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Leader: Any 'wrong move' on JCPOA will draw response

POLITICS TEHRAN — "Any wrong move by the hegemonic system on the JCPOA will draw a reaction from the Islamic Republic," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned at a graduation ceremony of police cadets in Tehran on Sunday.

Criticizing the White House for its "brazen and shameless" measures with regard to the JCPOA, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Every day they show one wickedness and one mischief with regard to this issue, which proves that what our honorable Imam [Khomeini] said about America being the Great Satan is true and the regime of the United States of America is really the most evil of devils." →2

Iran says only recognizes 'united Iraq'

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani on Sunday insisted on Tehran's long-held position on the territorial integrity of Iraq, saying Tehran only recognizes an "integrated" and "federal" Iraq.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a friend and ally to the Kurdish brothers who have stood beside them in the most difficult time, does not assess referendum as beneficial to the Kurdistan region and is against the move," the top security official noted.

President of Iraqi Kurdistan Masoud Barzani tweeted on June 7 that an independence referendum is scheduled to be held on September 25. →2

Kaveh Madani appointed Iran's deputy environment chief

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Renowned Iranian scientist and environmental activist Kaveh Madani was appointed on Sunday as the deputy for international affairs, innovation and socio-cultural engagement of the Department of Environment.

Earlier this year, Madani's name appeared in the media as one of the candidates with strong support from the Iranian environmental NGOs and activists to become Iran's Minister of Energy after Hamid Chitchian in President Hassan Rouhani's second presidency term. Madani had denied the news later in an interview with Mehr News Agency.

Madani, 36, is known internationally for his work on integrating game theory and decision analysis into water resources management models. →12

PERSPECTIVE
By Zahra Khezri
Tehran Times Journalist

ISIS looking for other places to nest

For a longtime, the imperial powers have had eyes on the Middle East for its geopolitical importance and wealthy resources like oil and natural gas. The regional countries, mostly populated by Muslims, have been grappling with plots hatched against them by outsiders for decades.

Their latest heinous plot was the creation of ISIS, (also known as Daesh, ISIL or simply Islamic State) which their horrific and savage acts shocked the world.

It was created in 2010 by vicious powers and certain regional states in order to vent anger on certain independent countries in the Middle East.

WIKILEAKS founder Julian Assange, on the sixth anniversary of the first infamous "Cablegate" (United States diplomatic cables leak), said the CIA was responsible for paving the way for ISIS, which is an outgrowth of al-Qaeda which was responsible for 9/11 attacks.

Initially ISIS planned to establish a caliphate or Islamic State in Sunni majority regions; it also succeeded to seize control of large swathes of territory across Syria and Iraq.

The U.S. exploited ISIS as part of a wider drive to find a foothold inside Syria as independent country which has been standing against Israel for decades.

Also, cash poured in from sympathetic donors around the region and hundreds of millions of dollars was seized by ISIS and other terrorist groups loyal to Saddam Hussein when they captured Mosul and other cities in northern Iraq.

The political turmoil, the chaos brought about by devastating civil war, sectarian violence, envy of the political system in Baghdad and other problems helped facilitate the entry of ISIS into Iraq from neighboring Syria.

Finally, Iraqis joined hands by defeating Daesh by wresting control of the areas captured by them. Also Syria, along with the resistance forces, has succeeded to break the backbone of ISIS.

But as ISIS is losing the ground in Iraq and Syria they look for new breeding ground in other countries. Some ISIS elements which poured into Iraq and Syria from Europe are also coming home to roost.

Iranian MPs urge action after U.S. ban on aircraft sales

TEHRAN — Senior Iranian lawmakers have called for an action after the U.S. House approved new measures on Wednesday that block the sale of commercial aircraft to the Islamic Republic.

The measures would specifically prevent the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) from clearing licenses for aircraft sales and prohibit the use of funds for financial transactions.

Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, on Sunday called the move a "clear violation of the JCPOA," using the official name the nuclear accord, Press TV reported.

"It should be acknowledged that the sale of aircraft to Iran is specified in the JCPOA

text and annex," Boroujerdi said.

He reminded that the measures had to go through the Senate and also be signed off on by the U.S. president before becoming law, "but the whole issue is wrong in the first place and needs to be corrected."

The rest of the countries, which have signed the nuclear deal -- the UK, France, China, Russia, and Germany -- and also the United Nations Security Council which has approved the JCPOA, should also protest the U.S. move, Boroujerdi suggested.

The lawmaker further urged the Iranian committee tasked with monitoring the accord's implementation to take "serious decision" versus the violation.

MP Mojtaba Zonnour, who heads the Parliament's Nuclear Committee, said the U.S. measures defied the letter of the nuclear agreement.

"One of the things that has been explicitly mentioned in the JCPOA is the lifting of sanctions on the sale of airplanes and parts and after-sales services," the MP stated.

The U.S. House measures violate the Iranian people's rights, said the lawmaker as he urged action against any future attempts by the U.S. to breach the nuclear deal.

"In our view, the JCPOA has been violated again. The supreme supervisory board on the implementation of the accord should announce its view and make a decision on this matter and decide on what action to take." →2

Iran marks Intl. Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer

By Maryam Oarehgozlou

TEHRAN — Iran marked on Sunday the United Nations' International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer commemorating the date of the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in 1987.

Back in the 1920s, coolants and fridges were discovered to be very toxic, causing severe health complications to humans. CFCs were the solution to address this, but decades later, CFCs were also found to be the root cause of a hole in the stratosphere- commonly referred to as the ozone hole.

The ozone layer is the natural shield against the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays, which can cause severe health risks such as

skins cancers. This damage to the ozone layer prompted governments to moot an environmental agreement to govern the production and use of harmful substances that damage the ozone.

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was designed to reduce the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances in order to reduce their abundance in the atmosphere, and thereby protect the earth's fragile ozone layer. The protocol was agreed on September 16th in 1987 and entered into force on January 1st in 1989.

As of 1990 Iran has archived its phase-out targets for a number of ozone depleting sub-

stances, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Gary Lewis said, adding, "Since 2012 the UN has partnered with the Islamic Republic of Iran on the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan or what we call as HPMP."

The project's main target is to phase-down and ultimately phase-out the use of HCFCs in Iran to comply with the Montreal Protocol's controlling targets through a harmonized national strategy. Iran does not produce any HCFCs. However, Iran uses import HCFCs for various industrial uses and as a Party to the Montreal Protocol, Iran must incrementally decrease HCFC consumption culminating in a complete HCFC phase-out in 2030. →12

Second suspect arrested in London Underground attack

A second man has been arrested over Friday's bomb attack on a London Underground train that injured at least 30 people, police said.

The 21-year-old man was arrested in the west London suburb of Hounslow just before midnight on Saturday, the Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

He was detained under Britain's Terrorism Act and taken to a south London police station, police said.

Earlier on Saturday, police arrested an 18-year-old man in the port of Dover and raided a property in Sunbury, a small town outside London, as they hunted for whoever planted the device.

Hounslow is about four miles from Sunbury.

A bucket packed with nails and the explosive Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP) was left on a busy train during Friday's morning rush hour. No one was killed when it went off.

Officials have said they are not sure how many people were involved in the bombing, which prompted the government to raise country's terrorism warning to critical, the highest level.

In the wake of the attack, there was no sign of panic among Londoners and the weekend life of the city continued undeterred by the raised threat level.

Officials said the bomb was intended to do grave harm to commuters. Analysts said the injuries would have been far worse had the entire device exploded.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack, which it said was carried out by an affiliated unit.

Britain has endured four other attacks this year, which have killed a total of 36 people. The other attacks in London - near Parliament, on London Bridge and near a mosque in Finsbury Park in north London - used vehicles and knives.

In addition, a suicide bomber struck a packed concert hall in Manchester in northern England, killing 22 people. That attack in May also briefly caused the threat level to be set at "critical". (Source: agencies)



Iran's humanitarian aid reaches Rohingya

The first humanitarian shipment of the Relief and Rescue Organization of the Iranian Red Crescent Society was distributed among the displaced Rohingya Muslims at refugee camps in Bangladesh under the supervision of the Bangladeshi government. The forty-ton relief aid on Saturday reached Bangladesh, where tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims are stranded after fleeing what has been called "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" by the UN.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iranian, Pakistani military chiefs call for end to Rohingya plight

POLITICS TEHRAN — Chief of Staff of the d e s k Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri on Sunday spoke with Pakistan's Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss the ongoing violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, Tasnim news agency reported.

In a phone conversation, the two sides called on the Muslim world to help end the plight of the Muslim minority.

Baqeri and Bajwa also discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries' armed forces to help the Rohingya.



Nuclear chief in Austria for IAEA conference

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), left Tehran on Sunday for Vienna to attend the 61st General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Heading a delegation, Salehi is scheduled to deliver a speech to the conference and meet a number of IAEA authorities and top officials from other countries on the sidelines of the annual event.

According to the IAEA website, working toward the peaceful use of nuclear technologies is a priority of the conference.



U.S. has ruined 'warp and woof' of nuclear deal: Larijani

POLITICS TEHRAN — U.S. authorities have torn up the "warp and woof" of the nuclear deal, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said on Sunday in response to the U.S. government's claim that Iran has not been in compliance with the "spirit" of the accord.

"Iran has acted wisely regarding the nuclear issue," Larijani said, adding the country would restore its nuclear program to pre-deal era in case the deal fails.

Iran and six world powers signed the nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, on July 14, 2015. It went into force on January 16, 2016.



Over 1500 events to be held during Sacred Defense Week

POLITICS TEHRAN — The head of the d e s k Foundation for Preservation of Sacred Defense Works and Values said on Sunday that more than 1500 events will be held during the Sacred Defense Week, which will begin on Shahrivar 31 (September 22).

Brigadier General Bahman Kargar said that this year's Sacred Defense Week coincides with the mourning days of Muharram, IRIB news reported.

"The Sacred Defense has a deep connection with Ashura (the day Husayn ibn Ali, Shia Muslims' third Imam, was martyred)," he said.

Iranians refer to resistance against Iraq's invasion of Iran in the 1980s as sacred defense.



Task force set up to choose Tehran governor

POLITICS TEHRAN — A task force has been d e s k formed in order to find the best pick to serve as the governor of Tehran Province, reformist lawmaker Qassem Mirzaee-Niku said on Sunday.

Mirzaee-Niku stressed that appointing the governor of Tehran Province will be carried out in a transparent, democratic manner, ILNA reported.

He also said during the first meeting of the task force, several candidates were mentioned, including Javad Emam, Mohammad-Ebrahim Ansari Lari, Mohsen Mehrizadeh, Mohammad-Hossein Moqimi and Ali-Ousat Hashemi.



Independence referendum in Iraq will cause new conflicts: general

POLITICS TEHRAN — Brigadier General d e s k Massoud Jazayeri, the deputy chief of Iran's armed forces, said on Sunday that independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan will lead to new conflicts in Iraq and the region.

Noting that the vote would lead to many disasters, Jazayeri said one of the long-term policies of the U.S. and the Zionist regime is to disintegrate and weaken Muslim countries.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi also commented on the issue, saying the vote is a "strategic mistake".

Leader: Any 'wrong move' on JCPOA will draw response

1 -> Ayatollah Khamenei stated that Iran started its nuclear program, because according to experts' estimates, the country needed to generate at least 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity, but the United States opposes Iran's nuclear program as it is basically opposed to scientific progress of the Iranian nation and other nations.

The country's officials reached the conclusion that Iran should negotiate and forego some of their rights so that sanctions [imposed on Iran on account of its nuclear program] would be removed. But today, we see that despite all agreements and promises and many discussions during [nuclear] negotiations, America treats these negotiations and their outcome in a totally oppressive and bullying manner," the Leader noted.

The Leader added that in the face of the United States' measures to scuttle the nuclear deal, Iranian "officials must prove to the corrupt leaders of the regime of the United States of America that they rely on their own people and the Iranian nation, which is a powerful nation thanks to Islam, will never submit and bow to them.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said, "The enemy should know no matter how arrogance and bullying succeed around the world, they will fail in the face of the Islamic Republic."

In the final part of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei pointed to the recent sad road accidents which took about 20 lives in Iran, saying various organizations, from police to Ministry of Transportation to industrial units should clarify their share in preventing such deadly incidents and settle for removing the shortcomings.



"The enemy should know no matter how arrogance and bullying succeed around the world, they will fail in the face of the Islamic Republic."

Mogherini calls nuclear deal 'good', 'robust'

POLITICS European Union foreign policy chief d e s k Federica Mogherini has said that the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is a "good" and "robust" agreement.

"The Iran deal is a good and robust agreement that serves the interests of all parties," she said in a statement to NBC News.

"It is not an agreement between two countries — it is a commitment undertaken by the entire international community on one side and Iran on the other, supported by a resolution of the UN Security Council," she said.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including

the U.S. signed the nuclear deal on July 14, 2015.

On July 20, 2015, the UN Security Council turned the JCPOA into international law by endorsing a resolution, setting the stage for the lifting of the Security Council sanctions against Iran.

The nuclear agreement went into effect in January 2016.

On September 5, U.S. ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley laid out a case for President Donald Trump to step back from the nuclear deal, arguing that Iran's technical compliance alone isn't enough for the U.S. to stick with the pact.

Trump levelled sharp criticism at the agreement many a time during his election race calling it "the worst deal

ever". On Thursday Trump again ramped up its rhetoric on the nuclear agreement, saying, "You'll see what I'm going to be doing very shortly in October."

Trump is expected to recertify Iran's compliance to the deal before October 15 as required by the U.S. law. "De-certification" would start a 60-day clock for Congress to decide whether to re-impose U.S. sanctions on Iran.

The European Union has said even if Trump withdraws the U.S. from the JCPOA it will remain in the deal.

In an indirect reference to the United States on Sunday, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, threatened that Iran will respond if the any "wrong move" is taken against the JCPOA.

Iran says only recognizes 'united Iraq'



1 -> Shamkhani said independence referendum has no "legal credibility" and will only undermine regional security.

"Opposition of Iraq's neighboring countries to referendum... will create a complicated and difficult situation in (Iraqi) Kurdistan after referendum," he predicted.

Shamkhani attached great importance to necessity of protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq, saying any move in line with disintegrating Iraq will make Iran to review its policies on cooperation with the Kurdistan region.

He also warned that agreements on border areas will not be "valid" if the Kurdistan region is split from the mainland.

"Separation of the Kurdistan region

from the Iraqi central government means closure of all the common border areas," asserted the high-ranking official who was Iran's defense minister from 1997-2005.

The security official highlighted the importance of dialogue to settle disputes between the Kurdistan region and the central government and avoid taking "hasty decisions".

The Iraqi government issued a statement on June 9 rejecting any unilateral move by Kurdish regional authorities to press for independence.

While all countries are insisting on territorial integrity in Iraq, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed interest in partitioning Iraq and establishing an independent Kurdish state during a meeting with a delegation of 33 U.S. Republican congressmen.

'Iran favors cooperation with any country serious in anti-terrorism campaign'

Iranian Supreme Leader's top aide for international affairs Ali Akbar Velayati underlined Tehran's enthusiasm for cooperation with any country which seriously fights against the terrorist groups.

"We are living in a sensitive region and the Islamic Republic of Iran seriously pursues fight against terrorism as a principled policy and helps the legal governments in the region against plots," Velayati said in a meeting with Belgian Parliament Speaker Siegfried Bracke in Tehran on Sunday.

He also underscored that Iran is prepared to cooperate with all countries which are interested and

serious about fighting terrorism.

Bracke, for his part, stressed the need for the development of relations between the two countries in economic fields and the necessity for taking positive steps in bilateral relations.

In relevant remarks earlier this month, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani underlined his country's preparedness to broaden its anti-terrorism efforts in cooperation with the regional states.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate with the regional countries, including Pakistan, in campaign against terrorism and development of peace, stability

and security in the region," Rouhani said in a meeting with Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Tehran.

He stressed that the problems in the region, including Afghanistan, can be solved through regional solutions and not by the trans-regional powers.

Asif for his part, underscored that the regional issues cannot be settled through military action, and said, "Resolving the regional countries' problems needs regional solutions, specially with Iran's partnership, and measures by the powers outside the region is not helpful."

(Source: FNA)

Rouhani: Nuclear deal benefits entire world



POLITICS TEHRAN d e s k President Hassan Rouhani of Iran said on Sunday that there is an international consensus that the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and great powers is beneficial to the "security," "stability" and "development" of the entire world.

Rouhani made the remarks at Mehrabad airport before departing for New York to attend the annual UN General Assembly meeting.

He said there are only two or three ruling system including the Trump administration which are against the JCPOA - the official name for the nuclear agreement - because they feel it has undermined their plan to demoralize the Islamic Republic.

He also noted that Iran seeks to

have "constructive" relations with the world.

Commenting on the crises in the Middle East, he said that the regional conflicts should be settled "politically" and not "militarily".

The Iranian president went on to say that terrorism must be defeated through international cooperation.

Elsewhere, Rouhani said that the world should condemn cruelty being committed against the Rohingya by Myanmar's government and army.

According to Reuters, nearly 400,000 Rohingya Muslims from western Myanmar have crossed into Bangladesh since August 25, fleeing a Myanmar government offensive against insurgents that the UN has branded a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Iranian MPs urge action after U.S. ban on aircraft sales

1 -> "Of course, Majlis (Parliament) will also be acting on its own responsibility and will decide on this issue at the first meeting of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee."

Zonnour further touched on the U.S. Treasury's announcement of economic sanctions on Thursday against 11

individuals and companies for allegedly supporting the country's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.

"Definitely, the Treasury's bans are new sanctions and are among the instances of the violation of the JCPOA," he said.

Under President Donald Trump, the U.S. has imposed several rounds of new

sanctions against Iran in a move which many believe are aimed at provoking the Islamic Republic to abandon the nuclear accord.

Alireza Manzari, a former deputy chief of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, said Boeing had signed its contract for sales of passenger

aircraft to Iran Air before the new sanctions were imposed, and that the new U.S. law could not potentially affect past agreements.

Nevertheless, the U.S. company could refrain from turning over the aircraft if the law came to include former provisions, he added.

Syrian Army, allies cut ISIL's main supply line in Dayr al-Zawr

Russia denies bombing positions of U.S.-backed SDF forces in Syria

The Syrian Army and its allies have cut the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group's main supply line in the northeastern city of Dayr al-Zawr.

The victory came after the combined forces pushed the terror group out of the al-Jafra district on the western bank of the Euphrates River in the city, Syrian military sources said.

The London-based so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) confirmed the conquest, and said the forces had also retaken control of a number of villages near the city's air base overnight.

A Syrian source said ISIL terrorists could now only escape across the river.

"They have no outlet except crossing the Euphrates towards the eastern bank and fleeing towards the desert, or (the towns of) al-Bukamal and al-Mayadin," the source said.

The terrorist outfit started its campaign of bloodshed and destruction against the country in 2014, taking over vast swathes of territory. It, however, was forced out of much of its turf a year later against Army advances, which have been backed by Russian aerial support, Lebanese Shia fighters, and Iranian military advisory assistance.

Earlier this month, the Syria Army and its allies broke a nearly three-year-old ISIL siege on government-held parts of the provincial capital.

As the combined forces began building on their gains, the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a United States-backed group of mostly Kurdish militants, said it was also launching an attack on the



province from Euphrates' eastern side.

A commander with the SDF, Ahmed Abu Khawla, said on Friday that the group would not "allow" the Syrian forces to get to the eastern bank of the river.

Russia, however, said Syrian government forces had crossed the Euphrates in their push to liberate the province from ISIL, ignoring a warning by the ragtag group.

The ISIL terrorist group is currently reported to be in control of just a third of the province, the liberation of which would also put a stop to the movement of its terrorists across the common border with Iraq.

■ Russia denies bombing U.S. backed forces

Meantime, the Russian military has flatly rejected a claim that its warplanes have bombed the positions of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Syria's flashpoint province of Dayr al-Zawr.

"This is not possible. Why would we bomb them?" the AFP quoted Igor Konashenkov, Russia's military spokesman at the Hmeymim Air Base. The air base, located in Syria's western province of Latakia, is Moscow's main outpost for its counterterrorism airstrikes in the Arab country.

Also the Pentagon said "Russian mu-

nitions impacted a location known to the Russians to contain Syrian Democratic Forces and coalition advisers."

Earlier in Saturday, the U.S.-backed militia claimed that they had allegedly come under attack from Russian fighter jets in the strategic and oil-rich eastern province, a complex battlefield where Syrian troops, backed by aerial cover from the Russian air force, and the SDF forces are carrying out parallel yet separate offensives against the Takfiri ISIL terrorist group.

The United States and its allies have been bombarding what they call ISIL positions inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a United Nations mandate. They also support some groups, such as the SDF, claiming that they help them in their alleged fight against ISIL terrorists. Damascus has repeatedly voiced its strong opposition against operations of the so-called coalition in the country.

Different foreign-backed terrorist groups have been wreaking havoc in Syria since 2011. The government controls the main urban centers in the west of the country and has recaptured much of the eastern desert from ISIL in recent months.

On September 12, Lieutenant General Aleksandr Lapin, the Russian chief of staff in Syria, announced that Damascus was in control of 85 percent of the country's territories. He added that Syrian forces must now purge terrorists from the country's remaining 15 percent, which amounts to 27,000 square kilometers.

(Source: agencies)

Hamas accepts Fatah reconciliation conditions, including vote in Gaza



Hamas says it has accepted "key" reconciliation conditions offered by rival Fatah party's head Mahmoud Abbas, including nationwide elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Palestinian resistance movement underlined its "desire to achieve national unity" after a 10-year rift that has left Palestinians divided between two governments.

Hamas has been running the Gaza Strip since 2006 when it scored a landslide victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections, leaving Abbas in control only of the autonomous areas of the West Bank.

Hamas said it had agreed to dissolve an administrative committee that runs Gaza, invite the Palestinian Authority led by Abbas to return to Gaza and hold new elections.

