



Despite Trump's criticism, world powers defend Iran nuclear accord **2**

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Iraqi troops recapture 20 villages in Kirkuk's Hawija **3**

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Iran signs deals with Danish, Austrian banks, breaking 15-year spell

Economic Desk

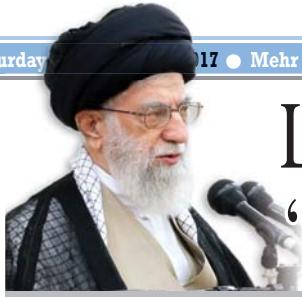
Iran broke the 15-year spell of not obtaining any finance from European banks by signing major deals with Austrian and Danish banks to secure funding for its development projects.

The contracts were signed in the Austrian capital of Vienna by an Iranian banking delegation which included representatives of 14 domestic banks headed by Mohammad Khazaee, the president of the Organization for Investment Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran. Deputy Head of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for Foreign Exchange Affairs Ahmad Araçhi was also a member of the delegation.

The first major finance deal worth €1 billion was signed on Thursday between Austria's Oberbank and a dozen Iranian banks. The Austrian bank thus became one of the first European financial institutions to break the ice in providing loans for Iranian projects following the removal of Western sanctions in early 2016.

Oberbank, Austria's seventh-biggest bank, with a balance sheet of roughly €20 billion (\$24 billion), signed the deal with 14 Iranian banks at its headquarters in Linz.

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Leader censures Trump's 'ugly' remarks against Iran at UN

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Iran vows to boost defense capabilities as it unveils new missile

Iran on Friday unveiled a new ballistic missile as it marked the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1980-1988 war waged by Iraq with nationwide military parades.

The missile, named Khorramshahr after a southwestern city, which became the symbol of resistance during the war, was showed off at a military parade in the capital Tehran, with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and senior military officials in attendance.

"The Khorramshahr missile has a range of 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) and can carry multiple warheads," IRNA quoted the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Commander General Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

"As it was observed, the missile has become smaller in size and more tactical and it will be operational in the near future," he told reporters on the sidelines of the parade.

Addressing the event, President Rouhani vowed Iran would boost its missile capabilities, adding that no country can stop the Islamic Republic from strengthening its defense programs.

"We will promote our defensive and military power as much as we deem necessary," Rouhani said. "Whether you like it or not, we are going to strengthen our military capabilities which are necessary for deterrence."

"We will strengthen not only our missiles but also our air, land and sea forces... When it comes to defending our country, we will ask nobody for permission."

He added that Iran's defense power has never been used for aggressive acts, while certain world powers export deadly weapons to the Middle East.

Rouhani slammed those who "create problems for the peoples of our region every day and boast of selling arms to the bloodthirsty Zionist regime which has been attacking the peoples of our region for 70 years like a cancerous tumor."

Iran, key regional player

The Iranian president said Tehran is playing a key role in restoring peace and stability to the region.

"The great nation of Iran has always pursued peace and security in the region and the world, and has always defended the oppressed peoples of the world. We will defend the downtrodden people of Yemen, Syria, and Palestine, whether you like it or not," he added.

Rouhani further slammed Washington and Tel Aviv's recent anti-Tehran statements before the UN General Assembly.

He said the US and Israel have isolated themselves by expressing opposition to the nuclear agreement, which is hailed by the entire world community as a win for international diplomacy.

Rouhani once again reiterated Iran's full commitment to the landmark 2015 nuclear accord with six world powers, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

He said the entire global community commended the deal, "except only two people," referring to US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who used their UN speeches to attack the JCPOA.

Iran FM: If US wants new nuclear concessions, we do, too

Iran's foreign minister rejected on Thursday any new negotiation with the United States over extending the length or conditions of the 2015 nuclear accord, saying that Iran would talk about changing the accord only if every concession it made — including giving up nuclear fuel — were reconsidered.

In an interview with The New York Times, Mohammad Javad Zarif said that would mean Iran would retake possession of the stockpile of nuclear fuel it shipped to Russia when the accord took effect.

"Are you prepared to return to us 10 tons of enriched uranium?" Zarif said of the relinquished stockpile — one of Iran's concessions — about 98 percent of the country's nuclear fuel holdings.

Under the agreement, Iran retains a limited amount of enriched uranium.

