinds of bacteria to grow in the middle ear?"

"Unfortunately, we still have a lot to learn."

The findings were presented at the American Academy of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery annual meeting, in Chicago.

Findings presented at medical meetings are typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More pregnant women to get GBS treatment

All pregnant women who go into labor too soon should be given antibiotics to protect their baby from a potentially deadly infection called Group B Strep (GBS), said new guidelines.

Hundreds of newborn babies a year in the UK catch it. With prompt treatment, most can make a full recovery, according to BBC.

Currently, two in every 20 infected babies develops a disability and one in every 20 dies.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists wants to change this.

It said any woman who goes into labor before 37 weeks should be offered antibiotics as a precaution, even if her waters have not broken and the protective amniotic sac surrounding the baby in the womb is still intact.

Group B Strep bacteria can live harmlessly in the lower vaginal tract — about one in four women has it — and it can be passed on to the baby during delivery.

Most women will not realize they are a carrier. The updated guidelines from the RCOG say pregnant women should be given information about the condition to raise awareness.

They also say women who have tested positive for GBS in a previous pregnancy can be tested at 35 to 37 weeks in subsequent pregnancies to see if they also need antibiotics in labor.

But they do not go as far as recommending routine screening of mothers-to-be.

The RCOG said there is no clear evidence that this would be beneficial, as previously stated by the government's National Screening Committee but campaigners disagree.

Group B Strep Support would like every pregnant woman to be offered the opportunity to be tested for the bacteria.

Chief executive Jane Plumb said, "The RCOG guideline is a significant improvement on previous editions, however, the UK National Screening Committee still recommends against offering GBS screening to all pregnant women, ignoring international evidence that shows such screening reduces GBS infection, disability and death in newborn babies."

Rebecca Gunn, 32 and from Wakefield, had GBS during her second pregnancy.

Plumb said, "I had gone in to hospital after experiencing some bleeding at 17 weeks, and that is when they picked up that I was a GBS carrier."

"The diagnosis came out of the blue. I was really surprised, as GBS hadn't even crossed my mind."

Rebecca went into labor at 38 weeks and was given intravenous antibiotics after her waters broke.

She gave birth to her son, Alistair, who was fortunately unaffected by GBS.

She said, "I knew nothing about GBS. I'm not saying this to scare people, but it's important they are informed and aware of the risks."



Foods to fight a cold

Winter is fast approaching — which means people are more likely to catch the common cold.

One of the main differences between a cold and the more severe flu virus is that with a cold, your symptoms arrive gradually, express.co.uk reported.

Meanwhile, flu sufferers will be hit suddenly and have little or no time to prepare.

Symptoms of a cold include a sore throat, runny nose, coughs and sneezes, headache and tiredness.

Once symptoms start, there is no way to avoid the cold but people can eat the right food to help them feel better.

Dr. Adam Simon, chief medical officer at online GP service Push doctor has revealed how to handle a winter cold.

Avoid comfort food

If you're feeling poorly, it can be tempting to gorge on your favorite comfort foods to help you feel better.

While there is an old myth that you should 'feed a cold', the reality is that this will probably make you feel even more unwell.

High-fat diets have been shown to slow down your immune system's response to infection, which will make it harder to fight off infections such as a cold.

You need the nutrients provided by a balanced diet to help your recovery.

However, don't be tempted to try a crash diet, as these have also been shown to re-

duce your immune system function.

Also remember that not all fat is bad. Some, such as the fats you get from oily fish and nuts, are an important part of your diet regardless of whether or not you have a cold.

Garlic

A 2001 study tested 146 volunteers, half of whom were given a daily garlic sup-



express.co.uk

plement and half received a placebo.

The garlic group suffered just 24 colds over a 12-week period and endured 11 days of ill health due to viruses.

On the other hand, the placebo group reported 65 colds and a significantly higher 366 days where a virus prevented them from carrying out their usual activities.

It's thought that raw garlic is the most effective here, as cooking it too much will rob you of any potential positive effects.

There are capsules available if you — understandably — don't fancy chewing on a clove straight from the cupboard.

Soup

While chicken soup is the most commonly-prescribed, in fact any broth-based soup will help you feel a little better.

It'll warm you up and we've already discussed how water and steam can help with your symptoms. However, it's important to choose the best soup for the job.

You should avoid creamy soups, as these are higher in

fat, which, as we know, hampers your immune system, and consider including some vegetables in your broth to get even more nutrients.

Spicy food

The chemical that gives chili peppers their spice is called capsaicin. As well as adding a kick to your dinner, there are plenty of other benefits, not least a healthy amount of vitamin C.

If you're coming down a cold, chili peppers can ease congestion and reduce swelling around your nose and throat. It'll also help make your mucus thin enough for your body to cough or sneeze

it away.

Capsaicin is actually a fairly common medicinal treatment, although you'll usually find it in anti-inflammatory medicine.

Honey and lemon

If a sore throat is your most troublesome symptom, honey and lemon is the way to go. It won't necessarily speed up your recovery, but you'll feel a lot less miserable now that your throat doesn't feel like sandpaper!

Avoid the packets of lozenges you see in shops, as these are packed full of sugar.

Instead, try a homemade honey, lemon and ginger tea which is packed full of natural ingredients and an added dose of steam to help clear your airways.

Rest

Resting is one of the best ways to help your body shake off a cold.

As tiredness is a symptom of a cold, going about your usual routine is only going to make this worse.

Stay hydrated

Water helps your immune system fight off any infection, so it's important to stay hydrated as soon as you suspect a cold.

Drinking plenty of water will help you replace any fluids lost from constantly blowing your nose or sweating, as well as loosening any mucus at the back of your throat.

Immune-focused drug may be weapon against advanced melanoma

New research suggested that Opdivo — a drug that works with the immune system to fight melanoma — is more effective than the current standard of care for patients who've had surgery to remove advanced tumors.