The statement followed negotiations held last week in Cairo between the movement's officials and a delegation sent by Abbas.

Hamas has fought off three Israeli wars on Gaza and been managing the coastal enclave's affairs in the face of a crippling Israeli siege.

Abbas's government has compounded the misery of the Gazans through "punitive measures" which it has imposed to squeeze Hamas and force it to relinquish the control of the enclave.

Among a series of economic sanctions has been the reduction of payments for Gaza electricity, which has prompted Israel to drastically cut power supply to the territory of 1.8 million residents to less than four hours a day.

Last month, Abbas threatened to gradually cut financial support to the impoverished strip "by 100 percent" until Hamas agreed to reconcile with Fatah. The overall deprivations are estimated to render Gaza uninhabitable by 2020.

Palestinian president has threatened to gradually reduce funding to the Gaza Strip until Hamas reconcile with the Fatah Party.

Hamas has shunned contacts with Israel, while the Palestinian Authority maintains security coordination with Tel Aviv.

The coordination and whether Hamas would subject its security forces to the Palestinian Authority command have persistently thrown off the prospect of reconciliation between the Palestinian factions.

The Sunday statement stopped short of offering information about either issue.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S.: No change in plan to quit Paris climate deal

The United States has refuted reports that it was softening its stance on the Paris climate accord, insisting that Washington will still withdraw from the agreement unless it can re-enter on more favorable terms.

The statement on Saturday came after the Wall Street Journal and AFP news agency quoted Miguel Arias Canete, a top European climate official, saying the U.S. will "not re-negotiate the Paris accord, but will try to review the terms on which they could be engaged under this agreement".

Canete said there would be a meeting on the sidelines of next week's United Nations General Assembly with U.S. representatives "to assess what is the real U.S. position", noting "it's a message which is quite different to the one we heard from President Trump in the past".

The U.S. President Donald Trump announced in June that he would withdraw America from the 2015 global pact, arguing that it would undermine the U.S. economy and national sovereignty. But he also left open the door to negotiating a better deal for U.S. businesses and workers.

"There has been no change in the United States' position on the Paris Agreement," said White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters on Saturday. "As the president has made abundantly clear, the United States is withdrawing unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favorable to our country."

The U.S. State Department submitted an official withdrawal from the pact



to the UN last month.

Saturday's White House statement came as environment ministers from 30 countries gathered in the Canadian city of Montreal to push forward on implementing the Paris deal.

Ministers from Canada, the European Union and other nations told reporters that they expect continued U.S. participation in Paris Climate Agreement talks.

The withdrawal process will take until November 2020 to complete.

Attendees reaffirmed their commitment to the terms of the pact, which was signed by nearly 200 countries in December 2015.

The aim is to limit global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by 2100.

To achieve this, global greenhouse gas emissions will need to be cut by an estimated 40-70 percent by 2050, and by 2100 the planet must be carbon-neutral.

The Montreal gathering precedes larger United Nations climate talks in Germany's Bonn, where devastation from Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean is expected to be discussed.

(Source: agencies)

NATO to decide on increased Afghan deployment in one month

Senior authorities in the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) military alliance have announced that a decision on sending more troops to Afghanistan as requested by the United States will take at least one month to take shape.

NATO Supreme Allied Commander United States General Curtis Scaparrotti said on Sunday that the NATO Military Committee, which comprises defense chiefs from 29 member countries of the organization, would give a firm answer to a U.S. request for increased troop contribution in Afghanistan in its next meeting in October.

Scaparrotti made the remarks after a meeting of the NATO committee in Tirana. The U.S. military commander did not reveal the details of the discussions but hinted that members had in general accepted US requests for increased troops on the ground in Afghanistan.

The commander said that the coalition was seeking more troops in Afghanistan to facilitate training and equipping of the Afghan military in the fight against militants.

General Petr Pavel, who heads NATO Military Committee, said in Tirana that all defense chiefs in the meeting recognized the need to fill current shortfalls in Afghanistan. However, he said any response to the question of increased deployment would be made when the ministers consult their respective governments.

(Source: Press TV)



More than 16 years after the occupation of Afghanistan, the United States and allies in NATO still struggle to maintain security in the country. The coalition transferred security responsibilities to the Afghan forces in 2014 in a bid to end its long-standing mission there although some 13,000 NATO soldiers, most of them from the US, are still stationed in Afghanistan.

That comes as the Taliban, the militant force that ruled the country before the 2001 invasion, is regaining territories in south and north while defectors of the group are helping Daesh Takfiri terrorists to launch its own attacks in Afghanistan. US President Donald Trump has allowed the deployment of another 4,000 US troops in Afghanistan while he has repeatedly urged other NATO members to contribute more.

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told NATO allies in June that it was a responsibility for the alliance to finish its job in Afghanistan or risk allowing the militancy to bloom.

Iraqi Kurdish secession vote 'playing with fire': PM Abadi

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says Kurdish authorities are "playing with fire" by planning to hold a referendum on the independence of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

"A sincere and brotherly call to the leaders in Kurdistan: the decision of referendum is a dangerous one. I consider it playing with fire. This decision poses the biggest danger to our citizens in Kurdistan," Abadi told The Associated Press in an interview on Saturday.

The is scheduled for September 25 to gauge support for the possible secession of Iraq's Kurdistan region.

On Friday, Iraqi Kurdish lawmakers approved holding the secession vote in the face of fierce opposition from the central government in Baghdad, the United Nations and the United States.

Regional powers like Iran and Turkey have also expressed concerns about the planned referendum by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), arguing that it could create further instability in the region.

Abadi described the upcoming Kurdish vote as "unconstitutional" and "illegal", noting that Baghdad was resorting to all legal processes it has at its disposal in response to the referendum. "If you challenge the constitution and if you challenge the borders of Iraq and the borders of the region, then ... this is a public invitation to the countries in the region to violate Iraqi borders as well [which] would be a very dangerous escalation,"

he warned.

Asked whether the use of force was on the table, the Iraqi premier stressed that if the Iraqi population is "threatened by the use of force outside the law, then we will intervene militarily."



ly The Kurdish vote, he said, jeopardizes gains achieved by the Iraqi Kurds under a self-rule government and opens "the gate for regional intervention in the KRG. Not in the rest of Iraq, but in the KRG."

Asked whether he would ever accept an independent Kurdistan, Abadi said it was a "constitutional matter."

"It's not up to me, there is a constitution ... I don't have legal authority to accept this referendum. ... If they (the Kurds) want to go down that road, they should work toward amending the constitution," he pointed out.

Earlier this week, the Iraqi parliament voted to reject the Kurdish plebiscite, requiring Baghdad to "take all steps to protect the unity of Iraq and open a serious dialog" with Kurdish leaders. Additionally, the White House called for the Iraqi Kurdish region to abandon the referendum "and enter into serious and sustained dialog with Baghdad."

The United Nations also urged KRG head Masoud Barzani to drop plans for the secession vote and enter talks with Baghdad aimed at reaching a deal within three years.

The KRG has long been embroiled in disputes with the Iraqi federal government over budget payments, oil exports and control of ethnically-divided areas.

Barzani told a rally for secession in the city of Dohuk on Friday that the Iraqi Kurdistan did "not take legitimacy from anyone."

The contentious vote comes at a time when Iraq is still grappling with the insecurity caused by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

A car bomb explosion hit Iraq's northern city of Kirkuk on Saturday, killing three civilians and wounding nine others.

(Source: agencies)

Pakistan's Sharif faces key by-poll after dismissal

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League/Nawaz) party is facing its first major political challenge on Sunday in a by-election widely seen to be a barometer for whether he has managed to maintain support in his political heartland following his dismissal from office.

Sharif's wife Kulsoom will be running for the parliamentary seat vacated by her husband after his disqualification by the Supreme Court in July over an omission in his parliamentary wealth declaration.

Voting was under way in Lahore on Sunday, after campaigning for the seat concluded late on Friday night.

On Friday, the Supreme Court dismissed petitions seeking a review of its decision to disqualify Sharif, although a separate bench is still deliberating on whether the ban on holding public office is permanent.

The court also referred Sharif, three of his children and several aides to an anti-corruption court for trial on charges that he looted state wealth during his previous two terms as prime minister in the 1990s.

Campaigning in the NA-120 constituency, located in the heart of the eastern city of Lahore, has been fierce, with the PML-N chief's daughter Maryam Nawaz - herself facing corruption charges - leading more than a month of rallies and campaign events.

Kulsoom Nawaz, 66, has spent much of the campaign undergoing treatment for her recently diagnosed lymphoma in Britain.

Nawaz's party has won the parliamentary seat consistently since it began contesting elections in 1985.

Analysts say Sunday's by-poll will be a key indicator as to whether Sharif's dismissal has led to an erosion of support.

The NA-120 constituency, home to almost half a million of Lahore's 11 million residents, is located in the heart of the old city, and includes the historic Lahore fort and the shrine to Daata Ganj Baksh, the city's patron saint.

On Thursday, Imran Khan led a rally of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party through the constituency, attracting hundreds of party supporters in a bid to gather support behind Rashid, his party's candidate.

Khan's party is running their campaign on a platform of being anti-corruption and calling for new leadership in the country's politics.

A middle-class professional doctor, Rashid gained more than 52,350 votes in the constituency when she last ran in 2013, ultimately losing to Nawaz Sharif's 91,683 votes. The constituency is considered a Sharif stronghold, and he won 60 percent of all votes cast in that election.

This time around, PTI supporters say they are hoping for a win, but will settle for narrowing the margin of defeat.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Tehran to host intl. conference on material cost flow accounting

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The three-day International Conference on Material Cost Flow Accounting (MFCFA) is set to be held in the Iranian capital from September 19 to 21, 2017, IRNA reported.

The conference will reportedly be held by the cooperation of National Iranian Productivity Organization (NIPO) and Asian Productivity Organization (APO) where prominent international experts from Germany, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam will present and discuss their latest experiments and theories.

Some 80 experts active in green productivity from Iran and other countries, members of APO, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka will also attend the event.

Sterling vulnerable as May prepares to outline Brexit strategy

The pound's rally, spurred by the Bank of England's hawkish rhetoric, may be vulnerable to heightened sensitivity to economic data and Brexit uncertainty this week.

Sterling concluded its biggest weekly gain in five months against the dollar Friday, reaching its highest level since just after Britain's European Union referendum as U.K. policy makers spurred speculation of an interest-rate increase within months. While a speech by BOE Governor Mark Carney and retail-sales figures may influence pound moves earlier in the week, Prime Minister Theresa May threatens to steal the show when she unveils her approach to Brexit on Sept. 22.

The U.K. currency is the world's best-performing major against the dollar so far in September as BOE policy makers said some withdrawal of stimulus may be needed "over the coming months." Still, with May due to speak on Friday in Italy's Florence about Britain's exit talks with the EU, traders will scour her comments for clues on progress on any transitional deal and the U.K.'s separation payment, which is needed before trade can be discussed.

"The medium-term narrative for the pound will continue to be dominated by Brexit and here May's speech in Florence will be key," said Viraj Patel, a currency strategist at ING Groep NV. "If her speech doesn't address the near-term obstacles such as the divorce bill and transitional arrangements required to move onto the next stages of the Brexit talks, then the uncertainty factor will continue to weigh on sterling in the near-term."

The pound climbed 1.3 percent to \$1.3572 as of 6:23 p.m. London time Friday, having risen 2.8 percent against the dollar since the previous week. Earlier on Friday it reached \$1.3616, its highest level since June 24, 2016, the day after Britain's EU vote. Against the euro, sterling rose 1.2 percent to 87.93 pence.

Following the U.K. currency's outperformance, BNP Paribas SA recommended fading the rally.

"The pound's sensitivity to data should rise because the BOE's message now has a lot of scope to shift around in response to data," said Sam Lynton-Brown, a strategist at BNP Paribas. "Growth will surprise materially to the downside versus the BOE's forecasts in the August Inflation Report, which will ultimately prevent them tightening anywhere near as much as they've signaled."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Egypt expects cabinet approval to sell Eurobonds within weeks

Egypt's cabinet is expected to approve a plan to sell 1.5 billion in euro-denominated bonds in two to three weeks, the finance minister said, as the government seeks cheaper finance abroad to plug its budget gap.

The Finance Ministry has started initial discussions with some European investment banks, Amr El-Garhy said in an interview in Bahrain late on Saturday. The notes, which will be Egypt's first in euros, will likely have tenors of five to 10 years, he said. The plan is to sell the bonds before the end of November, El-Garhy told Bloomberg earlier.

There are some "pockets of money" in Europe that are interested in Egyptian assets, El-Garhy said. "We're taking good advantage of the current market conditions as well as the progress in our current economic reform program."

With local borrowing costs above 15 percent, Egypt is increasingly looking at international debt markets to capitalize on growing investor confidence after it floated its currency and cut costly energy subsidies. The steps helped seal a three-year \$12 billion loan program from the International Monetary Fund in November. Egypt has since raised \$7 billion from the sale of international bonds, helping foreign reserves surge to a record of more than \$36 billion. "The focus is to make sure that the level of external debt to gross domestic product is within a manageable level, and within a comfortable level that we believe we can manage in the medium and the long term," El-Garhy said.

The budget deficit fell to 10.9 percent from 12.5 percent of gross domestic product in the fiscal year ended June 30 on the subsidy cuts and a government tax increase.

Yet Moody's Investors Service last month stopped short of upgrading Egypt's junk credit rating -- or even improving its outlook from «stable» -- citing Egypt's "very weak government finances" and increased external exposure.

"It was a bit strange to say the least," El-Garhy said of the decision. "In a year full of economic reform actions and very bold actions on all fronts, you don't see anything, you don't see any positive sign" from Moody's, he said.

Egypt is rated B3 at Moody's, six steps below investment grade and on par with Lebanon, Argentina, Pakistan and Ghana.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Petchem exports over \$4.5b in 5 months

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran exported over 9 million tons of petrochemical products worth \$4.593 billion during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), IRNA reported on Sunday.

As Shana news agency has previously quoted Ali-Mohammad Bossaqzadeh, the production control director of National Petrochemical Company (NPC), the country's petrochemical output has risen five percent during the first five months of this year compared to the same time span in the preceding year.

In July, Bossaqzadeh announced that seven new petrochemical projects were planned to be implemented in the country by the end of the current calendar year (March 20, 2018).

He put petrochemical output at 51 million tons in the past calendar year, saying that the figure is estimated to reach 56 million tons by the end of this year, posting a record for the second consecutive year.

Iran is among the few countries which have all kinds of petrochemical feedstock, according to NPC Managing Director Marziyeh Shahdaie.

The future of Iranian petrochemical industry is promising after the implementation of JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action which lifted sanction against Iran in January 2016), Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said in the 13th edition of Iran Petro-



chemical Forum (IPF), which was held in Tehran on April 22.

Given that Iran ranks the first and fourth in the world in terms of gas and oil reserves, respectively, no country enjoys feedstock as much as Iran to develop its petrochemical industry, Zanganeh highlighted.

Several credit lines expected to be opened for Iran soon: CBI governor

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) President Valiollah Seif said that Iran expects several credit lines to be opened for the country in near future, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Speaking at an inauguration ceremony in Tehran on Sunday, the official noted that there is a strong will among the country's foreign trade partners for financing Iranian projects.

"Signing new financial agreements will provide a desirable atmosphere for boosting trade and creating new job opportunities inside the country," he said.

Seif further mentioned finalizing a €15b agreement with China Development Bank (CDB) and said "hopefully we will sign a general deal in the upcoming days which covers all the fi-

nanced projects to avoid signing separate contracts."

According to the governor, the credit line will be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure and production projects in the country.

The significant credit line will primarily use euros and yuan to bypass the U.S. sanctions.

Chinese state-owned CITIC investment company allocated a \$10 billion credit line to several banks in Iran.

Seif said in August that three European countries including Austria, Denmark and Italy are set to open €22 billion credit lines for financing projects in Iran which in addition to the €8-billion credit line to be secured by South Korea's Eximbank the total value of loan deals will reach €30 billion after Iran's nuclear accord in 2015.

Iran crude oil price jumps \$1.48 in a week

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran's light crude oil price rose \$1.48 in the week ended on September 8 to settle at \$52.41, Shana reported on Saturday.

The country has sold light crude at \$49.17 on average since the beginning of 2017 up to the mentioned week.

Also, Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$50.69 per barrel in the said week, up \$2.18 compared to its preceding week.

Meanwhile, with \$2.12 rise from its preceding week, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s basket price stood at \$51.68 per barrel in the mentioned week.

Oil prices rose in the mentioned week on forecasts for rising demand and the gradual restart of U.S. oil re-



fineries.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has forecasted higher demand for its oil in 2018 and pointed to signs of a tighter global market, indicating its deal with non-OPEC states to cut output is helping tackle a glut.

Oil prices rose in the mentioned week on forecasts for rising demand and the gradual restart of U.S. oil re-

Countries that started rift with Qatar have more to lose

The Arab countries that have cut ties with Qatar may have more to lose from the spat compared to the gas-rich state they are targeting, according to the group chief executive of the Middle East's largest bank by assets.

The blockade, which first unfolded in June, saw Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain accusing Qatar of supporting terrorism. Qatar denied those claims, but its stock market and currency suffered from the initial shock of the crisis.

The country also experienced the largest fall in non-resident deposits in almost two years right after the rift began. Data by the Qatar Central Bank showed that non-resident deposits declined 7.6 percent to 170.6 billion Qatari riyals (\$46 billion) in June from the month before.

Part of the money that left Qatar originated from the countries that initiated the blockade. But that was expected and represents only 3 to 4 percent of total

deposits in the banking system, noted Ali Ahmed Al-Kuwari, group CEO of Qatar National Bank.

"I think to replace 3 to 4 percent is not a big deal and let me also remind you there is a two-way relationship. So there's deposits coming from the countries to Qatar and vice versa, Qatar has investments in these economies so it's fair to say for every dollar lost on one side, there's a dollar lost on the other side," he told CNBC.

"Sometimes it's a dollar and a half or two dollars from one side over the other because Qatar is not dependent on these economies, while some countries are dependent on trade flows with Qatar. So it's important to say this: Qatar also has deposits in the region," he said.

Other than outflows in deposits, Al-Kuwari said business is pretty much running as usual in the country despite the blockade, with the economy and financial

system still strong. He acknowledged that the standstill could continue for some time, but posited that it is a good opportunity for Qatar to press on with strengthening its economy.

Qatar, the world's largest gas exporter, has started diversifying its growth model away from the energy sector and is growing sectors such as education, healthcare and tourism.

Qatari banks have also started tapping international markets for funds, turnings to markets in Asia and Europe. Qatar National Bank itself just closed a bond issuance in Taiwan worth \$630 million on Wednesday, Al-Kuwari said.

"This is an ongoing exercise for us, with or without the crisis, to tap into the markets and help us fund our books," he said.

(Source: cnbc)

Volkswagen is 'second mover' in electric commercial vehicles

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE) is a "second mover" in electrified commercial vehicles, after lagging companies such as Tesla (TSLA.O) and Deutsche Post DHL (DPWGN.DE) in putting them on the road, the head of VW's trucks business told a German newspaper.

He said Volkswagen had emissions-free alternatives to conventional trucks and buses on offer.

"But maybe the German manufacturers were too slow. It could be," German

daily Tagesspiegel quoted Andreas Renschler, who is also a member of Volkswagen's group management board, as saying in an interview published on its website on Sunday.

Truck manufacturers such as Tesla, Daimler (DAIGN.DE) and Navistar International Corp (NAV.N) are racing to overcome the challenges of substituting batteries for diesel engines as regulators crack down on carbon dioxide and soot pollution.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk tweet-

ed on Wednesday that the Silicon Valley company would show off a prototype of an electric semi-trailer truck on Oct. 26.

"Tesla has set some important and good impulses in the industry," VW's Renschler told Tagesspiegel, but said Volkswagen was rather a "second mover, who would rather check a couple of times more whether the standards are right."

German peer Daimler said on Thursday that United Parcel Service (UPS.N) would be the first U.S. commercial customer for its new battery-powered

eCarter truck.

But German logistics group Deutsche Post quietly designed and made its own electric delivery van, the StreetScooter, and plans to double annual output to 20,000 by the end of the year.

Volkswagen said at the Frankfurt auto show this week that it was stepping up its shift to electric cars by investing more than 20 billion euros (\$24 billion) in zero-emission vehicles by 2030 to challenge pioneer Tesla in creating a mass market.

India likely to be 3rd largest economy by 2028: HSBC report

MUMBAI: India is likely to overtake Japan and Germany to become the third largest economy in the next 10 years but needs to be consistent in reforms and focus more on the social sector, British brokerage HSBC has said.

Social capital is "insufficient" in the country and spending on aspects like health and education "is not just desirable for its (India's) own sake, but is also central to economic growth and political stability", it said.

India also needs a lot of focus on ease of doing business and related aspects like contract enforcements.

"In over the next ten years, India will likely surpass Germany and Japan to become the world's third largest economy in nominal USD and the transition will happen even more quickly on a PPP (purchas-

ing power parity) basis," its economists said in a note.

Demographics and macro stability were pointed out as key strengths for the country by the brokerage.

Its estimates show India will be a USD 7 trillion economy in 2028, as compared to less than USD 6 trillion and USD 5 trillion for Germany and Japan, respectively.

Presently, India's GDP is around USD 2.3 trillion (fiscal 2016-17). It stands at the fifth spot in global rankings.

The brokerage said the growth rate, which will be lower in FY18 as compared to the year-ago's 7.1 per cent due to the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST), will recover from next year in a sustainable fashion.

It also made a case against "stray reforms", terming them as "harmful".

"There are limits to one-off reforms. India needs to create an ecosystem of continuous change," it said.

Citing the case of GST, it said the informal enterprises that create a bulk of jobs in the country may respond to higher taxation by shutting shop or laying off workers. With concerns being raised about jobless growth, it said the e-commerce sector will create 12 million jobs over the next decade, which is half of the 24 million shortfall.