Zarif comments came a day after he conferred privately with counterparts from the six countries that negotiated the deal with Iran — Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States — on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York.

It was the first time Zarif had met with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has said the United States wants to "revisit" what he described as flaws in the accord even as he acknowledged Iran is abiding by its terms.

'Ill-informed' administration

Zarif, who negotiated details of the Iran accord with then US secretary of state John Kerry, dismissed the Trump administration as "seriously ill-informed" about the limits on Iran contained in the deal.

He described US President Donald Trump's speech to the United Nations on Tuesday, in which he called the nuclear accord a one-sided embarrassment to the United States that he may abandon, as "absurd."



What the administration really wanted, Zarif said, was to keep the Iranian concessions while trying to extract more from Iran — but with no new concessions from the United States or other parties.

"That kind of position, he said, contradicted the premise of any negotiated deal.

"By definition, a deal is not perfect, because in any deal you have to give and take," he said. "Otherwise you won't have a deal."

He further dismissed the idea of an addendum to the agreement to address the Trump administration's objections, an idea that American officials say has been floated within the administration as a possible diplomatic way forward.

"Why should we discuss an addendum?" Zarif said. "If you want to have an addendum, there has to be an addendum on everything."

Trump has strongly hinted he is prepared to "decertify" Iran's compliance with the deal, even while Tillerson, speaking to reporters after his encounter with Zarif on Wednesday evening, acknowledged that Iran is in "technical compliance."

Under an American law, a decertification would not terminate the deal, unless Congress voted to reimpose nuclear-related economic sanctions against Iran — which would violate the terms of the accord.

Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Tillerson contend that Iran has violated the "spirit" of the nuclear accord by continuing to sponsor groups that the United States regards as terrorist organizations, supporting President Bashar al-Assad in Syria and pursuing cyberattacks against its Arab neighbors and the United States.

War of words ratchets up between Kim, Trump

An escalating war of words between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un ratcheted up a notch on Friday as the US president dubbed North Korea's leader a "madman," a day after Pyongyang hinted it may explode a hydrogen bomb over the Pacific Ocean.

Hours earlier, Kim took aim at Trump, branding him "mentally deranged" and warning he would "pay dearly" for his threat to destroy North Korea if he challenged, uttered before the United Nations General Assembly, AFP reported.

The verbal clash came a day after Washington announced tougher sanctions aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile program, on the heels of a Trump speech in which he which he branded Kim "Rocket Man" and declared him to be on a "suicide mission."

"Kim Jong-un of North Korea, who is obviously a madman who doesn't mind starving or killing his people, will be tested like never before!" Trump posted early Friday in the first of a barrage of unrelated tweets.

Kim had delivered a tongue-lashing of his own — vowing to "surely and definitely tame the mentally deranged US dotard with fire," in an address read out on state television by a star news anchor before a still image of Kim at his desk.

Trump "insulted me and my country in front of the eyes of the world and made the most ferocious declaration of a war in history", Kim said, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

"I will make the man holding the prerogative of the supreme command in the US pay dearly for his speech."

Russia and China have both appealed for an end to the escalating rhetoric between Washington and Pyongyang.

On the fringes of the General Assembly, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho told reporters Pyongyang might now consider detonating a hydrogen bomb outside its territory.

"I think that it could be an H-bomb test at an unprecedented level perhaps over the Pacific," he said — while adding: "It is up to our leader so I do not know well."

Washington on Thursday authorized a tough new raft of sanctions in the latest effort to tighten the screws on Pyongyang over its banned weapons programs, following its sixth nuclear test — the largest yet — and the firing of two missiles over Japan in recent weeks.

Rohingya refugee camps on brink of 'health disaster'

Bangladesh's refugee camps are on the brink of a "public health disaster," Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned, saying filthy water and feces flow through shanties bursting with Rohingya Muslims who have fled violence in Myanmar.

Nearly 430,000 Rohingya have poured into Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar in under a month, seeking refuge from an armed-led crackdown across the border in Myanmar's Rakhine state, which the UN has described as "ethnic cleansing," AFP reported on Friday.

The weary and wounded arrivals have shocked the world with stories of Myanmar soldiers and Buddhist mobs driving them out of their homes with gunshots and arson attacks that have razed entire villages to ash.