The international study was funded by Opdivo's maker, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and included more than 900 patients with stage III and stage IV melanoma, UPI wrote.

Patients were treated at 130 medical centers across 25 countries. All underwent surgery for

their cancer before they began treatment with either Opdivo (nivolumab) or Yervoy (ipilimumab), the drug that's the current standard of care.

Both drugs are 'immunotherapies', which work by boosting the immune system's ability to spot and destroy tumor cells.

After a year of treatment, 71 percent of patients in the Opdivo group were alive without any recurrence of the disease, compared with 61 percent of those treated with Yervoy.

And at 18 months, the rate was 66 percent for Opdivo and 53 percent for Yervoy, the findings showed.

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, metastatic melanoma accounts for only about one percent of skin cancer cases but causes the majority of skin cancer deaths.

Lead researcher Dr. Jeffrey Weber, professor of medicine at NYU School of Medicine, said, "Our results demonstrate that [Opdivo] is more effective in treating patients with stage III and IV melanoma, cutting the risk of relapse by a third."

"Results like this will change how we practice medicine. Hopefully, physicians will embrace the use of [Opdivo] in these high-risk patients as adjuvant therapy."

One cancer surgeon who reviewed the findings was impressed.

Dr. Gary Deutsch, a surgical oncologist at Northwell Health's Imbert Cancer Center in Bay Shore, NY, said, "Based on this study, it appears that patients with advanced melanoma who have their disease completely removed by surgery should go on to receive additional therapy with Opdivo."

"Not only did these patients have a better survival outcome at one year, but they had only one-third the side effects compared to Yervoy."

The study found that patients taking Opdivo had fewer severe side effects than those taking Yervoy, at 14 percent versus 45 percent.

Five percent of patients on Opdivo had to stop treatment due to side effects, compared with 31 percent of those on Yervoy.

The most common side effects for both drugs were fatigue and diarrhea.

Weber added that the safety of [Opdivo] is very promising.

Both Opdivo and Yervoy are already approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat advanced (metastatic) melanoma. In some patients, the drugs are used in combination.

Dr. Michele Green, a dermatologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, said, "Any advance in the care of aggressive melanomas is welcome news for patients."

"It is amazing that there is now an alternative that is superior to conventional chemotherapy for advanced metastatic disease."

"With these advanced melanomas — that have high risks of recurrences and have poor outcomes — it is vital to look at alternative treatments. The future in cancer treatments lies in immunotherapy and other targeted options."



Scientists have created methanol from methane using oxygen from the air. Methanol is currently produced by breaking down natural gas at high temperatures.

In these bot hookups, the machines meld their minds

Meet the first fleet of hive-minded robots.

These robots can latch onto one another and link up their individual 'nervous systems' — the network of connections between their computer processors, cameras, wheels and other gadgetry — to create a single-minded machine, sciencenews.org reported.

The composite robots, reported in Nature Communications, pave the way for a new generation of machines that can change their shape on the fly.



These Roomba-like robots latch onto each other with metal clasps and merge their 'nervous systems' to become bigger, centrally controlled bots of various shapes and sizes.

Study coauthor Marco Dorigo, an engineer at Université Libre de Bruxelles in Belgium, said, "In previous robots made up of many smaller machines, each robotic building block maintained control over its own nervous system.

"It was a little bit like if we had a bunch of people joining together to do something.

"They were trying to coordinate by exchanging messages with neighbors without anyone being in charge."

These multi-bodied robots could link up to create different shapes, unlike solo devices. But the lack of centralized control meant the robot collectives were clumsier and had slower reaction times than stand-alone bots.

The collective robot bodies created by Dorigo and colleagues, however, are helmed by a single member of the group, which the researchers dubbed the 'brain unit'.

That robot collects sensory data from all the others and controls their operations via Wi-Fi.

Dorigo said, "This centralized decision makes sensory-motor control much more efficient."

Dorigo's team built 13 robots, which could self-assemble into several arrangements, such as pincer-like and salamander-esque shapes.

Future robots with this ability to continually reconfigure themselves may be better at navigating different types of terrain, fitting through small openings and performing a wider range of tasks than solo robots with fixed body shapes.

These Roomba-like robots latch onto each other with metal clasps and merge their 'nervous systems' to become bigger, centrally controlled bots of various shapes and sizes.

Scientists work to keep NASA's space telescope in the dark

NASA scientists are taking on the vital task of ensuring unwanted infrared light does not interfere with the optical testing of the James Webb Space Telescope.

Quoting Randy Kimble, a scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, UPI wrote, "One of the challenges of testing an infrared telescope is that room-temperature objects [such as the walls of the vacuum chamber itself, or the warm electronics systems inside it] glow at the wavelengths of light that the telescope is trying to measure.



NASA technician Eric Zoller, from Harris Corporation, headquartered in Melbourne, checks the helium shroud in Chamber A at NASA's Johnson Space Center on July 12.

shroud inside Chamber A, where the Webb is located, as the innermost of two shrouds used to cool the Webb telescope down to temperatures it will experience while operating in orbit.

The shroud sits inside an outer liquid nitrogen shroud. The two shrouds are thin, cylindrical, metal shells that work together to lower the temperature of the area where the telescope sits.

The two shrouds are nested together inside the chamber similar to Russian Matryoshka dolls with the chamber as the largest 'doll', followed by the liquid nitrogen shroud, the cold gaseous helium shroud, and then the smallest 'doll' being the telescope itself.

The liquid nitrogen and cold gaseous helium flow through plumbing that crisscrosses the surface of their respective shrouds.

Scientists must protect the shroud doors, which provide access to the shrouds' interiors, to ensure unwanted infrared light is not able to interfere with the telescope.

To do this, engineers used a layer of black Kapton, a thin, opaque, plastic film used to curtain the door into the cold gaseous helium shroud and curtail the amount of light that can get into the shroud through the seam around the door.