Another avenue of job creation can be the social sector, where a lot of work needs to be done on health and education fronts, it said. India will continue to be a services oriented economy but needs to pay extra attention on manufacturing and farm sectors as well, it said, adding that it would be desirable to maintain the contribution of

manufacturing, agriculture and services at the current levels.

The Indian story will be different from the export-oriented one of China's, it said, pointing out that domestic consumption with over 550 million consumers will be the standout factor.

Apart from services, other hallmarks of the India story over the next decade will be higher investment and capital goods flows as its focus on manufacturing increases, Indian consumers forcing foreign brands to turn 'global' and a two-way human capital footprint that will see many skilled people travelling overseas, it said.

"It (India) needs to broaden its specialisation (beyond just IT in business and cricket in sports) if it wants to run harder and fly higher," it said.

(Source: The Economic Times)

This is what global oil market trend signals for the days ahead

Oil had its biggest weekly gain since late July as Texas refineries recovering from Hurricane Harvey processed more crude and global demand forecasts brightened.

Futures rose 5.1 percent this week in New York, settling just below the \$50-a-barrel threshold that's kept the industry in thrall. The increase was buoyed by higher demand forecasts from the International Energy Agency and expectations OPEC and its partners will extend output cuts beyond the March expiration date of their deal.

"The narrative in the market is that demand has really picked up," said John Kilduff, a partner at New York-based hedge Again Capital LLC. "As a result, we've gotten this push higher."

Nearly a quarter of U.S. refining capacity was shuttered in the wake of Harvey. Two weeks later, only three Gulf Coast refineries remain shut, according to the Department of Energy. The rest -- including Motiva Enterprises LLC's Port Arthur refinery, the nation's largest -- are gradually coming back online, helping boost crude demand.



At the same time, the Paris-based IEA said on Wednesday it expects global demand to climb this year by the most since 2015 while the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners were said to be discussing an extension of its deal to cut output beyond its March expiration.

"People are looking for the price to go ahead and settle above \$50 a barrel, but they need some more than just the current news," Michael Lynch, president of Strategic Energy & Economic Research in Winchester, Massachusetts, said by telephone. "We need a couple good inventory reports or perhaps some bearish

supply data from Libya or from the U.S. shale patch."

West Texas Intermediate futures for October delivery ended the session on the New York Mercantile Exchange at \$49.89, unchanged from the highest close since July 31 on Thursday.

Brent for November settlement closed 15 cents higher at \$55.62 a barrel on the London-based ICE Futures Europe exchange. Prices advanced 3.4 percent this week. The global benchmark crude traded at a premium of \$5.18 to November WTI.

Meanwhile, the U.S. oil rig count fell for the fourth time in five weeks, according to Baker Hughes data released Friday. Rigs decreased by seven to 749. The decline included drops in Texas' Permian and Eagle Ford shale basins.

"The feel-good factor appears to have returned to the oil market," said Stephen Brennock, an analyst at PVM Oil Associates Ltd. "Underpinning the prevailing sentiment is the positive afterglow of this week's frenzy of bullish oil demand forecasts from the leading energy agencies."

(Source: Economic Times)

BP and Azerbaijan lock in Caspian Sea oil deal

The government of Azerbaijan signed a new production sharing agreement (PSA) with the consortium operating the Azeri-Chirag-Deepwater Gunashli oil field in the Caspian. The new deal gives Baku a much larger stake in the field and establishes Azerbaijan's economic ties to Europe for decades to come.

The agreement, signed September 14, has taken five years to negotiate and runs until 2050. It sees Azerbaijan's state oil company Socar increase its stake in the field from 11.65 percent to 25 percent, with stakes held by its eight international partners falling proportionally.

The field's operator, BP, now holds 30.37 percent and the other seven partners under ten percent each.

The international partners also agreed to pay a "bonus" of \$3.6 billion into Azerbaijan's State Oil Fund and to further investment in the field which in the short term could see the addition of a seventh production platform and as much as \$40 billion invested over the lifetime of the agreement.

The new agreement replaces the existing AGC PSA

signed in 1994, by then Azeri President Heydar Aliyev, father of current president Ilham Aliyev.

Both Aliyev and BP chief executive Bob Dudley called the agreement "historic." The new agreement "is of crucial importance for Azerbaijan's future development," said Aliyev, who took to twitter to celebrate the accomplishment. "Today Azerbaijan is recognized in the world as a country, which stands on its feet and has broad international relations, and as an influential country."

Although at the time dubbed "the contract of the century", the terms of the 1994 agreement reflected the conditions of the time, with oil prices falling, Azerbaijan having just emerged from a civil war, and offshore production in the Caspian sea a new and risky area of investment.

ACG reserves at the time were estimated at only around 511 million tons.

Now with Azerbaijan having developed significantly on the back of the \$125 billion profit earned from ACG, Caspian investment being no longer viewed as risky, and

estimates of ACG reserves having been doubled, Baku has been in a strong enough position to negotiate considerably better terms for the next phase of operation.

This is expected to produce a further 570 million tons of crude and around 150 billion cubic meters of gas on top of 430 million tons of crude and 134 billion cubic meters of gas already produced.

Production from ACG is currently running at around 585,000 barrels per day of crude which is exported to global markets through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil line, down from a peak of 835,000 barrels per day in 2010. That could rise again with further investment, however.

Gas production is running at around 33 million cubic meters per day, mostly consumed locally but with talks underway for future gas production to be fed into state oil producer SOCAR's TANAP gas export line. That pipeline is now being constructed to carry gas from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz gas field through Turkey to Europe.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Ambitious solar project takes root in Tunisia

The recent submission of proposals for the construction of a new solar park project in Tunisia highlight the country's potential as a location for renewable energy projects at a time when domestic demand for power is rising rapidly.

In early August UK Company TuNur submitted its proposal to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies to build the 4.5-GW park in the south of the country. If approved and carried out, the project would have the capacity to power more than 5m homes, or 7m electric vehicles across Europe once fully operational, making it one of the largest facilities of its kind worldwide.

In its submission, TuNur outlined plans to export power from the park to Europe via underwater cables. The firm hopes to roll out the facility as a phased development in Rjim Maatoug, located within the governorate of Kebili, which receives double the amount of exposure to the sun as central Europe.

The first segment of the plant will cost €1.6bn to build and is planned to generate 250 MW of electricity, with early estimates suggesting it could be up and running as early as 2020. Electricity produced at the park will provide power to Malta, Italy and France, before being redistributed throughout the integrated European network. The project will require installation of an underwater cable linking the Tunisian network to Malta, which is already connected to Europe. Two other cables joining Tunisia to France and Italy are also under consideration.

TuNur's proposal, while targeting the European market, comes against a backdrop of initiatives taking shape in Tunisia aimed at boosting capacity to meet growing local demand.

The country remains largely dependent on hydrocarbons. However, many of the new ventures will harness renewable energy technologies as part of a national drive to boost their contribution to Tunisia's energy mix.

In June the government announced plans to tender projects worth a total of TD400m (€137.7m) that will provide a combined 210 MW of capacity, split between solar power (70 MW) and wind farms (140 MW).

Output from these projects -- which the ministry said would include both small-size and utility-scale production facilities -- will then be bought by public utilities company Société Tunisienne de l'électricité et du gaz (STEG) under long-term power purchase agreements.

For solar initiatives, 10 MW of planned capacity will be distributed among projects of up to 1 MW, with the remaining 60 MW to be awarded for projects with a maximum capacity of 10 MW. For wind power, meanwhile, 20 MW of planned capacity will be allocated to smaller projects of up to 5 MW and 120 MW to larger projects of up to 30 MW each.

(Source: Bloomberg)

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A new Trump?

By Elizabeth Drew

White House infighting may be quieter since John Kelly took over as Chief of Staff and imposed more order in the West Wing. But, so long as Trump is president, orderliness will not be the administration's chief characteristic.

It's generally agreed in Washington DC, that President Donald Trump's presidency is entering a new phase. Defining just what that phase is, is proving to be problematic.

The widespread expectation was that the removal of Stephen Bannon — the former White House chief adviser and resident avatar of white American nationalism — would make the administration run more smoothly, mitigate (though not eliminate) infighting, and reduce the number of leaks. The internal warfare may be quieter since John Kelly took over as White House Chief of Staff and imposed more order in the West Wing. But so long as Trump is president, orderliness will not be the White House's chief characteristic. In fact, Trump remains in frequent contact with Bannon, who is back in charge at Breitbart News.

Inevitably, by early September, after Kelly had been on the job for all of five weeks, Trump was chafing under his new chief of staff's restrictions. Kelly has imposed tight controls over who may enter the Oval Office, listens in on most of Trump's phone calls during office hours, and controls what pieces of paper reach the president's desk, thus eliminating the highly ideological screeds that some staff members used to slip him.

■ Trump likes disorder

The problem is that Trump likes disorder; that's how he had run his business, and he doesn't take well to being managed. He liked having favored people wandering into his office as they chose, and it's been his managerial creed to play people off each other. Nor does he bother to control his temper when dealing with aides. Even Kelly, an ex-Marine Corps general, has come under the lash of Trump's tongue. Observers now take bets on when Kelly will decide he's had enough.

I've never known a White House where so much depends on who has incurred the president's ire. Gary Cohn, the former Goldman Sachs president and chief operating officer who serves as Trump's chief economic adviser, is the latest to be frozen out. Cohn's sin was to let it be known publicly that he almost resigned following the violence last month in Charlottesville, Va., when Trump equated white supremacist and neo-Nazi demonstrators, many of them armed, with those who opposed them.

Actually, one can have some sympathy for a president with an aide who wants to have it both ways, as Cohn did — letting his apparent anguish be known without acting on it. But there can be problems when a president chooses

Speculation about the possibility of a "new Trump" peaked in early September, when the president suddenly cut a deal with Democratic congressional leaders.

to disregard his chief economic adviser. Cohn has been seen as one of the administration's more moderate voices, and he has wanted to succeed Janet Yellen as chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Speculation about the possibility of a "new Trump" peaked in early September, when the president suddenly cut a deal with Democratic congressional leaders. Trump agreed with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and her Senate counterpart, Chuck Schumer, on how to increase the federal debt limit, which Congress must raise each year as spending increases, and extend appropriations to keep the government running (because Congress routinely fails to write appropriations bills on time). Both items were tied to a special appropriation in the wake of Hurricane Harvey to pay for recovery efforts. (The larger Hurricane Irma hadn't yet hit.)

■ Republicans' position

In the midst of the discussion at the Oval Office meeting with Pelosi and Schumer, Trump interrupted Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin as he was defending the Republicans' position that these issues should be put off for 18 months, until after the 2018 congressional elections. The Democrats had argued that the increase in the debt ceiling and extension of appropriations should last for only three months, thus forcing the Republicans to take electorally risky votes before the 2018 elections.

Before the meeting, House Speaker Paul Ryan had adamantly rejected the Democrats' proposal. But suddenly, without notifying even his own aides, Trump went for it. The author of The Art of the Deal had accepted the Democrats' opening position.

Commentators went into overdrive, imbuing the episode with broad significance: Trump was now not a Republican but an Independent. He might start a third party. His move marked the beginning of a new way of governing.

In fact, Trump merely saw an opportunity and took it. With no real legislative achievements to claim, he did something. The Republican congressional leaders, Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, had been in bad odor with Trump for a while, because they had been unable to deliver on his legislative agenda. He was embarrassed and angered at their failure to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare. (Trump didn't recognize his own contributions to the debacle.) On many issues, Trump lacks a governing majority in the Senate.

Overlooked in all the excitement over Trump's lining up with Democratic leaders was that the issue at hand concerned legislative timing, not substance. And the subsequent fevered discussions about Trump's core beliefs — maybe he was a crypto-Democrat, who had, after all, donated to Democratic candidates at one time and sympathized with Democratic positions (such as on abortion) — missed the point. Trump harbors no particular political philosophy; he's an opportunist who craves publicity and praise.

But his maverick behavior might turn out to be self-perpetuating. For all his contempt for the "dishonest media," Trump was ecstatic about the positive press coverage his bipartisan move received. And that might lure him to try for more.

(Source: project-syndicate.org)

100,000 troops will engage in Russia's Zapad-2017 war games

By Simon Saradzhyan

As Russia prepares for its annual strategic military exercises, speculation is mounting that the Zapad-2017 war games, set for Thursday through Sept. 20 in western Russia and Belarus, might be a prelude to war. Ukraine's defense minister cautioned that Zapad could be a ruse to attack any European country "that shares a border with Russia," while the New York Times proclaimed that the drills near NATO's borders have raised "fears of aggression." A CNN contributor wondered, "Could they turn into war?"

My analysis of Russia's recent war games suggests that this is highly unlikely. The Russian military is preparing for war, but that is what generals in all countries do — prepare for worst-case scenarios, and carry out large-scale exercises to test the military's readiness for them. Russia's annual strategic exercises rotate among four regions: Zapad ("west," last held in 2013), Vostok ("east," 2014), Tsentr ("center," 2015) and Kavkaz ("Caucasus," 2016). If anything, this rotation suggests that Russian strategists are trying to for a strategic conflict from any direction, be it with NATO or China.

That does not mean Russia's military-political leadership wants this scenario to materialize. Russia's three foreign military interventions since 2008 — in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria — did, in fact, involve some deployments concealed as military exercises. But as these interventions suggests at least two conditions need to exist for Russia to seriously consider such a "disguised" form of large-scale use of force:

1) Russian leadership has to believe there is a credible, acute, serious threat to the country's vital national interests or to the Russian ruling elite's grip on power. Such threats could include: an attack against Russia, an ally or a client (as in the 2008 war with Georgia over its separatist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia); the attempted ouster of a friendly ruling regime (think Syria); or concern that one of Moscow's post-Soviet neighbors may "escape" to an alliance Russia sees as hostile (as in the 2014 conflict with Ukraine, as well as the Georgian war).

2) Russian leaders have to be sure they would prevail in a confrontation with the states against which they want to use force, or at least ensure a stalemate.

■ No new acute threats to Russian security

Neither of these conditions is present at the moment, in my view. Here's why.

There have been no major new threats to Russia's vital interests or rul-



The Russian military is preparing for war, but that is what generals in all countries do — prepare for worst-case scenarios, and carry out large-scale exercises to test the military's readiness for them.

ing elite since last year's Caucasus-2016 exercise, which also was preceded by claims that Russia was going to launch a "full-scale invasion" of a neighboring state, or even a "mega war."

None of Russia's post-Soviet neighbors is any closer to membership in NATO than they were last year. Georgia's hopes of joining NATO remain futile, while post-revolutionary Ukraine has made little progress in its effort to accede to the alliance. Had Russian President Vladimir Putin thought otherwise, he would not have called for UN peacekeepers along the line of contact in Donbass, as such a deployment would make it harder for Russia to escalate hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

Belarus and Russia have had their differences, but Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko — unlike the victorious organizers of the "color revolutions" in Georgia and Ukraine — does not appear to have any intention of steering his country toward NATO.

None of Russia's neighbors is in a period of acute instability, which would let Russia quickly prevail in a conflict — as was the case with post-revolutionary Ukraine's ability to prevent the loss of Crimea. And while Western nations were largely caught unaware as Russia stealthily deployed troops to Crimea in 2014, NATO is now all eyes — especially con-

sidering that some of the earlier Zapad exercises featured simulations of a first nuclear strike against the alliance.

In fact, NATO is sending observers to Belarus. You don't let your ally invite observers from five NATO countries, plus Ukraine and Sweden, to watch strategic drills if the plan is to launch another Crimea-scale covert campaign against any of your neighbors. Observers can, of course, be kept out of certain areas. In fact, NATO has already complained that observers will be treated like "distinguished visitors," with fewer opportunities to monitor the war game than full-fledged observers, according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

■ Annexing? Belarus? Not likely.

As stated above, the Belarusian leadership is not seeking membership in NATO, so there's no evident rationale for what former Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili has described as Russia's intention to annex Belarus. A surprise annexation of Belarus would seriously undermine Russia's efforts to keep other post-Soviet republics in Moscow's camp. If Russia were to seize Belarus, with which it formed a "Union State" in 2000, that would signal to countries like Kazakhstan, which participates in Moscow's major security and economic blocs, that even membership in Russian-led inte-

gration projects wouldn't protect their independence. These states would then probably look for guarantors other than Russia.

■ The Russian public is not likely to support further military engagement

Would the domestic situation in Russia be conducive for new military campaigns? Putin may be enjoying more autonomy on major defense or foreign-policy decisions than any Soviet/Russian leader since Joseph Stalin, but even he has to factor in the opinion of his citizens.

Russia is already heavily involved in Syria and Ukraine, and polls show that Russians aren't eager for further military engagement, absent any clear threat to them or Russian-speaking minorities abroad. A July 2017 poll by Russia's state-owned VTsIOM pollster showed that more Russians (35 percent) support noninterference in the conflict between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian separatists in Donbass than any other policy option toward that conflict. As for Syria, 49 percent want Russia to end its military operations there, while 30 percent think it should continue, according to an August 2017 poll conducted by the Levada Center, Russia's respected independent pollster.

It's also worth noting that, contrary to news reports, Zapad-2017 won't be the largest-ever Russian war game. According to Western estimates, some 100,000 service members will be participating — compared to 120,000 in 2016 or the record-setting 155,000 in 2014.

There is, of course, always room for greater transparency, and Russia's neighbors and the international community as a whole would feel more reassured if Russia shared more details about its upcoming exercises and granted greater access to foreign observers of this war game. This would put Russia in compliance with the Vienna Document, which calls for OSCE members to share information each year about their military capacity and operations.

However, while helpful, greater transparency will not eliminate the chance of an emerging conflict between Russia and NATO and its partners. While Zapad-2017 isn't likely to produce a new military hot spot, the possibility of conflict continues as long as the underlying animosities are not addressed, such as Russia's concerns about NATO expansion into the post-Soviet space and Western allies' concerns about Russia's use of force against neighbors.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Ankara hardens opposition to KRG referendum

By Barin Kayaoglu

Since the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced in June that it will hold a referendum on declaring independence from Iraq, the Turkish government has maintained a coolheaded approach — until now. As the Sept. 25 referendum approaches, Ankara seems to be toughening its stance against Iraqi Kurdistan independence.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry posted a press release on its website Sept. 14 supporting the Iraqi parliament's Sept. 12 resolution rejecting the KRG's vote on independence. The ministry release read, "We welcome the decision taken by the Iraqi Council of Representatives ... as the clear expression of the importance given to Iraq's political unity and territorial integrity and we strongly support the said decision."

The statement added, "Despite the warnings of Turkey and all the members of the international community who act with common sense, we are concerned by the KRG leadership's persistence and its increasingly emotional statements on the referendum. We would like to stress that [the] KRG should keep in mind that continued insistence on carrying out this referendum despite all the friendly advice to the contrary shall have a cost. In that regard, we invite the KRG to act with common sense and to give up its erroneous stance."

An interesting aspect of the media coverage of the Foreign Ministry statement is that even though the statement used the more neutral phrase "shall have a cost," Turkish and regional news outlets have claimed Turkey threatened that the KRG "will most certainly pay a price" if it goes ahead with the Sept. 24 referendum. Turkey's governmental-owned news organization TRT, the country's pro-government media and the Iraqi Kurdish news outlet Rudaw all used the tougher wording, which interestingly does not exist in the English-language version of the Foreign Ministry announcement. The Turkish version of the press release is even less threatening than the English version.



Turkish and regional news outlets have claimed Turkey threatened that the KRG "will most certainly pay a price" if it goes ahead with the Sept. 24 referendum.

To be sure, Ankara publicly opposes both the referendum and the idea of an independent Kurdistan. But as Al-Monitor columnist Amberin Zaman's stories show, Turkey's position swings from outright opposition to the referendum to tacit support and private nods for the KRG asserting its position in the region. KRG President Massoud Barzani told Zaman in March 2016 that the ruling Justice and Development Party is the only Turkish government that could ever acquiesce to an independent Kurdistan.

At any rate, Iraqi Kurds' bigger problem is not Turkey or Iran or the United States or even the central government in Baghdad, but the political divisions among themselves. If anything, events in the run-up to Sept. 25 will complicate rather than resolve the problems facing the Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq.

■ Disrespect for the dead

In more tragic and foreboding news for Turkey, a mob attacked the funeral procession of the deceased mother of a Kurdish politician in the capital, Ankara, on Sept. 13. Aysel Tugluk, the deputy co-chair of the predominantly Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) who has been in detention since December, was temporarily released to bury her late mother, Hatun Tugluk. At the funeral, she and other HDP members faced an ultranationalist mob that apparently yelled, "This is a Sunni cemetery."

Alevis cannot be buried here. This is Turkish soil, not Armenian. We do not want Armenians here." News reports pointed out that police units at the scene initially did not intervene. The furor got so bad that the buried body had to be exhumed and taken away to be interred elsewhere.

Karabekir Akkoyunlu, an assistant professor at the University of Graz in Austria, told Al-Monitor that such incidents are reminiscent of the tragic events of Sept. 6-7, 1955, when ultranationalist mobs carried out pogroms against the Armenian, Greek and Jewish communities in Istanbul.

"Recently, on the anniversary of Sept. 6-7, people shared memes that read, 'Crimes that are not investigated will be repeated.' But by tolerating evil acts and covering them, we have created a gang that could spew such hatred to a funeral. ... Although the government is the source of the hatred, certain elements of society have internalized this degeneration. And this is threatening our ability to be a society."

Akkoyunlu tweeted, "Such intense hatred, just like a black hole, will suck up all the light, energy and life around it and destroy it until it collapses on itself."

In all fairness, the Turkish authorities have opened an investigation into the heartbreaking affair and the presidency has condemned the attack. But empty political statements will not be enough for Turkey to bring back the barest amount of decency and respect for the dead.

(Source: Al Monitor)

Controversial Monday in New York!

By Saeed Sobhani

Today, US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are scheduled to meet in New York to discuss the Iranian nuclear program. The main objective of Trump and Netanyahu is to face a nuclear deal with Iran.