While Bangladesh has offered sanctuary from the terror, there are dire shortages of nearly all forms of relief in what has become one of the world's largest refugee settlements in a matter of weeks.

MSF warned that a "massive scale-up of humanitarian aid is needed in Bangladesh to avoid a public health disaster."

"We are receiving adults every day on the cusp of

dying from dehydration," said Kate White, the group's emergency medical coordinator.

"That's very rare among adults, and signals that a public health emergency could be just around the corner."

There are no official roads into the slum-like settlements that have sprung up outside official camps, complicating aid delivery in the hilly, mud-slicked terrain.

"There is a complete absence of latrines," added White. "When you walk through the settlement, you have to wade through streams of dirty water and human feces."

With chaotic and patchy food distribution, many Rohingyas are only eating one meal of plain rice per day, she added.

'Safe zones' for Rohingya

Bangladesh's prime minister on Thursday proposed creating UN-supervised safe zones inside Myanmar to protect Rohingya Muslims. "These people must be able to return to their homeland in safety, security and dignity," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the UN General Assembly.



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Iranians staged rallies across the country after the Friday prayers to voice their anger at recent comments made by US President Donald Trump against the Islamic Republic.

Leader censures Trump's 'ugly' remarks against Iran at UN

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei censured US President Donald Trump's latest hostile comments against the Iranian nation at the UN as "ugly", "foolish" and "sheer lies."

Ayatollah Khamenei made the comments in a meeting with members of Iran's Assembly of Experts in Tehran on Thursday, Press TV reported.

The statements by the US president did not bring any pride to the American nation, said Ayatollah Khamenei. "The American elite should be ashamed of having such a president."

"That foolish, extremely ugly and hideous speech by the US president, with its gangster and cowboy language fraught with sheer lies, stems from their fury, frustration and lightheadedness," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that Washington's anger is also rooted in its failure to advance its agenda in the West Asia region, where Iran has played an influential, dignified and successful role.

"The presence and influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran caused the plots and intentions of the US and the Zionist regime [of Israel] to fail in all the three countries," emphasized the Leader. "But they faced defeat in all the three countries," emphasized the Leader. During his speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Trump accused Iran of engaging in "destabilizing activities" in the region. He claimed that Iran's "support for terror is in stark contrast to the recent commitments of many of its neighbors to fight terrorism and halt its financing."



as "an embarrassment" that Washington may abandon. However, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, during his own UN speech, fired back at the US president for his "ignorant and spiteful" comments against his nation.

Trump also denounced Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with the world powers

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Despite Trump's criticism, world powers defend Iran nuclear accord

Top diplomats from Germany, Russia, China and Italy insisted Thursday there can be no turning back on the Iran nuclear deal after President Donald Trump suggested that he may seek a renegotiation or simply walk away from the pact.

"How are we going to convince countries like North Korea that international agreements provide them with security – and in so doing make them commit to future disarmament efforts – if the only international example for such an endeavor being successful, the agreement with Iran, no longer has effect?" asked Germany's Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, addressing the UN General Assembly, A.P. reported.

Gabriel has warned that any US move to scrap Iran's nuclear deal would discourage other countries from going to the negotiating table to discuss their nuclear activities.

A collapse of the accord, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), would send a "terrible signal" for other diplomatic efforts, Gabriel also said on the sidelines of a UN meeting on Thursday.

"What should motivate countries like North Korea or others to enter into negotiations in the future when the one example of such a deal is being destroyed?" he asked.

"Now we will all try to convince the Americans in the remaining weeks... that calling the agreement into question will not increase security," he said.

The top German diplomat further noted that Iran was complying with the nuclear agreement. Italy's UN Ambassador Sebastiano Cardinali said after a Security Council meeting that the escalating situation with North Korea should serve as a cautionary tale for not abandoning the Iran deal.

Russia's top diplomat, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in his address, called the Iran deal one of the "more important factors of regional and international security" today, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also reiterated support. No agreement is perfect, he said, but if the accord is discarded, the entire non-proliferation system would suffer, the Xinhua news agency reported. The chorus of international support was countered by a succession of senior Trump aides who repeated the president's objections to the pact in television interviews on Thursday.

In his speech to the General Assembly on Tuesday, Trump called the accord "nothing short of an embarrassment" and the "worst one-sided deal perhaps in American history."