Kimble said, "Many people have worked for years on the test design and implementation to keep infrared light, from warm sources in the test chamber, from getting into the telescope beam.

"The final visual inspections and blanket closeouts...are just the icing on that well-baked cake."

Tomatoes' crystal ball reveals evolutionary secrets

Michigan State University (MSU)'s Robert Last studied tomatoes. Specifically, he conducted research on their hair, or trichomes.

For this study, he focused on a single type of molecule in trichomes — acylsugars, according to phys.org.

The secrets Last and a team of MSU sci-

entists found from studying these specialized metabolites open an evolutionary window for the emerging field of plant defense metabolism, insights that could lead to engineering advances for better pest resistance and human medicine.

There are an estimated 300,000 species of plants in the world, producing roughly more than a million

metabolites. Plants use these molecules to grow, communicate with each other or to defend themselves against pests and disease.

Humans benefit from many of these products for food, medicines and industrial uses. Thousands of core metabolites are found in every plant, but hundreds of thousands are more specialized and found only in specific groups of plants.

Acylsugars are an example of a group of specialized metabolites found only in the Solanaceae family, which includes tomato and petunia plants.

These specialized metabolites have a wide variety of structures and are made by different enzymes working together to carry out a series of biochemical reactions.

Last, MSU Barnett Rosenberg Professor of

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the study's senior author, said,

"We sought to understand how this novel pathway originated and diversified across 100 million years of plant evolution.

"This is our crystal ball, our view into evolution."

The crystal ball revealed that many of the enzymes that make acylsugars are 'promiscuous', meaning that they could use a variety of molecules as starting points for their chemical reactions.

This could be the key to how the plants make a variety of acylsugars.

The scientists also discovered that many of the enzymes that make acylsugars are encoded by genes that were originally copies of other genes that have subsequently evolved new roles.

Deciphering these codes are important because tomatoes' acylsugars are natural pesticides.

Engineering plants to pro-

duce acylsugars could reduce pesticide use in crop production.

Additionally, some of these mechanisms could help make chemicals that have pharmaceutical value, including ones that treat cancer and heart conditions.

Last, who's also an MSU AgBioResearch scientist, added, "Plants are master chemists, and we're only just beginning to understand the metabolic pathways that they use to produce these amazing compounds."

By understanding how the pathways evolved to produce these enzymes could lead to innovative ways to make valuable compounds on a large scale."

The MSU team of scientists contributing to this research included Gaurav Moghe, Bryan Leong, Steven Hurney and Daniel Jones.

The paper was published in the current issue of the journal eLife.



seriousoats.com



organicfacts.net

Russian spacecraft makes lightning fast journey to ISS

A Russian spacecraft has docked at the International Space Station (ISS) after a lightning fast journey.

The craft launched on Tuesday from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 9:30 p.m. BST and arrived at its destination a mere five hours and 38 minutes later at 2:57 a.m. BST, according to express.co.uk.

A Russian Soyuz rocket gave a flawless launch sequence and the crew made their journey in a Soyuz MS-06 space capsule.

As the rocket launched a translator for Russia's Mission Control Center in Moscow announced during the live broadcast. "Everything is nominal on board [and] the crew is doing fine."

The craft arrived at the International Space Station a couple of minutes early.



The Russian Soyuz rocket gave a flawless launch sequence. express.co.uk

NASA TV commentator Rob Navias said during the launch, "A series of burns

over the next several hours will gradually raise their orbit as they chase down

the space station."

The crew consisted of two NASA astronauts, Mark Vande Hei and Joe Acaba and one Russian cosmonaut, Alex Misurkin.

They are meeting up with the other half of Expedition 53 at who arrived at the station in July.

They include NASA astronaut Randy Bresnik, Russian cosmonaut Sergey Ryazanskiy and European Space Agency astronaut Paolo Nespoli.

Vande Hei, Acaba and Misurkin will spend five months aboard the station.

NASA officials said, "Perform hundreds of experiments in biology, biotechnology, physical science and Earth science."

They will serve as members of Expeditions 53 and 54 during their stay.

Ancient tree exposes cause of hike in Arctic temperature

Scientists from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) have found an ancient kauri tree in New Zealand that holds the key to the cause of rising Arctic temperatures.

The 30,000-year-old kauri tree in a peat swamp in New Zealand showed a new mechanism that could explain how temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere spiked several degrees centigrade within a few decades during the last global ice age, UPI reported.

Significant, rapid warming spikes during glacial periods are known as Dansgaard-Oeschger events and are linked to a phenomenon known as bipolar seesaw where increasing temperatures in the Arctic simultaneously occur as cooling occurs over the Antarctic and conversely.

Previously, it was thought

the divergences in temperature at opposite poles were driven by changes in the North Atlantic causing deep ocean currents — referred to as the ocean conveyor belt — to shut down leading to warming in the Northern Hemisphere and cooling in the Southern Hemisphere.

The study, published in Nature Communications, used a detailed sequence of radiocarbon dates from an ancient New Zealand kauri tree to precisely align ice, marine and sediment records over a period of great climate change.

Professor Chris Turney, UNSW scientist, said, "Intriguingly, we found that the spike in temperature preserved in the Greenland ice core corresponded with a 400-year-long surface cooling period in the Southern Ocean and a major retreat of Antarctic ice.

There had to be another

"As we looked more closely for the cause of this opposite response we found that there were no changes to the global ocean

cause."

Researchers turned to examining lake sediments from the Atherton Tableland in Queens-

land and found sediments exhibiting a simultaneous collapse of rain-bearing trade winds over tropical northeast Australia.

Turney said, "Our study shows just how important Antarctica's ice is to the climate of the rest of the world and reveals how rapid melting of the ice here can affect us all."

"This is something we need to be acutely aware of in a warming world."