On the other hand, today Trump will meet with Emmanuel Macron, French President. Paris and Washington will also come up with common solutions to the nuclear deal with Iran. Over the past months, Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed his opposition to a nuclear deal with Iran. Everyone knows well that Trump seeks to find a solution to the exit from the JCPOA.

Trump and Macron meet when the President of the United States has left the Paris climate accord after attending the White House. Some analysts believe that Trump and Macron might deal with the return of the United States to the Paris climate agreement in exchange for a French-American partnership against nuclear deal. On the other hand, Benjamin Netanyahu has also prepared his plan to withdraw from the nuclear deal and will present to Trump today.

As the media reported, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to clarify his stance on the Iran nuclear deal on Tuesday, calling for the agreement to either be amended or canceled altogether. In the case of Iran, there have been some news stories about Israel's purported position on the nuclear deal with Iran. So let me take this opportunity and clarify: Our position is straightforward. This is a bad deal. Either fix it or cancel it. This is Israel's position," Netanyahu said at a press conference with Argentine President Mauricio Macri.

Netanyahu's statement came after a report by Reuters suggested that both Israel and Saudi Arabia – two U.S. allies that have been strongly opposed to the Iran deal – were in favor of the U.S. remaining in the pact, despite their reservations about Iran's adherence to the agreement. The report said that the Trump administration is still debating a "new stance" on the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement.

"The main issue for us was to get the president not to discard the JCPOA. But he had very strong feelings, backed by (U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations) Nikki Haley, that they should be more aggressive with Iran," one of the two U.S. officials told Reuters. "Almost all the strategies presented to him were ones that tried to preserve the JCPOA but lean forward on these other (issues)."

Netanyahu sees his visit to Trump as



an opportunity. However, the prime minister of the Zionist regime has received warnings in this regard. Netanyahu is scheduled to meet with Trump to address the United Nations General Assembly. Netanyahu has been an outspoken critic of the Iran nuclear deal and had pressed former President Barack Obama against it. During the 2016 campaign, Trump repeatedly called the deal "disastrous" and promised to "rip it up."

But Netanyahu also finds that it is not easy to withdraw from a nuclear deal with Iran! In this regard, the United States needs the support of the European Union, and even China and Russia. It seems that Trump intends to coordinate the positions of Washington, Tel Aviv and Paris on a nuclear deal with Iran.

News sources in the United States announce Donald Trump's attempt to redefine a nuclear deal. In other words, Trump refuses his previous strategy to withdraw from the nuclear deal (due to its political costs) and, on the contrary, is trying to change the deal. As the Bloomberg news agency reports, Donald Trump intends to advise the heads of the three German, French and British parties on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

The two countries, Britain and France, have already announced their readiness to re-negotiate a nuclear deal. However, Germany still has considerations in this regard. Former Foreign Policy chief of the European Union, Federica Mogherini supports this synergy. What is certain is that over the next two months, many developments await the nuclear deal. It seems that during this period, Trump will publicize his intention to renegotiate Iran about JCPOA.

According to US officials, there are three major flaws in the nuclear deal. These include lifting restrictions on Iran's low enriched uranium reserves between 2025 and 2030, the failure of a nuclear deal to ban Iran from developing ballistic missiles and poor regulations on inspecting suspicious military installations in Iran. The United States and the European Troika will try to integrate Iran's missile power into a nuclear deal. They also seek to increase Iran's inspections of Iran, especially military sites.

Obviously, entering each of these areas means breaking the red line drawn by the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the course of the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the 1 + 5 members, these red lines were repeatedly raised by the nuclear negotiating team.

The EU's paradoxical and non-transparent positions on this issue are another issue to be addressed. European officials, on the one hand, are pushing for a nuclear deal with Iran, and on the other hand, they are not taking action to curb the United States and stop negotiating a nuclear deal again. This paradox has shown itself in the behavior of European officials.

As Reuters reported, The European Union respects the United States' review of the 2015 deal with Iran but will make clear to Washington that it was an international accord endorsed by the United Nations, the EU's foreign policy chief said.

"The nuclear deal doesn't belong to one country, it belongs to the international community," Federica Mogherini told a news conference alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. "We have the responsibility to make sure

that this continues to be implemented."

The historic deal between Iran and six major powers restricts Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of oil and financial sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Since the signing of the nuclear deal, the Treasury Department of the United States has prevented the normalization of banking and business relations between Iran and European countries. However, not only the European Troika has not taken action against the Washington, but has actually been associated with it.

European officials are well aware that the congressional sanctions against Iran, the US Treasury blocking the normalization of banking relations with Iran, the creation of visa restrictions for those who travel to Iran, and the extension of the ISA law are all violations of the JCPOA. However, Germany, France and Britain have preferred instead to face up to these issues to complete the puzzle of the US game in confrontation with Iran.

The second point is that recent comments by Sigmar Gabriel have been delivered as Trump stepped down to overturn the nuclear deal. As news sources report, the US president is planning to announce Iran's lack of compliance in his October report to Congress. In such a situation, the remarks of the German Foreign Minister are worth considering! German co-operation with anti-Iranian policies of the United States once again showed that European Troika is unreliable. This is also true of a nuclear deal with Iran.

Undoubtedly, the statements of the European authorities regarding adherence to the JCPOA are not in line with their own practice. Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, has repeatedly spoken out of adhering to a nuclear deal, but in practice, she has not acted in a bid to halt US actions.

Now, the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing tensions with the United States, Germany, France and Britain for a nuclear deal. Obviously, the European Troika was unsuccessful in containing the United States. An issue that public opinion in Iran and the world are aware of that.

Ultimately, today's US President's meetings with Netanyahu and Macron will largely determine how Washington and the European Troika and Tel Aviv behave towards a nuclear deal with Iran. No matter what the outcome of the Trump talk with Netanyahu and Macron, the Islamic Republic of Iran is never ready to negotiate again on a nuclear deal.

Iran eyeing unprecedented boom in oil industry

By Maryam Azish

MNA — Luring \$100 billion in foreign investment to increase Iran's oil industry is among the oil minister's major tasks.

Attracting foreign investment and technology is a priority for the Islamic Iran in the oil industry, whether in shared fields or for increasing the production of oil at fields that are already operational.

According to Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh, Iran will need 200 billion dollars for financing oil and gas projects under the 6th development plan of the country.

Zangeneh said \$130 billion dollars will be invested in upstream projects and the rest will be allotted to developing downstream projects in the industry.

He said over 70% of the amount can be supplied by tapping foreign resources, adding, "We need foreign investments in order to reach the envisaged 6 million barrels per day of crude oil and condensate output under the 6th development plan of the country."

The official also said that arrangements for holding a tender for developing Azadegan Oilfield.

Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani also has announced the Ministry of Petroleum is seeking new investments in oil industry in a push to enhance recovery of oil from reserves.

Larijani underlined the significance of the sector in the country's economy, adding any development in the industry affects other industries in Iran.

He said development of oil and gas sector is a priority for Iran, adding enhancing oil recovery from reserves is high on agenda in the industry.

Unprecedented Boom

Amir Hossein Zamaninia, deputy petroleum minister for international affairs and trading said Iran's oil industry must expect an unprecedented boom given the eagerness of foreign companies to develop projects in the Middle Eastern oil-rich country and ongoing talks with them.

"My estimation is that within the next two years, the industry will witness an unprecedented boom," he said.

The official said Iran is in a good state given the political conditions and ongoing negotiations with foreign companies to develop oil/gas projects.

"Although the industry is over a century old in Iran, production is not commensurate with the size of our reserves which highlights the significance of new investments in the industry," Zamaninia added.

He said attraction of finances is a serious competition in the world because available resources are limited while



demands are high.

"Iran's oil industry is currently in its best possible state for attraction of finances; major companies are keen on investing in Iran and good negotiations are under way with them. I keep my fingers crossed that these talks will reach fruition."

"Talks are under way with foreign companies to ensure their return to Iran and many of the companies have submitted to NIOC their master development plans (MDP) for developing projects in Iran."

Provided that the talks do progress in all sectors as intended by NIOC, their financial dimensions will not take too long given the fact that the company has already signed a deal with a consortium of Total, CNPCI and Petropars for developing phase 11 of the supergiant South Pars Gas Field, he added.

"I cannot say which company will be next to Total and CNPCI for signing deals with NIOC," he added, saying, however, that talks with Russian companies are going on well and will hopefully conclude within the next 2 or 3 months, Shana wrote.

New Oil, Gas Contracts

After no developments last year, Zangeneh said Iran is concluding the financial aspects of a handful of deals with foreign oil and gas companies.

Zangeneh said the government was in serious talks with both domestic and international companies on signing off on as many as 10 oil and natural gas deals by next March, UPI reported.

German energy company Wintershall is among those considering developments for as many as three projects in Iran. "This is while last year this time we had not made such progress in the talks," Zangeneh said.

The German company said in response to emailed questions that it was closely following developments in the region.

In January, the Iranian Oil Ministry published a list of 29

foreign oil and gas companies eligible to take part in any upcoming tenders for exploration and production.

Royal Dutch Shell was among the first to buy oil from Iran after verification of a multilateral nuclear deal. Later, French company Total, China National Petroleum Corp. and Petropars Ltd., a subsidiary of the state-run National Iranian Oil Company, signed a 20-year contract to develop parts of the giant South Pars natural gas field in the Persian Gulf.

"In order to prepare for possible further activities in the region, Wintershall signed a memorandum of understanding last year with National Iranian Oil Company about a potential future cooperation," it said. "Details of the memorandum are subject to confidentiality."

Russia is also in negotiations to buy around 100,000 barrels of oil per day from Iran. Deputy oil minister for international affairs in Iran said the contract with Russia will enter into force as early as September.

Foreign Investment

Recently, Zamani-Nia said a number of foreign companies have voiced their willingness to help Iran implement its oil project.

Zamani-Nia said that given the enthusiasm shown by foreign companies to be involved in Iran's oil sector, the industry will experience a great boom within the next two years.

Pointing to the ongoing negotiations with directors of foreign oil companies, he added, "There is intense competition across the world to attract foreign investment, but the assets are limited while competition for absorbing them is high."

In relevant remarks in late October, Iranian Petrochemical Commercial Company (IPCC) Executive Director Mehdi Sharifi Niknafs said Iranian petrochemical facilities are ready to present their products to Germany, Britain and Europe.

According to a directive by the Headquarters of Economy of Resistance, Iran National Oil Company should settle 10 contracts by mid-March 2018.

Noting that the first agreement with Total, CNPCI and Petropars has been signed to develop the Phase 11 of South Pars Joint Gas Field, Zamani-Nia said that if technical talks are conducted properly, negotiations on other sections will not take long.

Earlier this month, Zangeneh was confirmed for a second term in office as the oil minister for a country that has the third largest oil reserves in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Iran has seen some economic doors open in response to a multilateral agreement that brought sanctions relief in exchange for modification on its nuclear program.

What is going on in Catalonia?

By: Hamed Rashidi

The state of Catalonia in Spain has once again become one of the most sensitive political points in the European Union. Despite the efforts of the central government of Spain, many Catalan residents insist on independence.

The steps taken by the residents and some politicians in the state of Catalonia for Spanish independence have made the Spanish authorities confused.

Although the Spanish Constitutional Court has rejected referendum in Catalonia, however, it seems that the Catalans are more serious than any other time for independence from Spain. The launch of the Catalan Independence Referral Campaign is the worst possible news for Spanish government officials.

In support of Catalonia's independence, Carles Puigdemont, leader of the Catalan region, has said that



a general referendum will take place in the region for independence from Spain on the first day of October.

The Government of Spain opposes any Catalan self-determination referendum, maintaining that the Spanish Constitution does not allow for a vote on the independence of any Spanish region while also deeming it illegal without its consent. An interpretation also favoured by the Catalan Statutory Guarantees Council.

On the other hand, the Catalan government invokes the right to self-determination for calling the referendum. However, the Council of Europe, when consulted by Carles Puigdemont, president of Catalan government, said that any referendum must be carried out "in full compliance with the constitution". So far, the Catalan government has tried but failed to get international support; in particular, Spain's European partners see Catalonia's status as a strictly internal matter.

As Telegraph reported, The Spanish government on Friday dismissed a letter from Catalan leaders offering talks over their looming independence referendum as "a trap", and announced it would intervene in Catalonia's finances to ensure that "not one euro" of public money was used to fund the "illegal" vote.

Sixteen days out from the planned referendum on October 1, Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and other top officials including the mayor of Barcelona released a letter appealing for an agreement on a vote and issuing "a new call to dialogue" without preconditions.

In the letter, addressed to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and King Felipe VI and carried by a number of media, the leaders said they were seeking talks "to make possible what in democracy is never a problem nor still less a crime: to listen to the voice of the citizens".

But the overture was roundly rebuffed by the spokesman for the Spanish government, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, who said Madrid had not received the letter and only learned about it through the press.

Spain's top court has ordered the suspension of the referendum and the attorney general has warned that anyone participating in the poll could face prosecution, including some 700 Catalan mayors.

On Friday the attorney general, José Manuel Maza, said he was investigating Thursday night's campaign launch in Tarragona, in particular whether it had been paid for with public funds.

Two printworks on the outskirts of Barcelona were also raided by the Guardia Civil, in search of referendum-related material. Mr Rajoy has faced criticism even from some opponents of independence that his dogmatic stance has only fed the secession movement.

However, the Spanish government is doing its utmost to prevent the referendum. But the Catalan people have shown that they are determined to hold a referendum.

But the main question is, what will happen next after the referendum in Catalonia? The answer to that question is unclear! If the result of the referendum is to benefit from the independence of Catalonia from Spain, we will see the serious and even violent opposition of the supporters of the independence of Catalonia to the central government of Madrid. Undoubtedly, this will also affect the Spanish economic equation. It should not be forgotten that Spain is one of the main centers of the economic crisis in Europe. Indeed, Catalan independence advocates from Spain believe that they have the necessary resources to achieve this.

Ultimately, the challenge between the Spanish government and supporters of Catalonia's independence will peak after October 1. This confrontation will intensify if the outcome of all races is in the interest of the independence. Once again, the Catalans had announced in an informal referendum that they agreed to independence from Spain.

But this referendum is different from the previous referendum. Officials in the Catalan region refer to the October 1 referendum as a formal referendum that the results of this should be accepted by the Spanish government and the European Union.

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Things your fingernails reveal about your health

By Macaela Mackenzie

Most of us don't give a lot of thought to our fingernails beyond how often to clip them or which color to paint them. But besides protecting our fingertips or making a beauty statement, your nails say a lot more about your body than you think.

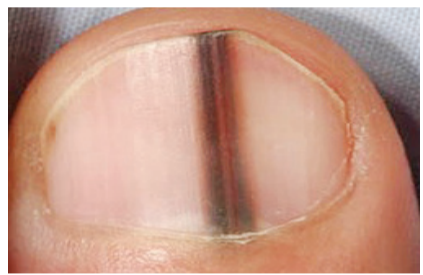
"The nail matrix, the site of nail growth that hides a few millimeters underneath the cuticle, is affected by each individual's general state of health," says Jessica Weiser, M.D., board-certified dermatologist at New York Dermatology Group. "Illness, fever, surgery, trauma, life stressors, and nutritional deficiencies all have different effects on the nails and their growth."

To clue you in to everything your nails might be telling you about your body—from the minor to the more serious—watch for these nine things.

1. Brownish stripes

Possible cause: Melanoma

Just like you regularly check your skin for moles, you should also keep an eye out for weird color changes in your nails. Melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, can pop up in your oft-exposed



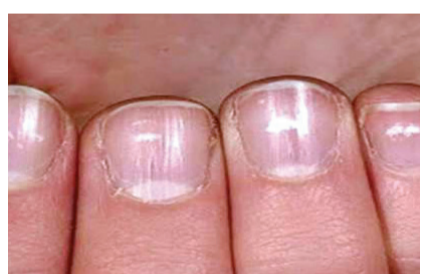
nail beds and go undetected. Any sort of asymmetric pigmentation can be a sign of skin cancer, but melanoma on nails (called subungual melanoma) usually looks like a pigmented vertical band stretching upward from the cuticle.

If a brownish streak on your nail bed shows up suddenly or changes in appearance, see a dermatologist as soon as possible, Weiser says. "If pigmented bands appear on several nails, this can be a sign of a normal variant, but you should still see a doctor to be sure."

2. White lines

Possible cause: Nutrient deficiency

Horizontal white streaks spanning the nail are called Muehrcke's lines. The likely cause: a protein or zinc deficiency. "These lines signal that segment of the



nail had an interruption while growing and didn't get all the nutrients or blood flow it needed," says Niket Sonpal, M.D., assistant clinical professor at Touro College of Medicine in New York.

Check in with your doc to make sure you're getting the correct daily

amount. Daily protein intake depends on your weight and activity level (you can calculate how much you need here). As for zinc, the recommended daily amount is 11 grams for women and eight grams for men. In rarer cases, Muehrcke's lines could signal more serious issues, including kidney disease or liver problems.

3. Vertical ridges

If you notice vertical ridges and roughness appearing in your nails that you didn't have a few years ago, it's probably nothing more than a side effect of aging. "They're analogous to getting



wrinkles in your skin," Sonpal says, who adds that we usually don't notice these until around age 50. If the ridges seem particularly severe, or they pop up out of the blue, check in with your doctor to make sure there's not something else at play.

4. Concave, spoon-shaped nails

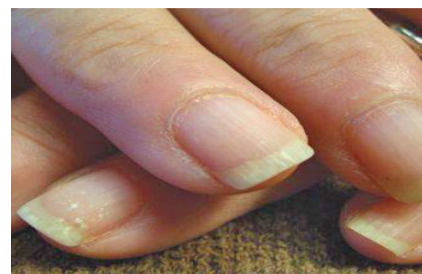
Possible cause: Iron deficiency or anemia

This nail deformity is not subtle, and definitely weird-looking enough to catch



your attention. Koilonychia, known as "spoon nails," are most commonly due to an iron deficiency. In this case, the

If you're a regular at the nail salon or working with water or cleaning supplies



all the time, dry, cracking nails aren't that unusual.

But if brittle nails are becoming a regular trend, then speak to your primary doctor and have your thyroid checked, since chronically brittle nails can be a sign of hypothyroidism.

6. Huge half-moons

Possible cause: Renal failure or liver disease

Everyone has little white half-moons at the base of the nails, but how big they are can clue you into some serious



health issues. If they take over half the nail bed, it could be a signal of renal failure, which tends to occur in people who have diabetes or high blood pressure.

If the moons extend two thirds up the nail bed, they're called Terry's nails, and you've got another issue. "Terry's nails are classically associated with liver failure," says Jennifer Chen, M.D., clinical assistant professor at Stanford School of Medicine. Liver failure is pretty serious, and treatment depends on the underlying cause. Certain liver problems might be easy to fix with a lifestyle

Horizontal white streaks spanning the nail are called Muehrcke's lines. The likely cause: a protein or zinc deficiency.

nail gets so thin that it actually becomes concave (as if it could hold a drop of water).

If you notice this, have some lab work drawn to determine if anemia is the issue, Weiser says. If you are iron deficient, your doc will probably recommend an iron supplement. Other causes include working with petroleum-based products or trauma. In very rare circumstances, koilonychia can be associated with thyroid disease and heart conditions.

5. Brittle or dry nails

Possible cause: External factors

Cracked, dry, and brittle nails that break easily aren't out of the ordinary—and probably a major reason why so many people stock up on nail-boosting supplements like biotin. Once in a while, brittle nails are normal, Sonpal says.

change, such as cutting out alcohol or losing weight, while others might require medication or surgery. Either way, it's important to see your doctor.

7. Red streaks



Possible cause: Heart condition
Bloody-looking streaks on your nail bed are not normal (unless you've just slammed a finger in a car door). Little

longitudinal lines of blood—especially on the half of the nail closest to your body—are called splinter hemorrhages. They can indicate a heart infection affecting the valves or inner lining of the heart, Chen says.

Heart infection, or endocarditis, is usually caused by a bacterial infection, and risk is higher for people who have implanted heart devices, congenital heart defects, a history of drug use, or have had heart attacks. It can be accompanied by flu-like symptoms, weight loss, muscle pain, coughing, and more. Treatment will typically involve antibiotics. Bottom line: If you notice little red lines, see a doc, stat.

8. Pitted nails

Possible cause: Psoriasis

Little dents and tiny craters in the nails are known as "pitting" and are often a symptom of psoriasis, a chronic skin condition that causes an itchy, scaly rash. But this particular symptom could



mean more complications later on. "When you see nail involvement with psoriasis, it's associated with a higher instance of arthritis down the road," Chen says. Typically, pitting occurs in around half of people with psoriasis and 80 percent of people with psoriatic arthritis, she adds.

Dented nails can also be a sign of alopecia areata, an autoimmune condition that causes you to lose your hair, Weiser says. If you're not already being treated for psoriasis, see a dermatologist to figure out what's going on.

9. Rounded or «clubbed» edges

Possible cause: Pulmonary problems

If the nail looks curved and rounded (like an overturned spoon) and fingertips look swollen, it could signify an issue called clubbing. "Clubbing is classically the result of a



wide variety of lung conditions that cause lower-than-normal oxygen levels in the blood," Weiser says. Lung cancer is the most common cause, but it can also be associated with an overactive thyroid or liver disease. Just remember: Clubbing is not a normal finding and should always be evaluated by a doctor to determine the underlying cause.

(Source: greatist.com)

Benefits of banana peels

Sounds weird, right? But actually, it's not! This is probably one of the most common fruits found in India and that is also probably why we don't really relish it as much. But before throwing the banana peel into the bin, read this post to know its benefits. It will give you amazing results.

The flesh of the banana is rich in many nutrients and carbohydrates. It is high in vitamins B6, B12, magnesium and potassium. The sugar content is the highest when the banana peel turns black.

Let us quickly see the top benefits of banana peels.