Iran has ruled out any renegotiation of the agreement and has said that any abandonment of the deal would lead it to immediately resume enrichment of uranium. Iran has also said it has no intention of ever acquiring nuclear weapons, but US and Israel are among the countries that do not accept those assurances.

'Deal is working'

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Wednesday had the highest-level encounter between the US and Iran during Trump's presidency, meeting and shaking hands with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The host of the meeting of parties to the agreement, EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, said all sides agreed that the deal was working.

Trump is obliged to certify to Congress by Oct. 15 if Iran is complying with the deal, and officials have said he may use that occasion to either declare Iran in violation or determine that the agreement is no longer in the US national security interest.

Tillerson hinted at the latter, saying Trump is "very, very carefully considering the decision of whether we find the [nuclear deal] to continue to serve the security interests of the American people or not."

In his General Assembly speech, German Foreign Minister Gabriel indirectly undercut Trump's philosophy of "America first" by devoting much of his time to the value of international cooperation and multilateralism.

"National egoism is worthless as a regulatory principle for our world," he said. "This world view describes the world as an arena, a kind of battleground, in which everyone is fighting against everyone else and in which everyone has to assert their own interests. ... In this world view, the law of the strongest prevails, not the strength of the law." He added: "We need more international cooperation and less national egoism, not the other way around."

Iran FM: If US wants...

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'Wrong signal'

Zarif said those complaints were all beyond the scope of the agreement struck in July of 2015, a position shared by other parties to the accord except the United States.

And the Iranian minister said that if the United States walked away from the accord, as Trump threatened, "Who would come and listen to you anymore?" With such a threat, he said, "The United States is sending the wrong signal."

Iranian officials seem to be betting that Trump, for all his criticism of the accord, will not blow it up. Washington has already run into resistance to any effort to reopen the terms, and Europeans have privately told the United States they will not reimpose nuclear sanctions on Iran even if the Americans do, undercutting any leverage Trump might hope to achieve.

Zarif said he was heartened that during a meeting of all the participants in the meeting on Wednesday evening at the United Nations Security Council, "everybody, with one exception, said this is a good deal." The "one" was a clear reference to Tillerson.

Turkey, Iran, Iraq consider countermeasures over Kurdish referendum

Turkey, Iran and Iraq agreed to consider countermeasures against Kurdish northern Iraq over a planned independence referendum, Turkey's Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of the three countries voiced concerns that the referendum would endanger the gains Iraq has made against Daesh, and reiterated their fears over the potential for new conflicts in the region, Reuters reported.

"In the meeting, the three ministers emphasized that the referendum will not be beneficial for the Kurds and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and agreed, in this regard, to consider taking countermeasures in coordination," the statement said.

The statement said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and their Iraqi counterpart, Ibrahim Jaafari, expressed concern that conflicts surfacing as a result of the referendum would "prove difficult to contain."



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (R), Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (C) and their Iraqi counterpart, Ibrahim Jaafari pose for a photo in New York.

The statement gave no details on the possible measures but said the ministers, who were in New York attending the United Nations General Assembly, called on the international community to intervene.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to impose sanc-

tions against Kurdish northern Iraq. Turkish troops are also carrying out military exercises near the border.

The central government in Baghdad, Iraq's neighbors and Western powers fear the vote could divide the country and spark a wider regional conflict, after Arabs and Kurds cooperated to dislodge Daesh terrorists from its stronghold in Mosul.

The three ministers also voiced their "strong commitment" to maintain Iraq's territorial and political unity, the Turkish Foreign Ministry's statement said.

Turkey, which has pulled a cabinet meeting and National Security Council session forward to Friday over the referendum, will also convene Parliament for an extraordinary meeting on Saturday, the chairman of the ruling AK Party's parliamentary group said on Thursday.

Authorities in Iraq's Kurdish region have announced that the northern territory will hold the independence referendum on September 25.

On Monday, Iraq's top court ordered the suspension of the Kurdistan Regional Government's referendum on independence. The Supreme Court's ruling calls for all preparations for the planned vote to be halted, following a review of multiple "requests to stop the referendum."

General Soleimani:

Daesh to be destroyed in two months

A senior general with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said the Daesh terror group will be uprooted in two months.