UPI

A recent study shows that an ancient kauri tree may hold the key to spikes in Arctic temperatures.

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UPI

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Social media helps students learn scientific argumentation better

Adults often bemoan the amount of time young people spend staring at a screen and browsing social media. But social media can not only be a way to teach students elements of the scientific process, those who took part in a program to learn scientific argumentation through social media learned the components of argumentation better than their peers who did not, a University of Kansas study has found.

KU researchers designed a curriculum unit to engage nearly 400 ninth-grade biology students in learning about scientific argumentation through social media use with their teachers and classmates, phys.org wrote.

Argumentation is a key element of both Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards. The researchers have since authored a chapter for the book 'Digital Tools and Solutions for Inquiry-Based STEM Learning', an article in the Journal of Education in Science, Environment and Health and an article in Educational Media International, a Taylor and Francis online journal outlining the study, its results and how teachers can implement similar practices in their classrooms.

The project and publications grew out of a National Science Foundation grant to KU's Center for Research on Learning.

As part of the grant project, researchers worked with teachers and administrators in several urban and suburban Midwestern schools to teach students about Next Generation Science Standards for scientific argumentation, including asking questions, analyzing and interpreting data, engaging an argument from evidence, constructing explanations and obtaining, evaluating and communicating information, all via Twitter and Skype with their classmates and teachers.



internapcdn.net

As use of technology and social media became more commonplace in American classrooms, the researchers wanted to address ways educators can use the methods effectively.

When compared with a group of students who did not take part in the project, the treatment group reported significantly higher use of social media to share scientific claims, discuss scientific phenomena, post counterarguments and/or rebuttals to others' claims, demonstrate their knowledge of science content, convince others to see their points of view and opinions about science, understand other points of view about science and to follow scientists and researchers on social media.

The treatment group's students also scored significantly higher than their peers on a post-test in areas of sharing scientific claims, discussing scientific phenomena and demonstrating

knowledge of scientific phenomena.

They also reported a significant increase in confidence regarding scientific argumentation and were more confident than their peers that they had the knowledge and skills to analyze and make strong scientific claims.

The book chapter is intended to help teachers, administrators, school boards and communities find new ways to incorporate technology and social media in the classroom.

The authors include several tips to make social media and science learning work, such as students reporting they often didn't like Twitter's 140 character limit and not wanting to engage with teachers with their own accounts.

Those concerns can be addressed by allowing students to use separate accounts for school, posting pictures of text,

keeping discussions on track with school-specific hashtags and ensuring teachers and administrators keep close watch of discussions.

The arguments had to take the form of a legitimate scientific argument.

Rowland said of the students' contributions, "There was no automatic right or wrong answer. They had to pass judgment, based on evidence and reasoning."

"I'd say one of our biggest findings was that topics had to be authentic, and social media brought interactivity to the classroom that would otherwise have been nonexistent due to time, distance and schedule demands."

While students discussed scientific topics such as de-extinction and genetics, teachers in the project ended up using social media for professional development as well. Educators

connected with colleagues in other schools to compare notes on the unit, share resources, discuss strategies for engaging students and provide evidence of their own successes.

Craig-Hare said of the social media and science project, "It really became professional development for the teachers, as well."

"Not all of them were social media advocates when we began. It was great helping the teachers make those connections."

Students not only demonstrated that they learned scientific argumentation better than their peers, the book chapter outlined how students not comfortable with making verbal arguments in class, such as individuals with autism spectrum disorders or those with social skill deficiencies reported they were more comfortable making arguments via social media.

UK cities to get millions of pounds for green energy projects

Green energy projects run by cities and local authorities around the UK stand to receive millions of pounds of government support, providing another fillip for renewable power just a day after the subsidized price of windfarms hit a record low.

The Guardian understood that ministers this autumn will offer more than £3 million to help local leaders build low carbon initiatives, such as installing solar panels on social housing.

The funding would be a key plank of the government's upcoming blueprint on how to meet the UK's binding carbon targets, the Clean Growth Plan.

The anticipated support is a response to calls from a network of 100 UK cities, which said they wanted to build clean energy projects at a local level but warned that they were struggling to finance them.

Judith Blake, leader of Leeds city council, and John Holdich, leader of Peterborough city council, said, "We believe the UK has a great opportunity to lead the world in an early shift to a fossil-fuel-free economy, just as we have led the world in previous industrial transitions." Both cities are members of the UK100, which backs action on climate change and clean energy.

But in a new report, the network said local authorities often lacked the technical expertise for accessing finance and EU funds being cut off post-Brexit posed a further challenge.

The report's authors, former employees of the engineering giant Arup and the recently privatized Green Investment Bank, called on ministers to tackle the problem by creating Clean Energy Action Partnerships between national and local government. The partnerships would employ teams of experts to support councils who want to build low carbon projects, such as heat networks or solar power.

Claire Perry, the climate minister, is understood to be sympathetic to the proposals. One idea put forward in the UK100's report is that clean energy projects run by councils could enjoy a cut in business rates.



guim.co.uk

Perry is believed to have told local leaders she looks forward to helping them access finance.

Perry said: "We want to build on our success and that's why collaboration across government, and with people and organizations throughout the country, is vital as we prepare to launch our Clean Growth Strategy."

The backing for locally owned clean energy came as a thorn-in-the-side of Labour members and MPs criticized the lack of UK ownership for offshore windfarms, such as the ones awarded nearly £200 million a year in subsidies.

The Labour Energy Forum found the Danish state-owned company Dong Energy owned 31.5 percent of all offshore wind capacity in the UK, with private German, Spanish and Swedish firms dominating the rest of the market.

Rebecca Long-Bailey, the shadow business secretary, said Labour supported offshore wind but wanted to see windfarms built off the coast that were publicly owned by the UK.