1. Sparkling teeth:

Rub the banana peel every day for a week on your teeth for about a minute. This actually results in teeth whitening, which can cost a lot of money otherwise.

2. Removes warts:

The banana peel helps in removing warts and eliminates the occurrence of new ones. For this, simply rub the peel on the affected area or tie the peel overnight on it. This is one of the simplest ways to use a banana peel for the skin.

3. Eat them:

Banana peels can also be eaten. You can find amazing Indian recipes that use banana peels. They are also used to tender chicken.

4. Cures pimples:

Just massage banana peels on your face and body for 5 minutes every day to cure pimples. The results should be visible within a week. Keep applying the peels till the acne disappears.

5. Reduces wrinkles:

The banana peel helps to keep your skin hydrated. Add an egg yolk to a mashed banana peel. Apply this mixture on your face and leave it for 5 minutes. Wash off after 5 minutes.

6. Pain reliever:

Apply the banana peel directly on the painful area. Leave it for 30 minutes till the pain is gone. A mixture of vegetable oil and banana peel also helps in pain relief.

7. Heals psoriasis:

Apply the peel on the psoriasis affected area. The banana peel has moisturizing properties and also reduces itchiness. It will quickly heal psoriasis and you can see noticeable results within no time.

8. Heals bites by bugs:

Massage the peel on the mosquito bites to get instant relief from the itching and pain.

9. Shoes, leather, silver polish:

Rub a banana peel on shoes, leather, and silver articles to make them shine instantly.

10. UV protection:

Banana peel helps in protecting the eyes from the harmful UV rays. Make sure you leave the peel under the sun before rubbing the banana peel on your eyes. It is also proven to reduce the risk of cataracts.

(Source: stylecraze.com)

One body part a day training

By Brian Willett

When attempting to gain muscle and improve your body composition, there are many types of workout programs you can use. One potential muscle-strengthening method is to train just one body part a day. While focusing all of your energy on a single body part during each workout may be beneficial, there are also potential downsides to this style of training. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends choosing exercises that train all major muscle groups two to three times per week as a more effective muscle-strengthening approach.

Benefits

One body part a day training has several potential benefits for muscle building and strengthening. This method can enable you to train efficiently by keeping your strength-training sessions shorter, because you don't have to do exercises for your entire body in each workout. In addition, training one body part per day allows each body part to have plenty of recovery time before the next workout for that specific body part. One body part a day muscle training may also allow you more daily time for aerobic activity, a key component of overall health and fitness according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Disadvantages

Designing your workout plan with one body part worked each day has some downsides. Working individual body parts every seven days may not provide sufficient stimulus for muscle growth or strength gains. In addition, this type of training may not improve overall fitness as much as workout plans that use compound exercises along with aerobic or sports-specific training components. Compound exercises engage multiple muscles to complete each repetition in a set instead of fatiguing a single muscle or muscle group in isolation.

Example workout schedule

The possibilities for a one body part a day training schedule are limitless. Take care not to schedule compound exercises, such as pushups -- which work both the chest and arms -- on consecutive days. For true one body part a day training, select exercises that isolate specific muscles or muscle groups over compound exercises. One example of a one body part per day training program would be: Monday, chest; Tuesday, back; Wednesday, hamstrings; Thursday, arms; Friday, quadriceps; Saturday, abdominals; Sunday, shoulders.

Alternatives

If the benefits do not outweigh the drawbacks for your training goals, you can choose an alternative approach to strengthening your muscles. One common workout program involves full-body training, which entails less frequent workout sessions that work your entire body. Another potentially beneficial alternative is an upper/lower program, which includes some workouts more focused on upper-body muscles and some that aim to target lower-body muscles more. Whichever you choose, you'll likely perform a variety of compound exercises that together target all of the body's major muscle groups on two or more days a week, as suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A schedule like this gives you days with no lifting during which you can rest or focus on fitting aerobic and/or sports-specific training activities into your workout plans.

(Source: livestrong.com)

5 health benefits of legs up the wall posture

I love Legs up the wall. This posture is one of the most nourishing, grounding and calming poses I can think of, and I have turned to it many times in my own life when I was feeling overwhelmed, tired, or stressed.

What is it?

Basically, Legs Up the Wall posture is exactly as it sounds! You lie on your back with your sit-bones as close to the wall as is comfortable for you. From there, you extend your legs up the wall, so that the backs of your legs are resting fully against it.

In more therapeutic variations of this posture, you may have blocks under your hips to elevate them, creating a slight inversion in your lower belly, and a strap securing your legs together so that you can fully relax and release into the pose, without having to exert effort to hold your legs up.

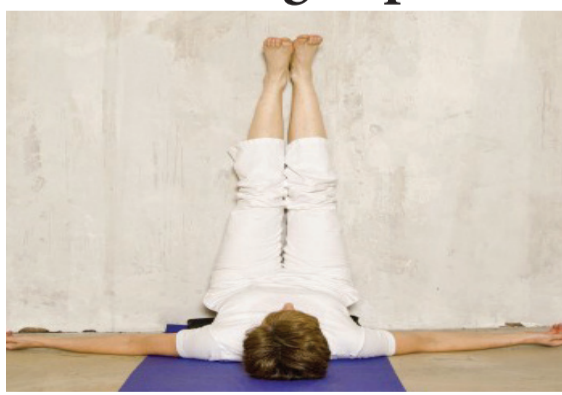
For the most benefit, I generally like to recommend practicing this pose for at least 10 to 15 minutes, but even just hanging out for a minute or two will suffice. Here are five health benefits of Legs Up the Wall posture.

1. It reduces edema in the legs and feet.

By reversing the effects of gravity on your legs and feet, you can really help to move any stuck or stagnant fluids that may build up there if you have low blood pressure, or spend a lot of time on your feet during your day. In this posture, you will be using gravity to your advantage.

2. It relieves tired leg muscles.

Hanging out with your legs up the wall is one of the best ways to help drain tension from the legs, feet, and even the hips if you have them elevated on blocks.



In this state [legs up the wall], your body will be actively digesting anything you have eaten, as well as working to heal and repair your body.

If you have a strap around your legs, and have given yourself an extended period of time to allow your body to fully relax into the posture, you will find that tired, sore legs will feel a whole lot better once you come out of your posture.

3. It gives you all the benefits of inversion, without the effort.

You most likely know how good inversions are for you at this point—they can help to reverse the effects of gravity on the whole system, help regulate blood

pressure, help move stuck fluids, and even help to improve your digestion.

However, sometimes the energetic expressions of inversions like Handstand are too much. We all have times in our lives when we need something that is just fully nourishing, and that is where Legs Up the Wall comes in.

You will still be getting many of the benefits of practicing an active inversion, while also fully resting and surrendering.

4. It is super calming for the nervous system.

This posture is really intended to be a deeply relaxing pose. When you combine a longer hold of Legs Up the Wall with slow, rhythmic breathing, you will be tapping into your "rest and digest" nervous response.

In this state, your body will be actively digesting anything you have eaten, as well as working to heal and repair your body. When you do poses like Legs Up the Wall consistently for a period of time, you may notice that your body feels healthier overall, and that you are better able to find a calm state of mind.

5. It helps quiet the mind.

As mentioned in the point above, this posture may help you cultivate a quiet mind if you practice it for a period of time. By fully releasing and relaxing your body and by focusing on deep breathing, you will evoke a meditative state.

Having the body feel safe and supported is one of the tools that we as yogis use to help reach this peaceful state. As you breathe, surrender and let go, you may find yourself slipping into bliss!

(Source: doyouyoga.com)

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

- 1** Advertisers are upset with Safari's new anti-tracking features. Apple, on the other hand, says it's for user privacy.
- 2** Alphabet's Waymo self-driving car unit said critical new evidence it recently obtained in a trade secret lawsuit against Uber means a U.S. judge should postpone a trial of the case set to begin next month.
- 3** General Motors Co's self-driving unit, Cruise Automation, is working to open an internal ride-hailing service to people outside the company, aiming to join a small group of autonomous vehicle developers testing their technology with the public.
- 4** Google disables offensive ad keywords found by BuzzFeed. Alphabet Inc's Google said it had disabled a "majority" of the offensive keywords that BuzzFeed found could be used by advertisers to target people searching for racist.
- 5** U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to block a Chinese-backed firm from buying a U.S.-based chipmaker this week is detrimental to America's growth and the global economy, China's state news agency Xinhua said in a commentary.
- 6** Facebook Inc has hired artificial intelligence academic Joelle Pineau to head its new research lab in Montreal. Once the exclusive domain of academic researchers, artificial intelligence has grabbed the attention of the corporate world as businesses from healthcare to financial services look to use algorithms to sort through reams of data in search of patterns to solve problems.
- 7** The future of obnoxiously loud autoplay videos is in doubt. Starting in early 2018 will block autoplay video with sound on its popular Chrome browser.
- 8** Huawei's Kirin 970 chipset is the first to support Category 18 for downlink speeds and Category 13 uplink speeds. This means that the Kirin 970 can reach downlink speeds as fast as 1.2Gbps. And darn if the Kirin 970 didn't hit that mark in a recent test conducted by Huawei and Rohde & Schwarz.
- 9** According to Legere, T-Mobile's new Apple Watch plan will provide 4G LTE speeds for Apple Watch users at the same \$10 per month rate that it was going to charge for 3G. Pre-orders for the Apple Watch Series 3 started yesterday and the timepiece will be released next Friday.
- 10** Equifax announces Chief Security Officer and Chief Information Officer have left. Equifax said that it made changes in its top management as part of its review of a massive data breach, with two technology and security executives leaving the company "effective immediately."

A Chinese tech giant tried to buy Spotify

Spotify is known for being fiercely independent, but that go-it-alone attitude might have been put to the test in the past several months. A TechCrunch source understands that Spotify rejected a buyout bid from Tencent, the Chinese internet giant behind WeChat, earlier in 2017. Reportedly, Tencent saw Spotify as an opportunity to expand its streaming music influence beyond China, where it thrives through services like QQ Music and KuGou. The insider doesn't say whether or not talks got to the point where a price came up.



Neither Spotify nor Tencent is commenting on the apparent leak, to no one's surprise, so there won't be any official clarification as to what took place. If talks happened in first place, though, they're still notable. They show that larger Chinese tech firms can feel confined by their home market -- Tencent's 600 million music customers may easily dwarf Spotify's 140 million, but that still leaves a lot of potential listeners up for grabs.

Also, it's significant that Spotify might have given up an opportunity for not only some useful financial support (it lost about \$568 million in 2016), but a chance to expand into countries it doesn't yet serve.

(Source: TechCrunch)

Business adoption of IoT is rising

By Christine Parizo

The Internet of Things (IoT) is moving full speed ahead, with no signs of slowing down. Earlier this year, Gartner reported that 8.4 billion "things" will be in use in 2017. That's up 31% from 2016--and it will create 8.4 billion vulnerability points if companies don't take action now.

Gartner predicts that by 2020, 20.4 billion connected things will be in use. Greater China, North America, and Western Europe represent two-thirds of the overall IoT installed base in 2017, and the consumer segment is the largest user. But businesses aren't lagging too much; in 2017, they're expected to employ 3.1 billion connected things. That leaves the possibility of botnets, brute force, and injection attacks wide open for hackers to exploit. Experts advise vigilance and accountability to prevent and mitigate breaches.

Where the vulnerabilities lie

The most common vulnerabilities with IoT devices are injection issues, said Rob Clyde, CISM, vice-chair of ISACA. This includes everything from SQL injection in applications to overflow conditions in operating systems and host contexts. With IoT, these issues can wreak havoc for several reasons. For starters, device manufacturers may not have the infrastructure and processes to push out security patches as quickly as other types of vendors. In addition, some IoT devices don't automatically update for vulnerabilities.

Brute force attacks don't rely on the same types of vulnerabilities as software, according to Brian Martin of Risk Based Security. He said that IoT vulnerabilities stem from not implementing proper brute force attack protection, like account lockout or request throttling.

While BYOD attacks come from web browsers and operating system flaws, IoT attacks often are based in the vulnerabilities in a specific vendor's code, Martin said. "Wrapping a web interface around a device will potentially open it up to common web attacks, such as cross-site scripting (XSS), cross-site request forgery (CSRF), SQL injection (SQLi), remote command execution, and the very common default credentials being present."

That was the case with the Mirai botnet, said Pascal Geenens, security evan-



gist at Radware. However, the Hajime botnet exploited supposedly secure backdoors created by manufacturers in modems, along with default passwords, to infect devices. The backdoors are meant for service providers, but if they're not managed, they can be abused by malicious actors, he said.

Preventing attacks with policies, personnel

Organizations may not have individuals responsible for keeping IoT implementations secure, but that's a critical prevention step, Clyde said. "Make sure someone is assigned to watch for, and implement, patches or workarounds relative to IoT or other issues." Ideally, the IoT devices should be automatically updated, but humans may be needed for updates. Clyde also recommends keeping an inventory of wirelessly connected, IP-connected, or other devices that may store, process, or transmit potentially sensitive information.

"It should also be noted that when vulnerabilities are disclosed by securi-

ty researchers and patches are released by manufacturers, it doesn't necessarily mean that users will immediately update, which can leave the devices exposed," Geenens said.

Some basic steps can be enacted to prevent attacks: Change default passwords, update and check software and microcode regularly, and put devices that aren't modems or routers behind firewalls or secure gateways. "There is generally no good reason to directly connect unprotected IoT devices to the public internet, except for modems and routers," Geenens said. And just like with any other type of device, you should implement traffic-based anomaly detection or intrusion prevention systems on networks that have a lot of IoT devices.

"In my experience, there is no label for devices that have been designed with cybersecurity in mind," Geenens said. Even the higher-end devices have backdoors and vulnerabilities--nothing comes out of R&D flawlessly secure.

Therefore, prevention also needs to

extend into deployments. IoT devices should be on separate segments, and ideally, the network will be micro-segmented, Geenens said. That way, if the device is compromised, it won't infect the rest of the network.

As for products, vendors that publish security vulnerability policies and clear instructions on who to contact with security issues are good places to start, said Jason Malacko, manager of security practice relationships and offerings at Logicalis US. If you're looking to get technical, seek out support for secure protocols like HTTPS, SSHv2, and SNMPv3 with respect to authentication mechanisms, cryptographic cyphers, and key sizes used, he advised.

As IoT becomes more widely adopted, it will become more attractive to hackers--as has been the case with all technology. By acting now, searching for secure products, and implementing policies, businesses can protect themselves as they introduce connected devices to the organization.

(Source: techproresearch)

Bitcoin value plummets after China orders trading in currency to cease

The virtual currency, which emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, fell as low as \$2,972 on Friday -- a drop of 40% from a high of \$5,000 earlier this month -- before recovering to about \$3,600 in the afternoon.

The drop came after Beijing ordered cryptocurrency exchanges to stop trading and block new registrations, due to fears that increasing number of consumers piling into the market could prompt wider financial problems.

"All trading exchanges must by midnight of 15 September publish a notice to make clear when they will stop all cryptocurrency trading and announce a stop to new user registrations," the government notice said, according to Chinese state newspaper Securities Times.

BTCChina, one of the biggest Chinese exchanges, said on Thursday it would stop all trading by 30 September. It was followed by a series of other exchanges, including OkCoin and Huobi, announcing closures on Friday.

China accounts for almost a quarter of bitcoin trades and is also home to many of the world's biggest bitcoin



miners, who use huge amounts of computing power to make transactions in the digital currency.

Using Bitcoin allows people to bypass banks and tra-

ditional payment processes to pay for goods and services directly. Banks and other financial institutions have been concerned about Bitcoin's associations with money laundering and online crime, and it has not been adopted by any government.

Despite the concerns, the currency had soared in value by more than 700% in the year to the end of August.

But the value of Bitcoins came under pressure this week when Jamie Dimon, the chief executive of the biggest US bank, JP Morgan, warned that the digital currency was "a fraud" that would "eventually blow up".

Dimon said he would fire "in a second" anyone at the investment bank found to be trading in bitcoin. "The currency isn't going to work. You can't have a business where people can invent a currency out of thin air and think that people who are buying it are really smart," he said. "If you were a drug dealer, a murderer, stuff like that, you are better off doing it in bitcoin than US dollars."

(Source: Guardian)

Fitness wearables will soon diagnose by design, not by chance

Apple has been very busy. Last week, on the 10th anniversary of the iPhone, the company unveiled a 4K-ready Apple TV, three new phones and a campus and theater dedicated to late founder Steve Jobs. It also announced the Apple Watch Series 3, which sports a barometric altimeter to track your elevation, can now stream music and connect to a cellular network so you no longer need your phone for all your notifications and calls. But while those additions all sound useful, what really stuck out was a feature that has the potential to save lives.

At this week's event, Apple teased something called Heart Study, which launches later this year. With the help of Stanford Medicine and the FDA, Heart Study will use Apple Watch data to detect irregularities in heart rhythms, including potentially serious conditions like atrial fibrillation. Details on how Heart Study will work or look are sparse at the moment, but it appears Apple's device will keep an eye out for, and actively flag, irregularities in your pulse. That's different from existing systems that simply chart your performance and don't alert you to anomalies.

Of course, there are good reasons other companies haven't implemented something like this. Just as trying to diagnose yourself via Google or WebMD could scare you into thinking you have cancer, having your fitness tracker alert



you to every little pulse variation could lead to undue paranoia, if not severe hypochondria. Plus, coming up with accurate algorithms that can detect and differentiate between an actual pause in your heart rate versus, say, a temporary loss of contact between the sensors and your skin is tricky. But companies are already trying.

Fitbit, for example, is working on using the blood oxygen monitor on its new Ionic smartwatch to study and detect

sleep apnea -- a potentially serious disorder where a person randomly stops (and starts) breathing. Fitbit hasn't rolled out this capability yet, so for now the hardware doesn't do anything.

Some fitness devices, however, have already managed to save lives (or at least alert users to potentially life-threatening conditions) without specific sensors. Fitbit, for instance, shared a story of how 48-year-old Ken Cook from Wisconsin discovered he had "atrial flutter" after

noticing the app said he had been working out for 90 minutes when he had not. There are many other examples of this happening -- people saying their Fitbits and Apple Watches made them notice their abnormal heart rates and catching signs of conditions like atrial fibrillation that they would otherwise have missed.

In those situations, the anomalies were discovered by chance. For example, Cook happened to be looking up his calorie intake in the Fitbit app when he noticed the supposed 90-minute workout it had been tracking. Instead of being a byproduct of the constant heart-rate monitoring, the Apple Watch's updated Heart Rate app is programmed to specifically seek out these blips. According to the company's page for the Apple Watch Series 3, "the Heart Rate app also notifies you if your heart rate rises above a set threshold when you've been inactive for a 10-minute period."

It's too early to tell what Apple's Heart Study will do and how accurate it will be at this stage. Figuring out the conditions under which to alert someone to a potential health problem and how to identify symptoms are enormously challenging and frankly perilous tasks. Will people eventually get desensitized to such alerts? Can you really trust your fitness tracker to tell you when your heart skipped a beat?

(Source: engadget)

Scientists are closer to making crops that fertilize themselves

Legumes are a self-sufficient crop when it comes to fertilization. Unlike most other large crops, legume plants (like peanuts, soybeans, peas, and beans) support the growth of microbes known as nitrogen-fixers. These microbes convert nitrogen in soil into ammonia, a necessary component in photosynthesis. Since major crops like corn, rice, and wheat don't naturally support nitrogen-fixers in growth, farmers rely on artificial fertilizer, a deeply environmentally unsustainable product. Fortunately, a synthetic biology company has committed to attempt to wean all crops from fertilizer-based growth.

Ginkgo Bioworks, a Boston-based company, is working to synthetically engineer nitrogen-fixing microbes that can live on any plant, and (like legumes) produce their own fertilizer, effectively eradicating the fossil fuel-reliant artificial fertilizers.

Earlier this year Bloomberg produced a video describing how Ginkgo modifies genes in microbes to generate scent compounds and successfully alters yeast genes to smell like peach and rose. The compounds were extracted and sold to Ginkgo's clients in the food and perfume industries.

Planetary resources

On a larger scale, Ginkgo is working towards a goal of using DNA to grow



goods instead of manufacturing them in factories generated on important planetary resources.

"Can you program biology to make stuff?" asks Jason Kelly, co-founder of Ginkgo Bioworks in the Bloomberg video. "Yes, because DNA is code."

Kelly is referring to his larger plans for Ginkgo, among them generating these designer microbes for large crops. To kick-start this program, Ginkgo recently began a merger with Bayer, a German-based multinational pharmaceuticals company.

On a larger scale, Ginkgo is working towards a goal of using DNA to grow goods instead of manufacturing them in factories generated on important planetary resources.

"We fundamentally know that microbes will provide benefits to plants that chemicals cannot," Mike Miille, head of biologics for Bayer Crop Science, told Wired. Miille went on to describe that nitrogen-fixers' potential power has been limited by natural biology and evolution. "We're trying to change that."

DNA sequencing

As Kelly explains to Bloomberg, DNA is a type of digital code, which scientists have the ability to read and write through DNA sequencing and synthesis respectively. "If you can read and write code, you can program ... the applications for this are sort of endless," Kelly says.

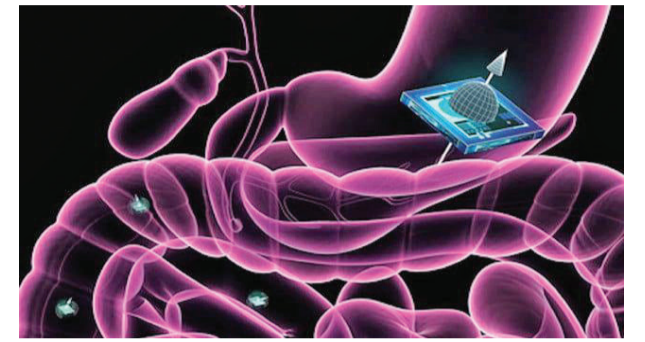
This work is exciting, but achievement of the synthesized nitrogen-fixers project and a subsequent successful application of the microbes onto the world's crops has a ways to go. In the meantime, choosing to implement more legumes into your daily routine is a good way to reduce our collective reliance on fertilizers.