The countries fighting Daesh will in two months celebrate its collapse, said Major General Qassem Soleimani, who commands the IRGC's Quds Force, the IRIB reported on Thursday, Press TV wrote.

"Iran, Russia, Syria, and Iraq should hold this celebration," said the general at a ceremony held in memory of an Iranian military adviser martyred in Syria.

The commander also slammed the US for its inaction in the face of Daesh terror activities and said Washington "has made no move to eradicate" the terror outfit.

"How can an administration, which created Daesh itself, claim to have played a noticeable role in fighting the outfit?" asked the senior general. "The US defeat in the region is rooted in the lack of a wise leadership and having ig-

norant rulers." In recent months, the Iraqi and Syrian armies have been dealing heavy blows to Daesh, ridding the terror group of its main strongholds in the neighboring Arab countries.

At Baghdad and Damascus' respective requests, Iran has been providing military advisory support to the countries' militaries in their counterterrorism operations.

Russia has also been providing the Damascus government with military assistance in the face of terrorists.

Soleimani also said there are three reasons why Iran is standing by Syria in the fight against terrorism.

Firstly, he said, the terrorists "consider killing us to be an imperative."

Consequently, diplomacy in such circumstances does not respond and the only way is to fight them, he added.

Secondly, the general said, the terrorists seek to use Iraq and

Syria as a bridge leading to Iran, noting, "We could not sit around to see Iraq and Syria fall, and then they reach us."

And thirdly, the Islamic Republic has to defend itself against the enemy's goal of obliterating its independence and existence, the commander added.

On June 7, Daesh gunmen mounted almost simultaneous assaults on Iran's Parliament and the mausoleum of the late Founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini. The twin attacks killed 17 people and injured over 15 more.

In response, the IRGC fired six ballistic missiles into Daesh bases in the eastern Syrian province of Deir ez-Zor later in June, leaving at least 65 terrorists dead.

In August, General Soleimani said Iranian forces would not rest until they have taken out every last terrorist from the face of the Muslim world after Daesh reportedly beheaded an Iranian military adviser in Syria.



Residents left homeless by Mexico's deadliest earthquake in a generation gathered in a tent village in the south of the capital on Friday, as the death toll climbed to 286 and signs of exhaustion gripped rescuers three days after the tremor.

Iraqi troops recapture 20 villages in Kirkuk's Hawija

Iraqi joint troops have managed to recapture 20 villages from the Daesh terrorist group's grip, in Hawija, Kirkuk, concluding the first phase of the offensive, military said.

"Federal Police, Rapid Response, army brigades and Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces), liberated 20 villages in Hawija," Lt. Gen. Abdul Amir Yarallah, commander of Hawija Operations, said on Thursday, iraqinews.com reported.

According to Yarallah, Iraqi troops managed to conclude the first phase of operations, which started early on Thursday.

During a joint press conference with Ryan Dillon, spokesman of the US-led coalition against Daesh, on Thursday, Brig. Gen.

Yahia Kasouli, spokesman of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said the number of Daesh members in Hawija falls between 800 and 1,500.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi and Lt. Gen. Abdul Amir Yarallah, deputy commander of the Joint Operations Command Thursday announced the launch of first phase of operations to liberate Hawija and western Shirqat. Several villages in Shirqat have been retaken.



Hawija and other neighboring regions, west of Kirkuk, have been held

by Daesh since mid-2014.

Other offensives were launched ear-

lier this week at the group's havens in western Anbar's borders with Syria.

AFP

Britain's May calls for post-Brexit transition in single market

Prime Minister Theresa May called on Friday for Britain to stay in the European Union's single market during a roughly two-year transition out of the EU while offering concessions on a divorce deal as she appealed for a revival of Brexit negotiations.

In a speech in a 14th century church in Florence, May spent much of the speech drawing on the similar values of Britain and the rest of the EU. She said if the complicated talks to unravel more than 40 years of union should fail, the only beneficiaries would be those who oppose democracy, liberalism and free trade, Reuters reported.

But her concessions on her vision for a two-year transition period on Britain's current membership terms, final financial settlement and legal protection of EU citizens rights when Britan leaves in March 2019 may still fall short of what the EU said was needed to move the negotiations forward.

The pound weakened about half-a-penny against the euro and three-quarters of a cent against the dollar during her speech, underlining the sensitivity of the talks to markets and firms, some of which fear Britain could crash out of the bloc without a deal.