"Labour not only supports investment and real proactive support for the renewables sector but we also commit to ensuring more rapid growth and diversification of ownership within this important sector through the creation of publicly owned and locally accountable energy companies and co-operatives," she said.

Progress on global poverty, disease at risk

Proposed United States budget cuts could put in jeopardy great progress in reducing global poverty and disease and lead to five million more deaths from AIDS alone, the philanthropist Bill Gates warned on Wednesday.

Gates, whose Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a major provider of global health and development funding, said there was currently "more doubt than usual about the world's commitment to development", Reuters reported.

A global health report by the foundation, co-authored by the Gates and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington (IHME), analyzed progress against diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

It also tracked rates of poverty, maternal and infant death, access to contraception, sanitation and other development issues. Forecasting good and bad future scenarios, it found millions of lives hanging in the balance.

In a telephone briefing about the findings, Gates, the cofounder of Microsoft Corporation, said remarkable progress had been made in recent decades but that shifting priorities, instability and potential budget cuts could lead the world to turn away, jeopardizing the gains.

HIV, which currently infects almost 37 million people worldwide, is an 'iconic example', Gates said, 'because the world really did stand up with an incredible level of generosity which has meant (annual) AIDS-related deaths have fallen by almost a half since the peak in 2005'.

The Gates IHME analysis, called the Goalkeepers report, forecasted that a 10 percent cut in global donor funding for HIV treatment could mean more than 5 million extra deaths by 2030.

Under budget proposals from US President Donald Trump released in May, US funding for global health programs including efforts on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria would see a 24 percent cut to about \$6.5 billion for 2018.

But opposition Democrats and many of Trump's fellow Republicans have blasted his plan, saying they will reject it. Congress, not the administration, controls US spending.

Ask parents in the US what they're most worried about regarding the wellness of their children as a new school year begins, and stress and anxiety are high on the list. So are obesity and lack of exercise, along with smoking and alcohol and drug use.

But for several years, the top answer is the same: Bullying and cyber-bullying, jsnline.com wrote.

C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health at the University of Michigan found that one in three parents are concerned about their child being bullied or cyber-bullied.

Bullying is the more common of the two; it happens at recess and in lunchrooms and on buses. It's also nothing new. What has changed is awareness. It would be hard to find a school that doesn't have a specific bullying policy, as well as resources available for parents.

Cyber-bullying, however, may be the more insidious, because it is difficult for a parent to detect and can happen with little warning. Threats and harassment can all be going on in a student's life under the radar of teachers or parents. They can happen around the clock, and there are no safe havens for students.

About one in five middle and high school students is a victim of bullying, according to a 2015 study by the US National Center for Education Statistics.

Girls are bullied more than boys; African-American students are bullied more than white students, who in turn



annett-cdn.com

Parents increasingly fret about bullying

are bullied more than Hispanic students; sixth-graders are bullied more than any other grade. Bullied students are five times as likely to miss school as the rest of the student population.

Sameer Hinduja, co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center and professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University, said cyber-bullying is not an epidemic. Hinduja and his partner, Justin Patchin, have been studying cyber-bullying for years, and the numbers have held steady.

"It's not spiraling out of control, but

we can agree that we want those numbers to be a lot less," Hinduja said.

Hinduja said reports on cyber-bullying exacerbate parents' concerns about their inadequacy in monitoring social media.

"The media plays on the fears of adults that are a little unfamiliar with technology, which gets them freaked out," Hinduja said about parents' worries.

Hinduja encouraged parents to not be spooked by technology and demonstrate an understanding of it because "technology is here to stay". Hinduja said when

parents talk with their child, it is important to remind them that if they err on the side of integrity, they will be more successful. The children must understand that every decision they make online can have far-reaching ramifications.

But nobody can control what people say about one another, and it's imperative to be able to block it out, Hinduja said.

"People are always going to talk smack, and there are always going to be haters," Hinduja said.

"We can't let it get in the way of our dreams and our hopes and send us to our pillow with tears every night."

This is the 11th year the Mott Poll has surveyed a national sample of adults on the top 10 health concerns rated as a 'big problem' for children and teens.

Gary Freed, a Mott professor of pediatrics and the poll's co-director, said parents should regularly talk with their children — and in particular discuss internet safety — to help prevent problems.

If a parent believes their child is being bullied, it is essential to ask non-judgmental questions because it is typically not the child's fault. The more the parents find out, the better they can respond.

- Make sure your child feels safe
- Talk with and listen to your child.
- If your child is being cyber-bullied, collect evidence by printing out or taking screenshots.
- Work with school.
- Don't contact the bully's parents. Stick with official channels.

'Runaway' robot remembers everyone it meets handshake with Putin

An infamous intelligent robot that escaped from his lab twice has shaken hands with Vladimir Putin.

The Russian president was touring an IT exhibition in Perm, which is becoming known as the country's Silicon Valley, when he met Promobot, mirror.co.uk reported.

The big-eyed, Russian-made machine is said to have immediately recognized Putin and enthusiastically introduced himself with a handshake.

Promobot is used as a guide, model and promotional salesman across Russia and keeps a database of prominent public figures.

However, the android has hit the headlines in the last year for his escape attempts.

Last year, the rogue robot was arrested at a political rally



TASS



PROMOBOT was 'arrested' at a Russian political rally last year.

when he was supporting Russian Parliament candidate Valery Kalachev in Moscow. Authorities attempted to

handcuff Promobot and take him away.

It is believed that the arrest occurred after a member of public called police as Promobots were recording the opinions of voters on a variety of topics "for further processing and analysis by the candidate's team."

A company spokesman told

Inverse magazine: "Police asked to remove the robot away from the crowded area, and even tried to handcuff him.

According to eyewitnesses, the robot did not put up any resistance.

The robot has hit the headlines in the past, when it escaped from its lab and walked out into oncoming traffic — twice.