However, employees at the still-named resulting new company of the Ginkgo-Bayer merger has already begun work on the project. According to Wired, Bayer's science team is currently putting together a group of various types of nitrogen-fixing microbes, which the team at Ginkgo can begin sequencing hopefully as soon as next month.

(Source: Extra Crispy)

Chip to help doctors track smart pills through a patient's body

"Smart pills" that are able to diagnose and treat diseases in a way that is unimaginable to us today are just around the corner. However, in order for them to be effective, they will need a way of relaying their location in the body to medical personnel. Because of the tiny microscale of such smart pills, that's easier said than done — although researchers at the California Institute of Technology think they may well have cracked it.



What they developed is a unique creation called ATOMS, standing for Addressable Transmitters Operated as Magnetic Spins. ATOMS is a silicon chip that relies on the same principles as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to determine where in the body it is located at any given time.

To "solve the problem of localizing microscale devices in the body, we borrowed some principles from nuclear magnetic resonance and embodied them in a silicon integrated circuit," Mikhail Shapiro, an assistant professor of chemical engineering at Caltech, told Digital Trends. "Nuclear spins in atoms resonate at certain frequencies, which scale linearly with the strength of the magnetic field to which they are exposed."

The research is still at a preliminary stage, but one day the hope is that the device could be deployed in settings like patients' gastrointestinal tract, blood, or even their brain. Once there, it could measure for information such as pH levels, temperature, pressure, or sugar concentrations, and wirelessly transmit this data to doctors. At present, a final prototype chip — measuring just 1.4 square millimeters — has been demonstrated in mice.

(Source: Digital Trends)

Scientists behind the lab mouse with a human ear speaks

You may have seen it in a textbook or on TV: a mouse with a human ear on its back. You might have thought that the mouse was genetically engineered, or deformed, or the result of mad scientists "playing God." Twenty years ago, Harvard surgeons Joseph and his brother Charles Vacanti, along with MIT engineer Bob Langer, experimented with techniques to create human body parts in the lab. They implanted the shape of a human ear in the back of a mouse as part of research to better understand how they could help grow body parts for humans. They published their results in 1997. After BBC aired a documentary on tissue engineering, the world saw the bizarre animal: The Vacanti Mouse.

Throughout the public consciousness, the mouse is still an icon of the power of science. On the 20th anniversary of this noteworthy development, Newsweek spoke with Joseph Vacanti to hear what he has to say about the mouse, looking back two decades later.

The organ shortage

In the mid-80's, I was a pediatric surgeon and I was trying to address the organ shortage. I thought, "well why don't we do what humans do when we need some-

thing—we design it and we make it."

Then, when I was getting ready to go into the operating room with my friend, a well-known pediatric plastic surgeon, I asked him, "What is the worst problem you have as a reconstructive plastic surgeon in children?" And he said it was the ear: they couldn't construct a good one.

We were making cartilage, and we could make it in specific shapes, so we decided that maybe we could make the specific shape of an ear. We developed a way to fashion a scaffolding in the shape of a human ear.

The man-made material

The whole process involved making a scaffold that has the shape and the size of an ear. The material is man-made, biocompatible and bioabsorbable; it disappears over time. Once you've made the ear-shaped scaffolding, then you seed it with cartilage cells and put it all in an incubator. Then you remove it from the incubator and implant the now-living structure in an animal.

The true story is, I thought the visual image of having a human ear on the back of a mouse would be too con-



troversial. So I asked my brother, people in my lab, and Bob not to bring up the mouse with the ear on its back so that we wouldn't create controversy.

Bob and I didn't bring up the mouse with BBC. When they went to my brother's lab at the University of Massachusetts, he showed them everything he was doing, and said "I've got this really cool thing to show you," which was the mouse with the ear on its back.

(Source: Newsweek)

Scientists map water on Moon

Using newly calibrated data taken from NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper, which flew aboard India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft, scientists have created the first global map of water in the Moon's soil.

The study, published in the journal Science Advances, builds on the initial discovery in 2009 of water and a related molecule — hydroxyl, which consists of one atom each of hydrogen and oxygen — in lunar soil.

The "signature of water is present nearly everywhere on the lunar surface, not limited to the polar regions as pre-

viously reported," said the study's lead author Shuai Li, who performed the work while a Ph.D. student at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.

The "amount of water increases toward the poles and does not show significant difference among distinct compositional terrains," Li, now a postdoctoral researcher at University of Hawaii, added.

Earth's driest deserts

The water concentration reaches a maximum average of around 500 to 750 parts per million in the higher latitudes. That is not a lot — less than what is found

in the sands of Earth's driest deserts — but it is also not nothing.

"This is a roadmap to where water exists on the surface of the Moon," study co-author Ralph Milliken, Associate Professor at Brown University said.

"Now that we have these quantitative maps showing where the water is and in what amounts, we can start thinking about whether or not it could be worthwhile to extract, either as drinking water for astronauts or to produce fuel," Milliken said.

As useful as the new maps may be, they still leave plenty of unanswered

questions about lunar water.

Mineralogy Mapper

The Moon Mineralogy Mapper, which supplied the data for the research, measures light reflected off of the lunar surface. That means that it can't look for water in places that are permanently shadowed from the sun's rays.

Many scientists think these permanently shadowed regions, such as the floors on impact craters in the Moon's polar regions, could hold large deposits of water ice.

(Source: thehindu.com)

Major Iranian Miner Starts Steel Production, Eyes New Line

One of Iran's largest iron ore miners has begun commercial production at an advanced steel plant, a company executive told S&P Global Platts Wednesday.

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (CMIC) has produced 70,000 mt of billet at its plant in Ardakan, which has a capacity of 1 million mt/year that could be

expanded to 1.3 million mt/year.

The electric arc furnace is designed to be fed by heated DRI that can reduce water and energy consumption significantly; the DRI reactor, with 1.55 million mt/year capacity, should be completed by March 2018.

Until the DRI plant is online the furnace will be fed by cold DRI and scrap.

"DRI hot charging could save up to 30% of electricity consumption and about 43% of water consumption as well," company said. Water supply is a serious challenge for any development in the country's steel industry at the moment and producers have to decrease consumption of water as much as possible using advanced technologies.

CMIC is one of Iran's largest iron ore producers. Iranian miners have had a strategy in recent years of trying to produce higher value-added products rather than raw materials. The company is studying a 1.2 million mt/year rolling mill and a 4 million mt/year pelletizing plant, which will probably be set up with international financing.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Attraction of 80b Tomans Worth of Foreign Capital in Sarakhs SEZ

Over the past year, 80 billion tomans worth of foreign capital has been attracted by a number of six investors in Sarakhs Special Economic Zone, the Public Relations Dept. of the Zone reported.

For his part, Ahmad Sadeghi Golmakani Managing Director of Sarakhs Special Economic Zone announced the above statement and said: "Attracting foreign investor is one of the priorities available in the Zone, so this purpose, giant steps have been taken in this regard."

Given the above issue, a number of six foreign investors from countries including Pakistan, Turkey, Georgia, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan have invested approx. 80 billion tomans worth of capital in the Zone, he maintained.



He termed construction of rail lines as one of the very important subjects for the progress and development of this Zone and said: "In this line, construction operation of vast and ordinary railroad, as long as 30 km, is underway in the Zone, expandable to 50 km in very near future."

In the end, Ahmad Sadeghi Golmakani Managing Director of Sarakhs Special Economic Zone said: "Development of foreign investments is one of the very important measures which has been put atop agenda in the Zone. For this purpose, it is tried to increase the number and volume of investment in this zone as well."

KSC Attends Conference on Billet in Oman

Director of research and marketing of Khouzestan Steel Company Mr. Majid Abiyat attended the conference on billet and steel-making raw material in Muscat, Oman.

Addressing the conference, Abiyat said that Iran is a big market in the Mid-

dle East and Khouzestan Steel Company has plans to increase its steel billet production to 13.6m tons, adding that the KSC produces its products based on the DRI method.

Abiyat added that KSC's products

are in compliance with the international standards and the company's products were 13.6m tons in 2015 and it reached almost two millions in 2016. He noted that 53 percent of the KSC's products are exported and Middle East, North

and South America are the major destinations for the KSC products.

He admitted that the fall in China's steel exports gave

Iran a good opportunity to expand its export markets.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Wolves understand cause and effect better than dogs

A good example of the connection between cause and effect, is that an object which contains food produces noise when shaken. The study of an international research team at the Wolf Science Center of the Vetmeduni Vienna shows how animals deal with these rules of the physical world. Based on where dogs and wolves searched for food after receiving some hints about its location, they showed that our domesticated, four-legged companions cannot make the connection between cause and effect, but wolves can.

The researchers Michelle Lampe from the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Juliane Bräuer from the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Germany, Juliane Kaminski from the University of Portsmouth in England and Zsófia Virányi from the Vetmeduni Vienna in Austria investigated the reasoning abilities of 14 dogs and 12 human-socialized wolves.

First of all, the researchers tested whether the animals can make use of communicative cues, such as direct eye-contact and pointing gestures to choose the correct object. Secondly, the dogs and wolves had to rely on behavioral cues, in which the experimenter only showed the location of the hidden food through her behavior, without making any eye-contact with the animals.

Kaveh Madani appointed Iran's deputy environment chief

➔ He has played a major role in raising public awareness about water and environmental problems in Iran in recent years. His research and major outreach activities have influenced water policy in Iran.

Madani is a Reader (Professor) in Systems Analysis and Policy at the Centre for Environmental Policy of Imperial College London. Prior to joining Imperial College in 2013, he was an Assistant Professor of Civil, Environmental, and Construction Engineering and an Alex Alexander Fellow at the University of Central Florida (UCF), where he founded and directed the Hydro-Environmental &



Energy Systems Analysis (HEESA) Research Group. He has a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of California, Davis, Master of Water Resources from the Lund University and B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from the University of Tabriz, and has done his post-doctoral research in Environmental Economics and Policy at the Water Science and Policy Center at the University of California, Riverside.

Madani is the founder of WaterSISWEB, one of the five winners of the "Huber Civil Engineering Research Prize" in 2017, one of the four recipients of the "Arne Richter Award for Outstanding Young Scientists in 2016", one of the ten "New Faces of Civil Engineering in 2012", and the Associate Editor of the Journal of Water Resources Planning and Management and Sustainable Cities and Society.

LEARN ENGLISH

Intermediate - Chinese New Year

A: I'm so **excited** about Chinese New Year! When do I get to visit Grandma? Grandma makes the best **dumplings** in the world!

B: Ha ha, right. Sounds to me like you're more excited about the dumplings than seeing your Grandma.

A: Of course I miss Grandma, too. I bet she's gonna teach me how to play Mahjong! Hey, Dad, are you going to buy me **firecrackers** this year? We're going to have the best fireworks! I'm really **looking forward to** lighting them!

B: Son, firecrackers aren't toys; they're dangerous!

A: No, fireworks are awesome!

B: Whoa, don't you remember? Last year when I **set off** the firecrackers, you covered both your ears and hid behind your mother?

A: Dad! I was scared because... because I saw a bug. That's all.

B: Hahaha... really?

A: Oh, and I **can't wait** to watch the dragon dance! Dad, can I sit on your shoulders this time?

B: Hey, I offered last year...

A: Well, I... anyways, I was just thinking of the red envelopes. I wanna make a list of all the things I'm gonna buy with my red envelope money! I can't wait! I'm gonna have so much money! Mom, can I get a pen and a piece of paper?

A: I want a new transformer, no, two transformers... the Optimus Prime, and...maybe the wheel jack? I'll get a PSP game, hahaha, and I'll buy the entire class lunch at MacDonald's...

Key Vocabulary

excited: very happy about something

dumpling: small lump of dough that is steamed or boiled, traditional Chinese New Year food

firecracker: a cylinder filled with explosive substance that makes loud noise when it explodes

look forward to: excited and happy about something that will happen in the future

can't wait: eager or excited about doing something or for something to begin

set off: cause something to explode

Supplementary Vocabulary

Lunar New Year: Chinese New Year, based on the cycles of the moon

Spring Festival: Chinese New Year

lunar calendar: a calendar based on the cycles and phases of the moon

can hardly wait: very excited about something that will happen in the future

impatient: not happy or willing to wait for something

(Source: irlanguage.com)



Have an idea?
Be in touch!

lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

Iran marks Intl. Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer

➔ Lewis went on to say that under HCFC Phase-out Management Plan Iran has succeeded in achieving two targets of freezing at baseline consumption level (380.5 tons of ozone depleting potentials) by 2013 and 10% reduction of the baseline (342.5 tons of ozone depleting potentials) by 2015.

"This success have been the result of collaboration of Iran's national ozone units and the work of UN agencies such as UNDP, UN environment, and UNIDO and the support of German government," he added. "And this is why I say Iran is the regional and global best practice and can serve as a hub to support similar efforts in the region."

"We need to build on the success of the first projects and continue it into the future; more works is required at the international level to which Iran should contribute," he highlighted.

Montreal Protocol is one of the most successful multilateral environmental agreement that fulfilled its purpose, the UN official to Iran said, stating, "The protocol has been responsible for phasing out nearly one hundred percent of ozone depleting substances and as a result the ozone is starting to thicken again and be able to protect us more from debilitating rays."

"And our new focus need to be on what we call hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and in this respect the parties to the Montreal protocol reached an agreement in October of last year in Kigali, Rwanda, to phase



UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message

The thirtieth anniversary of the Montreal Protocol is a milestone for all people and our planet. When scientists found that everyday products were destroying the fragile ozone layer, the world responded with the Montreal Protocol. It rallies Governments, companies, doctors, scientists and citizens to reverse the damage.

That saves millions of people from skin cancer and cataracts each year, and the Protocol helps combat poverty, address climate change and protect the food chain. The treaty also creates new business opportunities — and it will save the global economy over \$2 trillion by 2050.

Today we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Montreal Protocol. And we congratulate ozone heroes around the world.

out these hydrofluorocarbons," he said.

In Kigali, delegates worked to negotiate and reach a deal on a timetable that

would mandate countries to phase down the production and usage of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Iran takes measure to deal with poaching

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) has launched a data bank for hunting and fishing to control poaching in the country.

"Through developing the data bank, we will have access to information on hunters all over the country," the DOE deputy director Ali Teymouri said.

"In this way, the offending hunters cannot extend

their licenses in any part of Iran.

"Due to the lack of an integrated data bank, a hunter who poaches in a specific region can apply for getting a new license in another part of the country," he explained.

Officials in different provinces have been gathering data onto a portal since two weeks ago, he said.

Even hunting licenses for protected areas will be issued according to the data base, he added.

The DOE plans to hold workshops for registered hunters at Iran's Shooting Federation and University of Tehran's Faculty of Environment, Teymouri announced.

The hunters must have information about the environment, wildlife and its endangered species so that they can protect the environment, he concluded.

Iran's Welfare Organization set up child adoption website

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran's Welfare Organization has set up a child adoption website, the organization director Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said on Sunday.

Parents who are interested in adopting a child can refer to the website www.behzistehran.org.ir and sign up for adoption.

"The scheme is being piloted in Tehran and will be soon carried out nationwide," Mohseni-Bandpey said, adding the website would ease the time-consuming process.

Families with no children, families with one child, and single women are allowed to apply for adoption through the website, he added.

The whole process would take up to three months, he said.

Iran's adoption and foster laws

which dated back to some 44 years ago were revised and modified in 2013. Within the new law kids could be adopted up to the age of 16 while the former law states that kids aged 12 or less could be adopted. In addition to families with no child now families with one kid and single women are able to apply for adoption.

The law formerly authorized adoption only for orphans while the new law permit adoption for children with dysfunctional families as well in case the judge concludes that the new family is suitable for adoption. Earlier the adoptive families were required to sign over one third of their property to their child to-be but some could not afford to do so and now the judge gets to decide how a family, depending on their financial status, should be treated.

Photographer snaps eye-opening photo he wishes 'didn't exist'

ustin Hofman's photo of a tiny seahorse clinging to a pink plastic cotton swab highlights how plastic pollution has left virtually no corner of our world untouched.

"I wish we didn't have to see this beautiful wildlife mixed in with all of our waste," he told USA TODAY. "I travel all over the world, and I can't think of a single place where people haven't impacted the environment."

More than 8 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean each year, and some estimates show that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish. Hofman, who is nominated for London's Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year, snapped the photo while snorkeling near Subawa Island, Indonesia last year.

He said his friend pointed out the

sea horse, which was holding onto a piece of seaweed and drifting with the current.

"When the tide came in, the debris came in with it, and the seahorse hopped from the seaweed to a little piece of plastic and then a Q-tip," he said.

Hofman said his "blood was boiling," but he continued to snap pictures.

"I took the photo in Indonesia, but this is happening everywhere in the world," he said.

He said that many people in Indonesia are horrified by the pollution, but do not have the resources to recycle. He points out that it's hard to tell where the plastic came from because of the oceans currents.

The competition's winners will be announced on October 17.

(Source: USA Today)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

NGOs can help improve literacy: education minister

Iranian NGOs should play a more efficient role in helping the Literacy Movement Organization to improve the rate of literacy in the country, Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haee said.

The state-run Literacy Movement Organization of Iran should benefit from supports of the private sector and non-government organization, ISNA quoted the minister as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks at a press conference held on the occasion of International Literacy Day, September 8, which is celebrated annually worldwide by the United Nation.

"Unfortunately, there are still illiterate people in Iran. Although the illiteracy rate has declined to 10 percent among individuals over six years old in Iran, but [having] even a single illiterate person in the society is high," he said.

Literacy is not only reading and writing but it is an ability, which develop relation skills, he explained.

"The only solution to decrease the rate of illiteracy is practical planning for different regions," he said.

Bat'haee went on to say that traditional methods cannot solve the illiteracy problem and a flexible program should be developed for the problem.

ENGLISH PROVERB

To err is human, to forgive divine

■ **Explanation:** It is human nature to make mistakes, therefore one should forgive them.

■ **For example:** Take it easy and forgive Jim, to err is human, to forgive divine.

PHRASAL VERB

Wipe up

■ **Meaning:** remove a liquid from a surface using a cloth

■ **Example:** She wiped up the coffee she had spilled.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Same wavelength

■ **Explanation:** If you are on the same wavelength as someone else, you feel or think the same way about something.

■ **For example:** We rarely argue. We're generally on the same wavelength.

وزیر آموزش و پرورش: سوادآموزی به نهادهای مردمی واگذار شود

وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: سازمان سوادآموزی باید با کاهش تصدی‌گری دولت امور را به نهادهای مردمی واگذاری کند همچنین انگیزه در افراد برای سوادآموزی باید ایجاد شود. سید محمد بطحایی در همایش ملی سوادآموزی در دنیای دیجیتال، اظهار کرد: امروز بیش از نیم قرن از نامگذاری روز سوادآموزی توسط یونسکو گذشته است اما هنوز افراد زیادی از سواد بی‌بهره هستند و با وجود تلاش سازمان‌های بین‌المللی هنوز میلیون‌ها نفر از سواد محروم هستند.

وی افزود: تعریف سوادآموزی دیگر خواندن و نوشتن نیست، بلکه قابلیت است که مهارت‌های ارتباطی را توسعه می‌دهد و با وجود گسترش مفهوم سوادآموزی هنوز در سراسر جهان میلیون‌ها نفر از این فرصت محروم هستند و حتی از تعریف اولیه یعنی خواندن و نوشتن محرومند.

وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: در ایران نیز هنوز تعداد زیادی از سواد محرومند. با وجود تلاش فراوان و رسیدن نرخ بی‌سوادی در گروه سنی بالای ۶ سال به ۱۰ درصد باید گفت که بی‌سوادی آنگذر تاثیرات سوء دارد که حتی یک فرد بی‌سوادی هم زیاد است.

Fleeing violence at home, Rohingya Muslims face difficulties in India, Nepal, Bangladesh

There seems to be no end in sight to the plight of Rohingya Muslims as those members of the community who have fled persecution in Myanmar are now facing difficulties in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

The Indian government announced on Saturday that it would make a case to the country's Supreme Court for the expulsion of up to 40,000 Rohingya Muslims who have arrived over the past 10 years, claiming that they are a security threat.

The move has faced strong opposition from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini and civil rights campaigners.

According to the UN, there are 16,000 Rohingya Muslims registered in India and many more are still undocumented. Officials say nearly 7,000 of the Muslims live in shanties in Jammu in the Indian Himalayas.

Reports say 47 families live in dilapidated structures at the Kanchan Kunj camp in New Delhi.

In Myanmar, the Rohingya Muslims face death, torture, and rape by military forces and gangs of Buddhist extremists in the western state of Rakhine, according to reports and eyewitnesses. They have been fleeing bouts of violence in recent months.

The government in neighboring Nepal, meanwhile, is also attempting to prevent the entry of more members of the Muslim minority to the country. Those who have arrived live in slums in northern Kathmandu.

"Nepal has increased surveillance at its border to stop more Rohingya from entering the country after the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar because we cannot bear any more crises," Nepal's Home Ministry spokesman Ram Krishna said.

Bangladesh restricts movement of Rohingya

Meanwhile, Bangladeshi police said on Saturday that they had issued an or-



der banning the Rohingya from leaving the areas and camps the government has designated for them in the southeastern border district of Cox's Bazar, where the majority of refugees are living in squalid conditions.

"They should stay in the designated camps until they return to their country," Sahely Ferdous, a police spokeswoman, said in a statement. "They cannot travel from one place to another by roads, railways, or waterways."

Rohingya are asked not to take shelter in the homes of their friends or acquaintances, while locals have been asked not to rent houses to the refugees, and bus and truck drivers requested not to transport the Rohingya, according to the spokeswoman.