"For while the UK's departure from the EU is inevitably a difficult process, it is in all of our interests for our negotiations to succeed," she told an audience of Italian business leaders and diplomats.

"If we were to fail, or be divided, the only beneficiaries would be those who reject our values and oppose our interests."

Her words were aimed at unlocking the first phase of negotiations with the EU, all but stalled over one of the most symbolically important questions: how much will it cost Britain, in hard cash, to end its EU membership in March 2019?



REUTERS

Since triggering the divorce process, May has repeatedly said that Britain would honor its obligations but has also been under pressure from pro-Brexit supporters in her Conservative Party to reduce the bill or even bring it down to zero.

Britain desperately wants to move the talks forward and start addressing how a future relationship with the EU would work, a move May's government says is vital if they want to find agreement on the divorce settlement.

But the EU has stood firm, refusing to discuss trading arrangements until "sufficient progress" had been made on the first three issues — the financial settlement, the border with EU member Ireland and the protection of expatriates' rights.

Over a dozen dead after Hurricane Maria pummels Puerto Rico



AFP

Puerto Rico was on Friday battling dangerous flooding after Hurricane Maria ravaged the island, as the death toll there jumped to 13 and authorities rescued nearly 700 people from high waters.

Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rossello called Maria the most devastating storm in a century after it destroyed the US territory's electricity and telecommunications infrastructure, AFP reported.

"Part of the island is lacking communications so what we have are some preliminary assessments about 13 deaths at this juncture," he told CNN early Friday.

"We're 24 hours post-hurricane warning and right now our efforts are to make sure we have everybody safe, that we can rescue people. Our efforts have already produced almost 700 rescues so we're clearly focused on that."

The National Hurricane Center said some areas in Puerto Rico could see 40 inches (more than a meter) of rain from Maria, and Rossello warned of dangerous mudslides brought on by the deluge.

"We have a lot of flooding,

we have reports of complete devastation of vulnerable housing. Of course it's still raining over here."

Maria was blamed for at least 33 deaths, including 15 in Dominica, three in Haiti and two in Guadeloupe.

"Puerto Rico is absolutely obliterated," US President Donald Trump told reporters on Thursday after declaring the territory of 3.4 million people a disaster area, a move that will free up emergency relief funding.

"Puerto Rico is in a very, very tough shape," he said.

The torrential rain had turned some roads into muddy brown rivers, impassable to all but the largest of vehicles.

Topped trees, street signs and power cables were strewn across roads that were also littered with debris.

"We all lived through the worst night of our lives, but Puerto Ricans have great inner strength," said Iris Rivera, 53, in San Juan.

"Everyone is helping by cleaning up, directing traffic and supporting their neighbors."

As of early Friday, Maria

was a Category Three hurricane with winds of 125 miles per hour (205 kilometers per hour), churning in the sea some 35 miles east of Grand Turk Island in the Turks and Caicos.

Heavy rains and high winds began hitting the archipelago, a British territory, on Thursday afternoon.

The government opened new shelters after several buildings which had been used during Hurricane Irma earlier this month were damaged and authorities feared they might not hold up under another fierce storm.

In the Dominican Republic, the heavy rains triggered flooding as rivers overflowed their banks.

High winds downed trees and electrical pylons, and 140,000 people were left without power, the government said. Some 17,000 have been evacuated from their homes.

Ricardo Ramos, who heads Puerto Rico's electricity board, said it could take months before power is fully restored on the island.

"The system... has been totally destroyed," he said of the electricity grid.

France's Macron enacts contested labor reforms

President Emmanuel Macron on Friday signed sweeping changes to France's complex labor code into law, ramming through a landmark reform four months into his administration despite protests from hardline unions.

"The reform... constitutes an unprecedented transformation of our social model (and) the economic functioning of our country," the 39-year-old Macron said, adding that it had been "carried out in record time", AFP reported.



REUTERS

The measures are designed to give employers more flexibility to negotiate pay and conditions with their workers while making it easier and less costly to shed staff.

Macron signed the reform, contained in five executive orders, seated at his desk in the Elysee Palace before television cameras in a US-inspired novelty for a French president.

The overhaul, eagerly awaited by the business community and France's EU partners, was fast-tracked via executive orders as a way of avoiding a prolonged debate in parliament.