It caused chaos on the streets after getting halfway across the road before its batteries ran out, leaving it stranded in the middle of the carriageway.

The robot was on the road outside the research lab for more than an hour as vehicles tried to manoeuvre their way around it.

Promobot — short for Promotional Robot — is a unique robot, created by Russian scientists and designed to work in customer relations.

It is designed to interact with humans realistically and can answer questions and remember every person it has ever met.

Legal row over monkey selfie finally settled

A settlement has been reached in a lawsuit over who owns the copyright to selfie photographs taken by a monkey before a federal appeals court could answer the novel legal question.

Under the deal, the photographer whose camera was used to take the photo agreed to donate 25 percent of any future revenue of the images to charities dedicated to protecting crested macaques in Indonesia, lawyers for an animal-rights group said, according to metro.co.uk.

Lawyers for the group and the photographer, David Slater, asked the San Francisco-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals to dismiss the case and throw out a lower court decision that said animals cannot own copyrights.

Andrew J. Diney, a lawyer for Slater, declined to comment on how much money the photos had generated or whether Slater would keep all of the remaining 75 percent of future revenue.

There was no immediate ruling from the 9th Circuit.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) sued on behalf of the macaque monkey in 2015, seeking financial control of the photographs

for the benefit of the monkey named Naruto that snapped the photos with Slater's camera.

Slater and Peta said in a joint statement, "Peta and David Slater agree that this case raises important, cutting-edge issues about expanding legal rights for non-human animals, a goal that they both support, and they will continue their respective work to achieve this goal."

Lawyers for Slater argued that his company, Wildlife Personalities Ltd, owns worldwide commercial rights to the photos, including a now-famous selfie of the monkey's toothy grin.

Slater argued that he engineered the photographs in 2008 by traveling to an Indonesian jungle, spending three days with a troupe of monkeys to gain their trust and deliberately making his camera accessible to the animals to take photographs.

US District Judge William Orrick said in a ruling in favor of Slater last year, "While Congress and the president can extend the protection of law to animals as well as humans, there is no indication that they did so in the Copyright Act." The 9th Circuit was considering Peta's appeal.



PHOTO TAKEN BY DAVID SLATER (75%) / MONKEY (25%) The photographer has been sued by the monkey.

Toraja villagers dig up relatives' corpses, groom them in hope it will bring good harvest

An Indonesian tribe has held a festival of the walking dead in which they dig up the corpses of their relatives and friends.

They then wash, groom and dress them up before walking with them for good harvest, metro.co.uk wrote.

Every year, families in Toraja in the highlands of South Sulawesi, exhume the bodies of their dead relatives and friends to reunite with them in an annual celebration called Ma'ne'ne.

Even the bodies of babies and children are dug up to celebrate the ritual that last for three days.

The families open the coffins and let the bodies dry for some time. After that, they wash, groom and dress up the mummies in new fancy clothes and take them for a walk through the village in



CATERS

straight lines in much zombie-like fashion. All this is done while smiling from ear-to-ear because crying and mourning is prohibited.

One of the villagers said, "It is our way of respecting the dead. There is no mourning. It is a moment of joy for us because we reunite with our dead relatives.

"We try to honor them and in return get their blessings for good harvest."

After the walk, the villagers sacrifice buffaloes as an offering for the dead's free walk to heaven.

The bizarre tradition had started centuries ago when an animal hunter had found a decaying corpse but dressed him in his shirt and gave him a proper burial. He believed after the burial he was blessed with good fortune.

The Trojan people adapted the story and started celebrating the death of their deceased.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



A helping hand for a contestant in the Muddy Trials race, said to be the world's muddiest competition in Ayrshire, the UK.

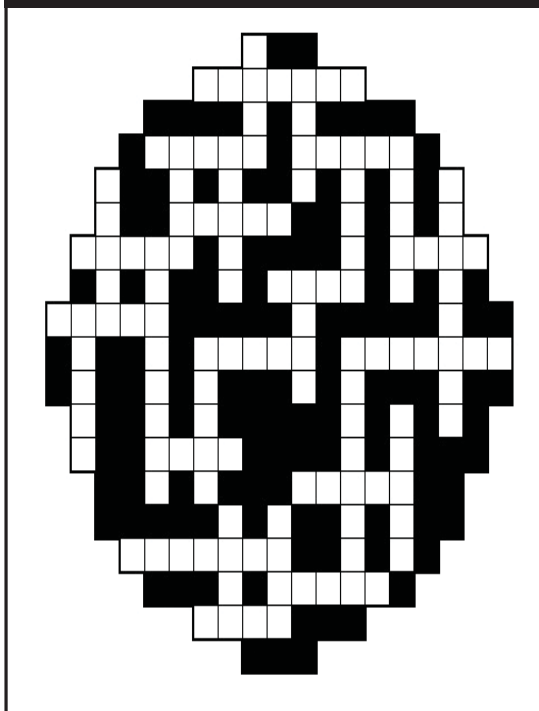
Sudoku

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.

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

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

Global Word-Fit



- 4 letters: BONN, DOHA, FIJI, LIMA, MALI, OHIO, OMAN, ROME, SUVA, UTAH

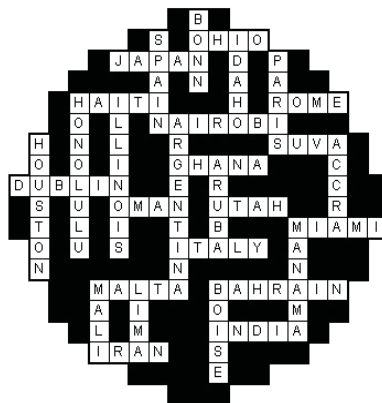
- 5 letters: ACCRA, ARUBA, BOISE, CHILE, GHANA, HAITI, IDAHO, INDIA, ITALY, JAPAN, MALTA, MIAMI

- PARIS, SPAIN, TONGA

- 7 letters: BAHRAIN, NAIROBI, URUGUAY

- 8 letters: BRASILIA, HONOLULU, SANTIAGO

Yesterday's solution



Celtic was charged by UEFA after a fan ran on to the pitch and appeared to aim a kick at PSG striker Kylian Mbappe in Tuesday's Champions League match at Celtic Park in Glasgow.