■ Bangladesh restricts movement of Rohingya refugees

Meantime, Bangladesh has restricted the movement of Rohingya refugees, banning them from leaving designated areas in the country to which over 400,000 have fled from violence in neighboring Myanmar.

Police said on Saturday that they have issued an order prohibiting Rohingya refugees from leaving the areas and camps

the government has designated for them in the border district.

Police said they have set up check posts and surveillance in key transit points to make sure the refugees don't travel to the other parts of the country.

According to the state-run news agency, new camps were also being set up to help house the influx of refugees.

The restrictions were announced as Bangladesh authorities said they faced an "unprecedented crisis" due to the influx of 409,000 refugees since last month, according to UN figures.

Dozens of refugees were found in three towns hundreds of kilometers from the Myanmar frontier, stoking fears that thousands of Rohingya Muslims will move from the border region into the mainland of Bangladesh.

Conditions were already worsening in Bangladesh's southeastern border district of Cox's Bazar where the majority of refugees are living in squalid conditions after fleeing Myanmar's violence-wracked Rakhine State.

Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as Myanmar's military, have faced international condemnation over its treatment of the Rohingya.

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who visited the refugee camps earlier this week, departed for New York City on Saturday to plead for international help and demand more pressure on Myanmar during talks at the UN General Assembly.

Bangladesh has been criticized for turning back hundreds of Rohingya refugees at its border with Myanmar, as well as not providing enough aid to the refugees.

The government has put the army in charge of ferrying foreign relief aid from airports to Cox's Bazar.

It also plans to build 14,000 shelters, which it hopes will be enough for 400,000 people. Each shelter can house six refugee families.

Hasina has ordered the shelters erected within 10 days, Bangladesh's disaster management secretary Shah Kama told AFP.

■ Myanmar-Bangladesh relations

As tensions mount between the neighbors, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said Bangladesh "will continue international pressure on the Myanmar government to immediately end its ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya".

The foreign ministry on Friday summoned the Myanmar charge d'affaires in Dhaka to protest at alleged violations of its airspace by Myanmar drones and helicopter.

The ministry warned that the three violations between September 10 and 14 could lead to "unwarranted consequences". Myanmar did not immediately comment.

The Bangladesh government earlier protested to the embassy over reports that Myanmar was planting landmines near their border, which have killed several Rohingya, and the treatment of the refugees.

Mahmood has also called the violence in Rakhine "a genocide".

(Source: agencies)

Roadside bomb kills tribal officials in Pakistan

A Pakistani official says a roadside bomb has killed a senior tribal government administrator and four tribal police near the Afghan border.

Fawad Ali, the assistant administrator, was traveling with police to attend a meeting when their vehicle was struck by the device in the town of Mamoond, some 25km from Khar, the main town of Bajaur on Sunday.

Anwarul Haq, another tribal official, says the device was detonated remotely, and that a search for the perpetrators is under way.

The Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehreek e-Taliban (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack.

Armed groups have long operated in the tribal region along the Afghan border, where they attack security forces and those seen as cooperating with the central government.

In June, a twin bombings killed at least 67 people and wounded more than 200 in the northwestern Pakistani city of Parachinar's Toori Bazar.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (Army of Jhangvi), a Sunni armed group, claimed the bombings in the predominantly Shia Muslim town.

On the same day, a suicide bombing claimed by the Jamaat-ur-Ahrar (Assembly of the Free), a faction of the Pakistani Taliban, killed at least 14 people at a police checkpoint in Quetta in Balochistan province.

At least 10 of the victims were police officers, bringing the overall death toll from three separate attacks across the country to 85.

(Source: agencies)

DR Congo forces kill at least 36 Burundi refugees

Security forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have killed at least 36 Burundian refugees during clashes over plans to send some of them home.

Maman Sidikou, the head of MONUSCO, the UN's peacekeeping mission in the country, said in a statement on Saturday that at least 36 refugees had been reported killed and more than 100 injured.

He called for a swift investigation and urged Congo's security forces to use force as a last resort only.

Josue Boji, a Democratic Republic of Congo interior ministry official, said troops had tried to disperse the refugees by "firing in the air but were overwhelmed" when the group responded by throwing stones during Friday's confrontation.

Police and soldiers opened fire as the refugees protested over the resettlement plan and tried to free some of their arrested compatriots in the town of Kamanyola in eastern Congo, sources told the Reuters news agency.

A local army spokesman, Dieudonne Kasereka, told Reuters there had been clashes between soldiers and refugees armed with knives and machetes, but that he did not know if there were any deaths.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) also called for an investigation of "this tragic incident," saying in a statement that it was "in shock and saddened".

UNHCR spokesman Andreas Kirchoff told Al Jazeera that the "circumstances are not clear". He added that teams have been sent to the area, including medical staff to treat those injured.

Burundi's Foreign Minister, Alain-Aime Nyamitwe, on Twitter described the incident as a "shooting" and said "explanations are needed".

More than 400,000 refugees have fled Congo's neighbor Burundi since violence erupted there in April 2015 when President Pierre Nkurunziza said he would seek a third term in office, a move his opponents said was unconstitutional.

Earlier this month, the UN released a report accusing Burundi's government of crimes against humanity, including executions and torture, and urged the International Criminal Court (ICC) to open a case "as soon as possible".

Burundi's government firmly rejected the allegations, accusing the UN investigators of being "mercenaries" in a Western plot to "enslave African states".

(Source: agencies)

IOM: Refugees dying at quicker rate in Mediterranean

Refugees and migrants are dying in the Mediterranean at a quicker rate than last year, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has reported, as rights groups raise alarm over abusive conditions in Libya - now the main country of departure.

While fewer refugees have drowned so far in 2017 compared with the same period a year ago, the number of arrivals has fallen drastically - meaning that those who do set off from the Libyan coast have a greater chance of dying.

At least 2,550 refugees and migrants died from January 1 to September 13, 2017, compared with 3,262 from the same period in 2016, the IOM said - a drop of 22 percent.

However, arrivals to Europe have fallen much more sharply from 293,806 to 128,863 - a year-on-year decrease of 57 percent.

At this year's rate, one refugee dies for every 50 who make it to Europe. Last year, one person died for every 90 who safely reached Europe.

"The rate of deaths for migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean was almost twice as high in 2017 than in 2016," the IOM said in a recent report.

"Despite considerable policy and media attention and increased search and rescue efforts by a range of actors, the death toll in the Mediterranean has continued to rise ... The rate of death increased from 1.2 percent in the first half of 2016, to 2.1 percent in the first half of 2017."

"Part of this rise is due to the greater proportion of migrants now taking the most dangerous route - that across the Central Mediterranean."

"Although fewer migrants crossed the Mediterranean in 2017, a higher percentage of those on this journey perished."

The Central Mediterranean journey, from Libya to Malta or Italy, is now the most active refugee route for

refugees.

In March last year, two events slowed the flow of Europe-bound refugees migrating from Turkey and Greece.

First, a string of countries effectively shut the Balkan route which allowed refugees to travel by land from Greece to Western Europe. The European Union-Turkey deal also came into effect, pushing hopeful asylum seekers in Greece back to Turkey and closing the Aegean route. Most of those affected were from the Middle East and Asia.

Those attempting to travel to Europe now from Libya are mostly African, Moroccan or Bangladeshi.

"Part of this rise [in the death rate] is due to the greater proportion of migrants now taking the most dangerous route - that across the Central Mediterranean," the IOM report stated.

Smugglers have also made the journey increasingly dangerous, forgoing boats for rubber dinghies, using less fuel and preventing refugees from carrying much drinking water, rights groups told Al Jazeera.

In the four years since October 2013, when these deadly journeys started making headlines, the Mediterranean crossing has claimed the lives of at least 15,000 refugees and migrants, accounting for more than half of the 22,500 refugees and migrants who have died or gone missing globally.

Those figures put into perspective statements by European officials, who have rushed to welcome the fact that fewer bodies are being pulled from the sea or washing ashore recently.

For example, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker made his third State of the Union speech to the European Parliament on September 13, claiming: "We have drastically reduced the loss of life in the Mediterranean."

Juncker did also temper his claim, however, by calling



on Europe to "urgently improve migrants' living conditions in Libya", and acknowledging the "inhumane" conditions at detention centers.

Rights groups have for months documented widespread exploitation and abuse of thousands of refugees in Libya.

Although it is possible that not all refugees and migrants trapped in Libya fled violence at home, they are likely attempting to escape brutal conditions in the war-torn, insecure country, Sunderland added, citing reports of beatings, torture, sexual violence and forced labor.

NGOs (non-governmental organization) have also condemned reports of the EU-backed Libyan coast-guard shooting at aid workers and refugees at sea.

Italian officials are also among those celebrating lower arrivals figures, attributing the drop to tougher actions against smugglers.

The Western pushback against refugees was also boosted in February this year when the European Union in February signed a \$215m deal with the fragile Libyan government to stop migrant boats, encourage voluntary repatriation and set up "safe" camps in Libya.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

U.S. police, protesters face off in St. Louis

Several hundreds of Black Lives Matter protesters and other activists have taken to St. Louis' streets for a second night in a row and clashed with police following the acquittal of a former white officer in the 2011 killing of an African-American man.

Protesters marched down the streets in St. Louis, Missouri, on Saturday chanting, "Black Lives Matter" and "United we stand/divided we fall."

"We don't want to see property destruction or see people getting hurt," Elad Gross, a 29-year-old St. Louis civil rights attorney, said as protesters gathered in a park near Washington University. "But this is a protest that addresses injustices not only happening here in St. Louis but around the country."

The St. Louis Police Department said on Saturday evening that some protest-

ers clashed with police and scuffles broke out. The police accused demonstrators of smashing windows at the Mayor's house, the St. Louis Public Library and several businesses. Officers fired tear gas and rubber bullets during clashes with protesters.

Protests began on Friday morning when Judge Timothy Wilson cleared former police officer Jason Stockley, 36, who was charged with first-degree murder for killing Anthony Lamar Smith, 24. The officer quit the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department in 2013 and was arrested in May 2016.

Stockley was accused of planting a gun in Smith's car but claimed in his testimony that he did this in self-defense.

"This court, as a trier of fact, is simply not firmly convinced of defendant's guilt," Judge Wilson wrote in his ruling.



Videos shared on social media of Saturday evening's demonstration showed television host Nick Cannon marching with demonstrators. Cannon raised his fist to the chants of "No justice, no profit" by protesters.

More than 600 protesters held a

demonstration on Friday following the verdict in downtown St. Louis, chanting, "No justice, no peace" and "Shut it down." Some protesters held "Black Lives Matter" signs.

Protests continued throughout the day on Friday and into the night with police using tear gas against people and arresting at least 33 protesters, according to interim St. Louis Police Chief Lawrence O'Toole. He said some nine police officers were injured.

Police said they had to use tear gas and pepper balls on the crowd after some officers were hurt by thrown bricks.

The deaths of unarmed black men at the hands of police over the past years have sparked nationwide protests under the banner of Black Lives Matter movement.

(Source: AP)

Japan's PM mulling snap election as early as October

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering calling a snap election as early as next month to take advantage of an uptick in approval ratings and disarray in the main opposition party, domestic media reported on Sunday.

Abe's ratings have recovered to the 50 percent level in some polls, helped by public jitters over North Korea's missile and nuclear tests and chaos in the opposition Democratic Party, struggling with single-digit support and defections.

Abe told the head of his Liberal Democratic Party's junior coalition partner, the Komeito party, that he could not rule out dissolving parliament's lower house for a snap poll after the legislature convenes for an extra session from Sept. 28, public broadcaster NHK reported, citing unidentified informed sources.

"Until now, it appeared the election would be next autumn, but ... we must always be ready for battle," media quoted Komeito party chief Natsuo Yamaguchi as telling reporters on Saturday during a visit to Russia.

Speculation has mounted over a snap election on Oct. 22, when three by-elections are scheduled, although other possibilities are later in October or after U.S. President Donald Trump makes a likely visit in early November, media said.

Abe's ratings had sunk below 30 percent in some surveys in July, battered by suspected cronyism scandals and a perception that he had grown arrogant after more than four years in office.

His popularity rebounded a bit after an early August cabinet reshuffle and has since been helped by worries over a volatile North Korea, which on Friday fired a ballistic missile over Japan, its second such move in less than a month.

(Source: Reuters)

Mayweather criticized for defending Trump lewd comments

US boxer Floyd Mayweather has been criticized on social media for defending vulgar comments made by Donald Trump in 2005 about women.

"He speaks like a real man spoke," Mayweather, who attended President Trump's inauguration, told the Hollywood Unlocked website.

The comments sparked a backlash, with critics pointing to the boxer's convictions for domestic violence.

Mr Trump apologized after taped remarks about women emerged last year.

Mayweather told Hollywood Unlocked that Mr Trump "didn't do nothing".

Many on social media referred to the boxer's history of attacking women.

Mayweather has previously expressed support for Trump, who has described him as "one of the best all time boxing legends".

In the interview, the boxer also defended Trump against allegations of support for racist groups.

"You never heard anything about Donald Trump being racist until he ran for president," Mayweather said.

(Source: BBC)

Stuttgart captain Gentner suffers multiple facial fractures in horror collision



Stuttgart captain Christian Gentner is expected to make a full recovery after suffering gruesome facial injuries in a clash with Wolfsburg goalkeeper Koen Casteels.

Gentner broke his lower and lateral eye-socket, nose and upper-jaw in a heavy collision during Stuttgart's win over Wolfsburg at the Mercedes-Benz Arena on Saturday.

The Bundesliga club have confirmed the 32-year-old Gentner will undergo surgery in the coming days.

Gentner was struck in the head by Casteels' knee as the Wolfsburg goalkeeper came out to clear a high ball late in the game.

Play was suspended as the unconscious Gentner received attention on the pitch before he was taken off on a stretcher.

Stuttgart sporting director Michael Reschke was confident the club captain would return to the pitch once recovered from the injuries.

"It's a cruel blow for Gente, his family and for us. The most important news though is that he will make a full recovery," said Reschke.

"We will give Christian all the time he needs to get fully fit again. Finally, we are delighted that we will have our captain back on board again.

"Christian is enormously important for us both on, as well as off, the pitch. In the four Bundesliga games we've played thus far, he has impressively proven his exceptional qualities."

(Source: Daily Mail)

Pete Sampras: 'Nadal has good shot to beat Federer's 19 Majors'



Pete Sampras thinks Rafael Nadal has a lot of chances to beat Roger Federer's 19 Grand Slams. The former American player suggested the Spaniard could have a few more competitive years at the top level. "Basically it's up to Rafa and how much he wants to play and how much he loves the game," the 14-time Major winner told The Independent. "If he said: 'Hey guys, I'm gonna play until I'm at least 35,' I'd say he's got a pretty good shot at doing it."

"If you do the maths, he's going to have many chances to win majors and he has the heart and mind to continue winning them. He will always be a favorite at the French and while Wimbledon will be a stress, at the other two [Slams] he's always going to be in the top-two favorites."

"It really is entirely up to him if he wants to play into his mid-30s like Roger. He also added that Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray will comeback in a good place next year: 'I think if you take that much time off, they're going to be very eager and determined [to succeed]."

"I'm sure Novak and Andy are going to be right in the mix next year and compete for majors."

(Source: Tennis World)

Coutinho speaks on Barcelona link: 'Everyone knows I got interested, my family too'

Philippe Coutinho has spoken for the first time about how close he came to joining Barcelona but insists there is no agreement for him to quit Liverpool next year.

The Brazil international started his first game of the season, playing 78 minutes in the 1-1 draw with Burnley. He was given a warm ovation before the game but, with Liverpool toiling, there was not much applause for him when his number was held up.

Coutinho was the subject of three bids from Barcelona, the last reaching £114million. Barcelona claimed after the transfer window shut that Liverpool asked for £186million on deadline day to sell him, an assertion which Liverpool quickly rubbished.

There was an understanding in the Anfield dressing room about what Coutinho – who submitted a transfer request on August 11 – wanted to move to Camp Nou but there have been no issues since he returned to training having recovered from a back problem.

Jürgen Klopp, Liverpool's manager, is adamant the 25-year-old will be a huge influence this season and Coutinho has vowed to work hard to help his club achieve their aims. He has admitted, though, that he was honored to be targeted by Barcelona.

"What happened was a job offer and, in life, sometimes you get interested," Coutinho told ESPN Brazil before he left Anfield. "Sometimes you don't and, in my case, everyone knows that I got interested, my family too."

"But as I have always said, it is a great offer to receive an offer from such a great club like that. But it is also a great honor being here. Liverpool is a great club worldwide. I'm here and I will give my best as always. I'm working hard, my thoughts are on the team's goals, making a good season."

Of the persistent speculation about his future,



Coutinho explained: "It was a complicated month for me but as I have said, it is an honour to receive that offer but it is also an honour to wear this shirt, so what I can do is work hard and honour that on the field. It is all cool."

When Liverpool last had a situation similar to this, Luis Suarez – who had been targeted by Arsenal in 2013 – gave them one more year before he moved to Barcelona for £75million and there is a feeling that Coutinho will end up doing the same.

He was asked directly by ESPN Brazil whether

he would follow his friend Suarez to Camp Nou but Coutinho, who signed a five-year deal in January, replied: "Not that I know of. I am in a place that I have always been given respect by everyone and (I) too respect everyone."

"I have conquered my space in four, five years and never had any problems with anyone – the fans, the board, my team-mates, the coaching staff. That has not changed. As I have said, in life, in every job you get an offer, interested or not. It is all in the past."

(Source: Daily Mail)

Harry Redknapp says 'every chance' Birmingham will be last job

Harry Redknapp says there is "every chance" his managerial career is over after he was sacked by Birmingham.

The 70-year-old former Bournemouth, West Ham, Portsmouth, Southampton, Tottenham and QPR boss left the Blues after 13 matches as manager.

They are one place off the bottom of the Championship table after six successive defeats.

"I doubt very much whether it will happen again now," Redknapp told BBC Radio 5 live's Sportsweek programme.

"I'm a realist. If I could help someone somewhere, help a young manager, I'd love that. I did it at Derby with Darren Wassall and had a great time."

Redknapp took charge at Birmingham in April and they won their last two matches of the season to avoid relegation on the final day.

But he was dismissed after Saturday's 3-1 home defeat by Preston North End.

Redknapp said: "They've got a squad that is probably as good as they have had for a long time. I still feel they are capable of challenging for the play-offs."

"I genuinely believe they have seven forward players who are as good as

any in the Championship, who unfortunately haven't been playing because of injury."

"They are going to be fantastic players, Premier League players for sure, hopefully with Birmingham one day."

Redknapp described the club's fans as "incredible" and said they "deserved success".

He added: "I'm sure there are great times ahead. I wish the club every success. Given time, we would have turned it round but whoever goes in is going to take over a good group."

Redknapp was one of three EFL managers to leave his job on Saturday, with Chesterfield sacking Gary Caldwell, and Port Vale parting company with Michael Brown.

"I feel more sorry for the other lads in the lower leagues who lost their jobs," he said.

"It's difficult to get back on the ladder for them, whereas I have been lucky enough to have been on that ladder and had a great time."

Birmingham signed 14 players in the summer, four of whom joined on deadline day.

(Source: BBC)



Sergio Aguero is a "legend" - Pep Guardiola

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola praised "legend" Sergio Aguero, after the striker moved two goals away from equalling the club's all-time record.

The Argentina forward scored his sixth Premier League hat-trick as City beat Watford 6-0 on Saturday.

The 29-year-old has 175 goals since joining City in 2011, with Eric Brook holding the club record of 177 goals.

"Hopefully that [the record] will happen very soon, and we can have a big celebration," said Guardiola.

Ex-England winger Brook, who was at City from 1928-1940, scored his goals in 494 appearances. Aguero has scored his in 259 games.

Guardiola added: "He's a legend, and it's a part of history in the club. Aguero's numbers speak for themselves - he is amazing."

Aguero's hat-trick at Vicarage Road put him on 127 Premier League goals, moving him above Robbie Keane and Nicolas Anelka and level with Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink on the competition's all-time list.

He has scored five goals in five games this season.

Former England striker and record

Premier League goal scorer Alan Shearer (260 in 441 appearances) challenged Aguero to get 30 league goals this season.

Aguero has scored 20-plus goals in four of the past six seasons, 26 being his highest tally in the 2014-15 campaign.

Ex-Liverpool striker Luis Suarez was the latest player to score 30, in the 2013-14 season. Tottenham striker Harry Kane was the Premier League's top scorer in the past two seasons with 29 and 25 goals.

"Watford could not get near Aguero," said Shearer on Match of the Day. "It was a top performance. For a centre-forward to play in this City team must be an absolute dream, with the chances created and the pace going forward."

"I think you are looking for Aguero to get 30 league goals this year."

Former England defender Phil Neville added: "Aguero does two things really well. When he goes short, he takes a defender into an area he's not comfortable with."

"But when he runs in behind it's very difficult because he's so small with a low center of gravity."

(Source: Independent)



Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele out for up to four months

Barcelona have confirmed that club-record signing Ousmane Dembele will be sidelined for up to four months after rupturing a tendon in Saturday's win at Getafe.

Dembele, 20, will travel to Finland this week to undergo surgery with a specialist.

The France international was making his first ever La Liga start at the Coliseum Alfonso Perez when he was forced off after just 25 minutes.

The Catalan club had initially hoped he had suffered a minor hamstring problem and would only be out for a few weeks, but tests at the club's training ground on Sunday revealed the worst case scenario.

"Tests have confirmed that first team player Ousmane Dembele has ruptured the tendon in his femoral bicep in his left thigh," Barca said in a statement.

"The player will be operated on by Dr. Sakari Orava in Finland this week. He is expected to be out for between three and a half months and four months."

After Neymar left for Paris Saint-Germain for €222 million, Barca used some of the money to sign Dembele from Borussia Dortmund, with the former Rennes forward replacing Luis Suarez as the club's most expensive



ever signing.

Barca paid an initial fee of €105m for Dembele, although that could eventually increase to €145m with add-ons.