Late drama sends spirited Persepolis to ACL semis



GETTY IMAGES Ali Alipour (R) scores Persepolis first goal in against Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli in the 2017 AFC Champions League quarterfinals in Abu Dhabi, the UAE, on September 12, 2017.

Iran's Persepolis produced a fine display at the Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium to book its spot in the AFC Champions League semifinals with a 3-1 victory over Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia.

Ali Alipour got the designated visitor on its way with a cool finish after five minutes, only for Saleh al-Amri to net an equalizer for Al Ahli seven minutes into the second half, Fox Sports reported.

However, Persepolis reclaimed the lead through a Godwin Mensha penalty in the 83rd minute, before Mahdi Taremi converted a second spot-kick in injury-time to seal the progress with a 5-3 aggregate triumph.

Having conceded two away goals in a 2-2 first-leg draw three weeks earlier, Persepolis entered the tie at the Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium knowing it would be in a precarious position as long as the Iranians failed to score.

Alipour settled some of the nerves

just five minutes in as he chased down a hopeful ball and shrugged off the challenge of Mohammed al-Fatih, before finishing past Mohammed al-Owais.

But just six minutes later, the Persian Gulf Pro League champion was dealt a huge blow when Kamal Kamyabinia was sent off for a studs-up challenge on Waleed Bakshween.

Despite being a man down, Persepolis continued to show more endeavor and was arguably the better of the two sides throughout the first half.

Nonetheless, Al Ahli eventually found the equalizer in the 52nd minute; al-Amri gliding past a challenge and bending a lovely shot into the far corner.

It now looked as though the Saudi giant would go on to claim the ascendancy yet its opponent refused to budge.

Persepolis piled the pressure in pursuit of a winner and as in the first leg encounter three substitutions made by Branko Ivankovic turned things around for Iran's

champion.

Whenever it could, Persepolis still looked to attack and was rewarded for its efforts in the 81st minute when a goal-bound shot from Shayan Mosleh was handled on the line by Motaz Hawsawi.

The referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot and issuing Hawsawi his marching orders.

When the dust settled, it was Mensha who took on the responsibility for the Iranians and coolly sent al-Owais the wrong way.

It was now just a matter of seeing out the remainder of the contest but Persepolis had other ideas.

Right at the death, the Iranian Reds won another penalty after Bashar Ressan was brought down in the eighteen-yard box and, this time, it was Taremi who converted from the spot, confirming his side's semifinal meeting with another Saudi side in Al Hilal.



fvb.com Iran's smiling Milad Ebadipour and Mohammad Moosavi celebrate the match-winning point in the 3-2 victory over USA in the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup at the Nippon Gaiishi Hall in Nagoya, Japan, on September 13, 2017.

Resurgent Iran stuns USA

From Page 1

Iran had momentum on its side and took advantage of USA's string of errors to win the last two sets.

Iran's captain Marouf praised his teammates' spirit to bounce back from two sets down, saying, "It was an unbelievable match, so I'm happy we won it. In the first two sets, we had nothing to offer. They were amazing and killed us with their serve and side-out and. After that, we played without fear and to our full potential. Our substitutes did well today and all the players helped us in this victory, so I'm happy. Congratulations to all Iran-

ans, to my team and the staff."

"It was such a difficult game. There were two different parts of the game. I have to say USA played unbelievable on reception, side-out and service in the first two sets. I talked to my players and told them if they played like that, there wasn't much we could do, so we had to wait for opportunities. I told them they would give us opportunities for sure because they can't play at that high level all the time. And we did that." Iran's coach Igor Kolakovich said after the game.

USA's coach John Speraw pointed to the latter stages of the third set as the game changer, saying, "We

came out and played some really great volleyball in the first two sets, particularly passing the ball. We just played great. I think we will look back on a period of about two minutes in the third set when we were up and there was a little bit of lack of focus. In that moment, Iran took advantage and made some good plays, particularly (Amir) Ghafour.

"We didn't play bad volleyball from that point; we just didn't score any points. Our offence continued to be OK, but not as good as earlier. But Iran played great volleyball from that point on offensively and we struggled to score points." Speraw added.

Ernesto Valverde was thankful to finally be able to enjoy having Lionel Messi on his side after spending years suffering at the hands of Barcelona's Argentine star.

Messi scored twice on Tuesday as Barca began its Champions League campaign with an emphatic 3-0 win against last season's runner-up, Juventus, which eliminated the Catalan side in the last eight on its way to the final, ESPN reported.

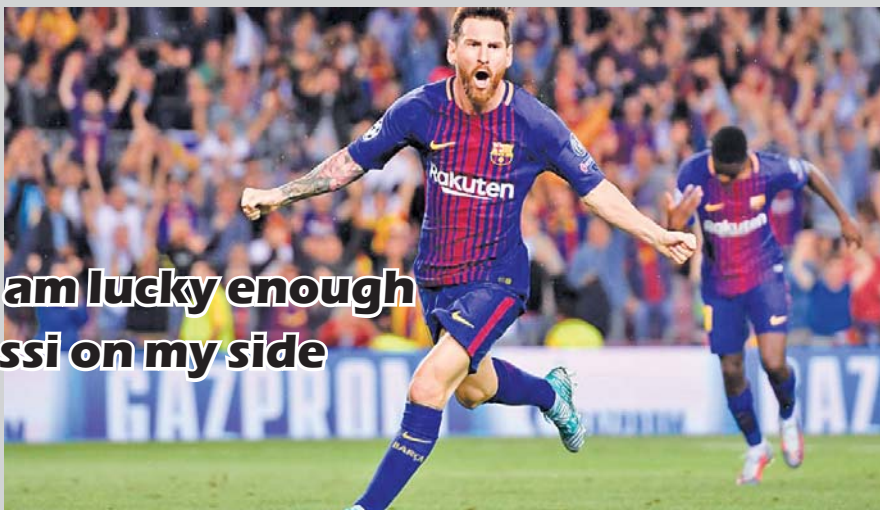
Ivan Rakitic scored the other goal, which was created by Messi, as former Athletic Bilbao coach Valverde saw his

Valverde: I am lucky enough to have Messi on my side

new side extend its winning streak to four games in all competitions.