Dembele made his debut for Barca as a substitute in last weekend's Catalan derby win over Espanyol, setting up the fifth goal for Luis Suarez.

Barca boss Ernesto Valverde then handed him his first start in the Champions League victory over Juventus in midweek.

However, after rupturing a tendon in his full La Liga debut at Getafe, he is unlikely to play for the club again until the New Year.

Barca, therefore, will be without him for the remainder of the Champions League group stages, while it is also likely he will miss the first league Clásico of the season against Real Madrid, which is scheduled for Dec. 23.

Dembele's injury represents an opportunity for another summer signing, Gerard Deulofeu, to stake his place for a regular first-team place.

Deulofeu re-joined Barca from Everton this summer for €12m and until the arrival of Dembele had been Valverde's preferred option in attack with Lionel Messi and Suarez.

Other options include Paco Alcacer, Denis Suarez and Arda Turan, who remains at the club after a move to Galatasaray fell through at the last minute earlier this month.

However, none of the alternative options offer the same pace and width as Dembele, which is something Valverde had stressed he was keen to add to the squad following the loss of Neymar to PSG in August.

(Source: ESPN)

Iran volleyball make history on world stage

S P O R T S Iran defeated France 3-2 (38-36, 25-23, 22-25, 25-27, 15-11) to earn their best ever finish at the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup, after finishing fifth in 2009 and fourth in 2013.

Igor Kolakovic's men recorded four victories in a single edition for the first time at the Osaka Municipal Central Gymnasium on Sunday.

Iran had five players that scored in double figures led by Ghafour, who finished with 24 points. Seyed Mohammed Mousavi Eraghi and Mohammadjavad Manavnezhad notched 20 and 19 points, then Milad Ebadipour and Saman Faezi added 12 points each.

France also had five double-digit scorers, led by Trevor Clevenot and Stephen Boyer, who made 25 and 21 points, respectively.

Iran and France had an intense duel in the opening set, which had to be decided with a two-point margin. Iran got better breaks and closed the set 38-36. The second set had another tight contest, but Iran still prevailed with the help of Ghafour and Manavnezhad. The French side retaliated with victories in the next two sets as Clevenot and Boyer persistently scored from the wings. Iran regained its composure and celebrated their bronze medal triumph with the victory in the fifth set.

"It was a very interesting and high-quality volleyball game. I'm so happy because we finished with a victory. After the game between the U.S. and Italy, we knew we already had the bronze medal, so I asked the players if they wanted to play or not. They told me they wanted to play to win because they wanted to finish the tournament with a victory. So that makes me happy," Kolakovic told fivb.org.

"We've had a lot of problems with injury and not much time for recovery. But we finished the year in the best way, for Iran and the Iranian people. This is very important because the people have supported the Iranian team and they deserve this medal as much as



the players. This first medal for Iran is very important, so this tournament win was important for Iranian volleyball. And it provides us with extra motivation for next season and for our young players," the Serbian coach added.

Brazil, the tournament's most decorated team, won

the title after defeating Japan 3-0. Italy also came second, beating the U.S. 3-1.

The competition brought six teams Iran, Japan, the U.S., France, Italy and Brazil together in Nagoya and Osaka, Japan from 12 to 17 September.

Iran compound women win gold at para worlds

S P O R T S Iran contested all three team gold medal finals on the last day in Beijing, and the women's compound open match between Iran and China, the first and second seeds, was spectacular.

China opened with a 59 to take a four point lead. But Iran then found their mark, and reeled off ends of 59, 57, and 58 to win by six points.

Incredibly, Iran beat China 229-223 and won the gold medal.

It was Iran's second gold medal in the competition



after Zahra Nemati claimed a gold medal in women's recurve on Saturday.

"This gold medal shows how much we are dedicated to our country and how much we love our country," Iran's Somayeh Abbaspour told worldarchery.org. "This was a dream for me and of course any athlete who wishes to win gold. It's amazing."

"The goal was to win a gold medal and we did. China was shooting well, but we kept shooting well too. Thank god everything was perfect and my teammates shot well. Thank god we won!"

Ex-Iran coach Stanko Poklepovic had his lower leg amputated



S P O R T S Former Iran national football team and Persepolis FC coach Stanko Poklepovic had his leg amputated from below the knee.

Poklepovic, 79, underwent the surgery at the hospital in Split, Croatia. "I am ok at the moment and I'll be back home soon," Poklepovic told Slobodna Dalmacija.

Poklepovic took charge of Iran national football team in 1994

and was named Persepolis coach in 1995 and won the back-to-back Azadegan League titles with the Iranian giants.

Stanko Poklepovic has also coached Iranian football clubs Sepahan and Damash.

Poklepovic is a Croatian football coach and former football player. He is mostly famous for managing Hajduk Split in four different occasions during his career.

Nazari Afshar bids farewell to Iran national volleyball team



S P O R T S Iranian outside hitter Farhad Nazari Afshar retired from national duty on the last day of the FIVB World Grand Champions Cup.

The 33-year-old player officially announced his retirement on Sunday in Osaka.

The tournament brought six teams in Nagoya and Osaka namely, Japan, Iran, the U.S., Brazil, Italy and France together from September 12 to 17.

Iran made history by winning their first ever medal after coming third in the tournament behind Brazil and Italy.

Nazari Afshar won the silver medal with Iran national team in the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou and claimed two AVC Cup gold medals in Nakhon Ratchasima (2008) and Urmia (2010).

"I think it's time to go. I helped the team whenever they needed me. We have a new generation of players who can develop," Nazari Afshar said.

Biggest worry about the U-17 Football World Cup is dodging India's traffic

As news broke that Iran have been drawn in Group C of the Fifa U-17 World Cup and will play all their group matches in Goa, head coach Abbas Chamanian couldn't help smiling.

He had a front-row seat at the draw ceremony in Mumbai and Iran's group destination, at least for Iran, couldn't have been better. After all, the Asian powerhouse spent three weeks in Goa during the AFC U-16 Championship last year, and had it not been for the lottery of the tiebreaker, would have returned home with the Trophy.

Iran eventually lost to Iraq in a nervy penalty shootout but still had the consolation of securing their place at the World Cup. Now, as Iran return to Goa, memories would keep flooding back with Chamanian hoping the end-result would be even better. "It's awesome to return to the same city where we spent 22 days.

We played six difficult and memorable matches at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (Fatorda) but now the situation at the World Cup will be different. We are trying to make the players realise that we will face stronger teams and the conditions will be different too. We feel returning to Goa is a good omen for us," the Iran head



coach told TOI in an exclusive interview.

There is no doubt, Iran enjoyed their stay in Goa, a "wonderful place", in the words of their coach. There is just one concern, though, and Chamanian hopes there can be an adequate solution before they set foot here again later this month. "Goa has great sports infrastructure but one of the most concerning points is traffic in India. We expect it to be re-considered and

solved during World Cup matches.

"India did its best during the AFC Championship and we do appreciate their efforts," said the coach. After failing to qualify for the first eight tournaments, Iran competed at their first U-17 World Cup at Trinidad and Tobago 2001 where they suffered three defeats and finished bottom of their group. Eight years later, the Asian side participated in Nigeria 2009, where they advanced from their pool but lost in the pre-quarterfinals.

They seemed in good form during the 2013 event in UAE but lost to eventual champions Nigeria.

This time around, Iran will fancy their chances of going far, even though have a tricky group to negotiate with teams like Germany, Costa Rica and Guinea all battling for the knockout slots.

"We have already watched videos of recent matches that Germany and Guinea played. I think all teams in our group are powerful and use different tactics," said the 53-year-old tactician who coached a number of clubs prior to being handed the reins of the Iranian U-20 national team in 2002.

(Source: India Times)

Iran fencing team win FIE Junior World Cup

S P O R T S Iran fencing team claimed the title of the FIE Junior World Cup in Tehran on Sunday.

The Iranian team defeated Belarus 45-43 at the Azadi Hall and lifted the trophy.

Iran defeated Germany 45-43 in the quarter-final and then advanced to the final match after beating Iraq 45-36.

In the bronze medal match, Italy beat Iraq 45-34.

Iran's Amirahmad Amini had already won a bronze medal at Men's Sabre Individual category.

Tehran FIE Junior World Cup, organized by the Fencing Federation of IRAN, in being held in the Iranian capital on 16-17 Sep 2017.



Messi unhappy with Luis Suarez: He has warned him - report

Lionel Messi is unhappy with Barcelona team-mate Luis Suarez and his poor form at the Nou Camp.

The Catalan club struggled to a 2-1 victory over Getafe in La Liga today but the Uruguayan failed to impress.

Strikes from Paulinho and Denis Suarez ensure the three points for Ernesto Valverde's side.

But Spanish outlet Don Balon say Messi is less than impressed with former Liverpool ace Suarez and the form he has shown so far this season.

The Argentine relies on those around him to give him the freedom to have an impact for Barca.

And the reports claim Messi has told Suarez the situation must change or there could be consequences.

Barca currently sit top of La Liga after winning all four of their games so far.

And Messi will no doubt hope Suarez improves his form and the Spanish giants can keep their run of good form going.

Last season they were beaten to the title by arch rivals Real Madrid and dumped out of the Champions League by Juventus.

Barcelona's next game is against Eibar in La Liga on Tuesday.

After that clash, they travel to Girona in the Spanish top flight next weekend.

(Source: Star)

Lewandowski brands Real Madrid rumors 'nonsense'

Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski has rubbished speculation he is determined to join Real Madrid.

A report in Spain on Friday claimed the Poland star is "obsessed" with a move to the Santiago Bernabeu and has already informed his agent to try to negotiate a move in 2018.

The rumors surfaced in the wake of an interview in which he criticized Bayern's transfer policy, prompting chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge to issue a public warning against any further such comments.

Lewandowski put talk of his future to one side with a clinical display in Bayern's 4-0 win over Mainz, scoring twice to take his tally to 82 goals in 100 Bundesliga appearances for the champions.

The 29-year-old promptly dismissed the Madrid rumors and hailed his side for their performance.

"I don't have to say anything to every bit of nonsense," he told the media.

He added of the win, in which Thomas Muller and Arjen Robben also scored: "We had a lot of room in which to maneuver and were very flexible going forward, which was really fun to play in.

"We were not static and created a lot of chances, which was why we won. We controlled the match from the first minute and scored four goals. Everything we had planned worked out.

"When we play with this flexibility, any team would struggle to keep up with us."

(Source: Four Four Two)

Hamilton wins in Singapore with Vettel out

SINGAPORE (Reuters) — Lewis Hamilton won the Singapore Grand Prix for Mercedes on Sunday to go 28 points clear at the top of the Formula One world championship after Ferrari rival Sebastian Vettel was caught in a first corner collision.

The Briton, fifth on the grid with Vettel lining up on pole position, cashed in on both the Ferraris and Red Bull's Max Verstappen smashing into each other within seconds of the start on a wet track.

The victory was the 60th of Hamilton's career -- third in Singapore and seventh in 14 races this season -- and took him a huge stride closer to a fourth world title with six rounds remaining.

It was also his third in a row after wins in Belgium and Italy and Hamilton set a lap record on his way to the chequered flag.

Australian Daniel Ricciardo finished second for Red Bull, for the third year in a row, with Hamilton's Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas the final man on the podium.

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Managing Director: Ali Asgari
Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Italian scholars published book on Iranian architecture

TEHRAN — Three Italian scholars have published their latest research on Iranian architecture in a book titled "Through Iran: Cities, Architecture, Landscapes" (Attraverso l'Iran. Città, architetture, paesaggi).



Front cover of "Attraverso l'Iran. Città, architetture, paesaggi"

Manfredi Edizioni in the Italian city Imola is the publisher of the book, which carries materials that Alessandra De Cesaris, Giorgio Di Giorgio and Laura Valeria Ferretti gathered about Iranian architecture during several trips to the country since 2010.

The book also provides a comparison of architecture in Iran's warm and cold regions.

The book also contains numerous photographs, sketches and drawings by the authors of Iran's various localities and landscapes.

"The Wolf of Wall Street" producer settles U.S. suit linked to Malaysian fund

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) — The movie company that made "The Wolf of Wall Street", and was co-founded by the Malaysian prime minister's step son, has settled a civil lawsuit brought by the U.S. government to seize assets allegedly bought with money stolen from a Malaysian state fund.

Red Granite Pictures announced the settlement in a filing at the federal Los Angeles court on Friday, without revealing any sum.

U.S. prosecutors, pursuing a kleptocracy asset recovery initiative, had claimed the 2013 film, directed by Martin Scorsese and starring Leonardo DiCaprio, was financed by Red Granite using funds stolen from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

"The parties are pleased to inform the court that Red Granite and the government have reached a settlement in principle," the filing stated.

Red Granite has said previously that neither it, or its co-founder Riza Aziz, had done anything wrong.

"We are glad to finally put this matter behind us and look forward to refocusing all of our attention back on our film business," Red Granite said in a statement.

The U.S. Justice Department has lodged dozens of lawsuits in the past two years related to the alleged misappropriation of \$4.5 billion from the investment fund, 1MDB.

The United States is seeking to seize some \$1.7 billion in assets, making it the largest action brought by the department under its kleptocracy asset recovery initiative.

The scandal has dogged Prime Minister Najib Razak, who had chaired 1MDB's advisory board until it was dismantled last year, but he has consistently denied any wrong doing related to the fund.

While Najib has not been the subject of any of the lawsuits, a number of his close associates, including step son Riza Aziz, have been named by U.S. investigators.

Both U.S. and Malaysian officials have confirmed however, that Najib is the "Malaysian Official Number 1" referred to in Federal Bureau of Investigation reports.

Red Granite Pictures provided no details of the settlement, which the filing said remains subject to final documentation and necessary approvals within the government.

The settlement also covers claims against Red Granite's rights and interests in two other pictures, "Daddy's Home" and "Dumb and Dumber To."

Potential witnesses in 1MDB cases are afraid to speak with U.S. investigators as they fear for their safety, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said earlier this month.

The U.S. lawsuits have also sought to seize a Picasso painting given to American movie star Leonardo DiCaprio and millions of dollars worth of jewelry give to Australian model and actress Miranda Kerr, all allegedly from 1MDB funds.

Najib met U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House earlier this week, but both leaders steered clear of addressing the American investigation into the 1MDB scandal.

Stage masters honored at Samandarian Awards

TEHRAN — Three members of the Iranian stage elites, Bahram Beizai, Mohammad Charmshir and Hamid Purazari, were honored at the 5th annual Samandarian Awards on Saturday.

The awards were established by the Samandarian Theater Academy in 2013 one year after the death of the veteran theater teacher and director Hamid Samandarian. The academy was founded by his son, Kaveh, and his widow, Homa Rusta who also died in 2015.

The San Francisco-based director/writer Beizai could not attend the awards ceremony held at Tehran's Iranshahr Theater Complex so his colleague Hamid Amjad received the award in his behalf from graphic designer Ebrahim Haqiqi.

"I don't know whether Hamid Samandarian would praise or reproach you for the kindness to me if he were alive, or Homa would be pleased or not over the compassion for me, if she were alive," Beizai wrote in a message that was read by Amjad onstage.

The veteran dramatist and theater teacher Charmshir received his award from Hossein Atefi. In his acceptance speech, he referred to Samandarian and Rusta as his teachers and thanked the academy for the award.

Director Purazari accepted his award from Mehdi Shafiei, the director of the Dramatic Arts Center who praised him for his concern about the promising newcomers to theater.

The ceremony went on with a screening of "The Master and Pupils", a documentary by Mohammad-Ali Sajjadi about Samandarian's behavior toward his students.

A troupe led by director Mahmudreza Rahimi also performed parts of "The Caucasian Chalk Circle", Bertolt Brecht's play that had been translated and staged by Samandarian in Iran.



This combination photo shows dramatist Mohammad Charmshir and director Hamid Purazari after being honored at the 5th annual Samandarian Awards at Tehran's Iranshahr Theater Complex on September 16, 2017. (ILNA/ISNA/Sahar Seifi/Borna Qasemi)

"The Servant" named best animation at San Diego horror filmfest



A scene from Farnush Abedi's animated movie "The Servant"

TEHRAN — "The Servant", the acclaimed short animation by Iranian director Farnush Abedi, has scored another triumph by winning the award for best animated film at the Horrible Imaginings Film Festival in San Diego, California, the organizers announced.

The film is about a servant who becomes a master and a bug becomes his servant. After a while, the man understands that he has begun a game that has no rules.

"The Servant" has been screened at many Iranian and international events and

won several awards from some of them.

The movie was selected as best animation at 19th Iran Cinema Celebration in Tehran last week. It also won an honorable mention at the Fresco International Film Festival in Yerevan, Armenia early September.

The Horrible Imaginings Film Festival, which was organized at the Museum of Photographic Arts from September 8 to 10, was founded in 2010 by Miguel Rodriguez to promote and spotlight exemplary new artistic voices in what is commonly known as the horror genre.

TMCA to host Chinese film festival



A poster for the Chinese Film Week at the TMCA

TEHRAN — The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA) will be organizing a festival of Chinese films during a six-day program that is scheduled to open at 5 p.m. today.

A lineup of six movies will be screened at the event titled "Chinese Film Week, the TMCA announced on Sunday.

"The Grandmaster" by Wong Kar-wai, "The Taking of Tiger Mountain" by Tsui Hark and "The Piano in a Factory"

by Meng Zhang are among the films. "Wong Totem" by Jean-Jacques Annaud, "Confucius" by Hu Mei and "Under the Hawthorn Tree" by Zhang Yimou will also go on screen.

The program has been organized in collaboration with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Tehran.

Chinese Ambassador Pang Sen and a number of Iranian cultural officials and artists are planning to attend the opening ceremony.

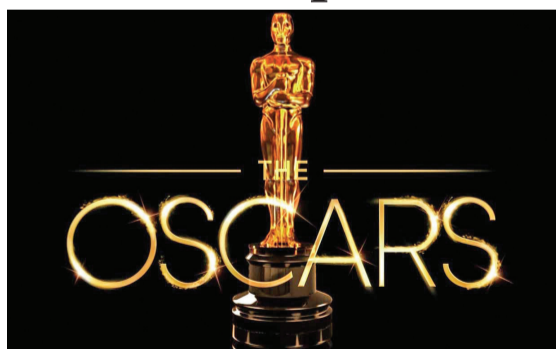
Iran appraising ten films to pick submission to Oscars

TEHRAN — A committee of nine cineastes is evaluating a shortlist of 10 films to select Iran's submission to the 90th Academy Awards for the best foreign-language film category.

Directors Sirus Alvand, Mohammad Bozorgnia, Kamal Tabrizi and Rasul Sadr-Ameli, actor Reza Kianian and musician Majid Entezami are among the members of the committee selected by Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation.

The shortlist includes Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian's acclaimed political drama "The Middy Event", which was crowned best film at the 35th Fajr Film Festival.

"The Villa Tenants" by Monir Qeidi, "Twenty-One Days Later" by Mohammadreza Kheradmandan and "Subdued" by Hamid Nematollah are among the films.



These movies also will represent Iranian cinema at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA).

Dr. Seuss company loses fight to block 'parody' of "Grinch"

NEW YORK (Reuters) — A New York playwright has convinced a federal judge that his new play is a parody of Dr. Seuss' classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" and that in this legal fight, he was in the right.

U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein in Manhattan on Friday ruled that Matthew Lombardo's "Who's Holiday!" transformed the "utopic" and "cheery" depictions in "Grinch" so completely that it qualified as a "parody" and "fair use."

Hellerstein rejected arguments by Dr. Seuss Enterprises LP that Lombardo's play infringed its copyrights to the late author's work.

"Who's Holiday!" was slated to open Off Broadway last November before its run was canceled.

Lombardo's lawyer Jordan Greenberg said his client intends for another production of "Who's Holiday" to begin running as soon as November.

"Everyone involved with the play is ecstatic, especially Mr. Lombardo," Greenberger said in an interview.

Lawyers for Dr. Seuss Enterprises did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"Grinch" is about a grouchy, cave-dwelling monster who decides to end Christmas, but has a change of heart after being interrupted by a little girl, Cindy Lou.

The Cindy Lou in "Who's Holiday!" is less endearing. She's a profane 45-year-old woman struggling with alcohol and substance abuse, and she spent time in prison for murdering the Grinch, who was once her husband and fathered her daughter.

Dr. Seuss Enterprises accused Lombardo of exploiting the characters and themes of "Grinch" because he was too lazy to try "working up something fresh."

"The Simpsons" actress finds her own voice "In Search for Fellini"

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — For most fans of "The Simpsons", the name Nancy Cartwright may ring a bell as the voice of 10-year-old troublemaker Bart Simpson over 28 seasons of the Fox animated show.

Now, the actress is hoping to establish her own voice by documenting a surreal adventure, "In Search of Fellini."

Cartwright, 59, co-wrote the new film, out in U.S. theaters this weekend, a mostly autobiographical tale of how her obsession with filmmaker Federico Fellini led to her own impromptu solo Italian adventure to find the elusive director.

"All the writers on 'The Simpsons,' they've created this legacy ... and to be a part of that has been such a privilege," Cartwright told Reuters.

"For me personally, I would like to be able to, as an artist, establish my own voice." "In Search of Fellini" follows Lucy, a young, naive girl living a sheltered life

with her mother in a small Midwestern American town until she undergoes a spiritual awakening watching Fellini's 1954's "La Strada" and goes to Italy.

The film traces Lucy's journey through idyllic highs, such as falling in love, and crippling lows, such as an encounter with an older, male stranger that quickly goes wrong quickly - a scenario that Cartwright said she lifted directly from her own experiences.

"As a writer, I thought it absolutely had to be in there. I couldn't hold onto something that had happened to me because I'm embarrassed to share that I was so naive or stupid," she said. Bringing the story to screen was a nearly 30-year effort, Cartwright said.

"I certainly didn't have the power back then that I have now, I didn't speak Italian, I didn't have connections that I have now worldwide, so it took a little bit of time for the physical world to catch up with Nancy's dream," she said.