"I have suffered against Messi many times; now I am lucky enough to have him on my team," said a smiling Valverde in his postgame news conference.

"When he has the ball you always believe that anything can happen -



GETTY IMAGES Lionel Messi celebrates scoring Barca's first goal in the 3-0 beating of Juventus in UEFA Champions League in Camp Nou, Barcelona, on September 12, 2017.

Art & Culture

Researcher claims to have deciphered mysterious Voynich manuscript



ifisience.com

The Voynich manuscript is a bit of a historical mystery. It is said that it came from Central Europe and historians have traced it back to the 15th or 16th Century, but beyond that not a lot is known about this cryptic text.

The name comes from a Polish antique book dealer called Wilfrid Voynich, who bought the manuscript in Italy back in 1912. Take a look inside and you'll find botanical and astronomical ink drawings and text written in a strange language (or a so far undeciphered code), ifisience.com wrote.

Over the years, linguists, mathematicians, and World War Two cryptologists have studied the manuscript, but while there have been several theories, no one has been able to decipher the language or work out what the book was for. Many believe it's a hoax and think the text is meaningless. Some other theories are a little more out there. One says it's a document written by an alien stranded on Earth. Another claims it's a guide to alchemy.

Now, historian Nicholas Gibbs says he's found the answer and it's brilliantly mundane. He thinks the Voynich manuscript is a ladies' health manual.

Writing in the Times Literary Supplement, Gibbs first compares the manuscript to other Medieval texts concerning women's health. Aside from the pictures of plants and zodiac signs, there are drawings of women as well.

Next, he explains the unusual writing in the manuscript, which contains "tell-tale signs" of an abbreviated Latin format. From this, he determines that each character is, in fact, an abbreviated word – not a letter.

He then puts forward the crux of his theory: The manuscript contains a series of recipes for women's health and other gynecology-related medicines.

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19th Iran Cinema Celebration names winners

The best of Iranian cinema this year were awarded during a special ceremony of the 19th Iran Cinema Celebration with Asghar Farhadi's 'The Salesman' scooping the most awards.

The 19th Iran Cinema Celebration, organized by the Iranian House of Cinema annually to observe Iran's National Day of Cinema, awarded the best cinematic performances this year, Mehr News agency reported.

Farhadi's Oscar-winning film 'The Salesman' and Narges Abyar's anti-war drama 'Breath' led the nominations each with ten nods, but the latter did not receive any awards while Farhadi's film snatched seven.

Best Film award went to 'The Salesman' and the Best Director award went to Asghar Farhadi for 'The Salesman'. Asghar Farhadi's film also received the Best Script award. In addition, Best Actor award was given to Shahab Hosseini for his role in 'The Salesman'.

The following is the complete list of the winners:
 Best Actress award went to Leila Hatami for her role in 'Subdue'.
 Best Supporting Actor: Fariid Sajadi Hosseini ('The Salesman')
 Best Editing: Haideh Safiyari ('The Salesman')



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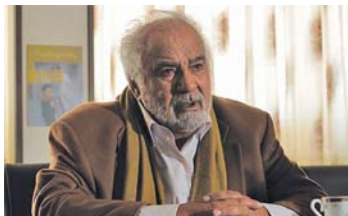
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Best Score: Karen Homayounfar ('Arvand')
 Best Cinematography: Farshad Mohammadi ('Subdue')
 Best Sound Mixing: Bahman Ardalan ('Subdue')
 Best Sound Recording: Babak Ardalan ('Subdue')
 Best Scenic Design: Keivan Moghadam ('The Salesman')
 Best Costume Design: Abbas Bolvandi ('The Orphanage of Iran')
 Best Makeup: Abdollah Eskandari and Mehرداد Mirkiani ('Lantouri')
 Best Visual Effects: Sina Ghavvidel ('Subdue')
 Best Field Special Effects: Iman Karimian ('Vilaicha')
 Best Documentary: 'Femininity' (by Mohsen Ostadali)
 Best Short Film: 'AnimAl' (by Bahman Ark, Bahram Ark)
 Best Animation: 'The Servant' (by Farnoush Abedi)

'Negar's Role' to vie at Scotland's Aberdeen festival

Iranian motion picture 'Negar's Role', directed by Ali Atshani, will be screened at the first edition of Aberdeen International Film Festival in Scotland.

This Scottish festival will start on October 4 and run through October 14. 'Negar's Role' is the only film to represent Iran in this festival, MNA reported.



The film narrates the story of Farzad, a young man who intends to marry Negar without asking for his father's approval. Eventually he manages to obtain his father's permission, but it won't last long due to Negar's past which causes the state of affairs to take a different turn.

Atshani is notable for directing films such as 'The President's Cellphone', 'Wishbone' (to be distributed by Netflix), 'Banana Peel', and 'Mr. Alef'. His 2016 film 'Paradise' was a co-production between Iran and Germany.

The Iranian director is currently producing a comedy titled '1st Born' with Hollywood.



SHARAREH SAMEI/honaronline.ir
 The 5th Grand Festival of Art for Peace is underway at Iran Artists House in Tehran. The cultural event will last until September 21, 2017.



Weather