The measures chip into worker protections that have long been sacrosanct in France, frustrating reform-minded governments whether on the left or the right.

But Macron insisted Friday that the reform contained "new rights and new protections", such as a provision for higher payouts to workers made redundant.

Three months of negotiations with union leaders produced a split between those willing to compromise — the CFTD and FO — and those determined to fight the reforms, led by the largest and most militant union, the CGT.

But the resistance has been weaker than that faced by Macron's Socialist predecessor Francois Hollande over his more limited changes to the labor code, which sparked a wave of sometimes violent protests last year.

On Thursday, some 132,000 people demonstrated across France, just over half the numbers who took part last week in the first major protests to challenge Macron since his election in May.

The CGT has vowed to continue to combat his reforms, while radical left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon wants to get tens of thousands into the streets on Saturday.

Melenchon, the head of the France Unbowed party, has led opposition to the measures, occupying ground vacated by the traditional left and right parties, which have been eclipsed by Macron's centrist Republic on the Move.

Protesters have seized upon his recent criticism of opponents to the labor market changes as "slackers", with slogans such as "Watch out, Macron, the slackers are in the street".

Rohingya refugee camps...

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Hasina accused Myanmar authorities of laying landmines on the border to prevent the Rohingyas from returning and said the United Nations must take immediate measures to find a solution to the crisis.

The prime minister laid out a five-point plan that called for the protection of the Rohingyas in "safe zones that could be created inside Myanmar under UN supervision."

Bangladeshi troops were deployed this week to build more toilets and shelters for thousands still sleeping out in the open despite regular monsoon rains.

On Friday the UN's Refugee Agency said it was speeding up the distribution of plastic sheeting to provide basic protection from the elements as authorities work on erecting a new 2,000-acre shelter.

The camps are "bursting at the seams and, yes, there are risks of diseases, so that is why the extension is so crucial," said UNHCR spokesman Andrej Maheic.

The potential of an infectious disease outbreak is "very high," according to MSF, citing the rapid population increase and low vaccination coverage among the Rohingyas, who lived in impoverished conditions in Myanmar.

"One small event could lead to an outbreak that may be the tipping point between a crisis and a catastrophe," said MSF emergency coordinator, Robert Ouse.

The humanitarian emergency has heaped global pressure on Myanmar's government to halt military operations in Rakhine state, which was once home to a 1.1-million-strong Rohingya population.

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SPECIAL NEWS

Domestic Economy Desk

Petrobras keen on Caspian Sea oil exploration

Brazil voiced interest in conducting exploration activities for hydrocarbon reserves in the Iranian sector of the Caspian Sea.

This was announced by Brazil's Ambassador Rodrigo de Azeredo Santos in a meeting with Yousef Etemadi, the acting managing director of Iran's Khazar Exploration and Production Company (KEPCO), Press TV reported.



pressstv.com

Santos underlined that Brazil's Petrobras was ready to cooperate with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and its subsidiary companies such as KEPCO in undertaking exploration operations in the Caspian Sea.

He further stated that this would be in line with discussions held by Brazil's Energy Minister Fernando Coelho Filho and Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh during the former's recent visit to Tehran.

Speaking at the same meeting, Etemadi said KEPCO had been able to obtain extensive experience in studying the hydrocarbon prospects in the Caspian Sea, but would nonetheless appreciate the opportunity to cooperate with global energy corporations in finding oil and gas reserves in the sea.

He also highlighted that KEPCO was satisfied with earlier instances of cooperation with Petrobras.

The Brazilian state company was involved in the exploration of Iran's Tusan block in the Persian Gulf. However, it announced in 2009 that the project was not economically feasible.

It had also won a deal from the NIOC to look for oil and gas reserves in a block in the Caspian Sea but declared — again in 2009 — that it would not begin the exploration operations.

This was because, as Reuters reported, the block it had targeted "appeared to hold mostly natural gas, rather than oil, in an area that did not have the necessary infrastructure for gas production".

Iran envoy: IP gas pipeline indispensable to CPEC

Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline can play a vital role in meeting the energy requirements of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan.

Speaking at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Islamabad, Mehdi Honaridou further said that Iran, which has one of the largest gas reserves in the world, could become an indispensable asset for the CPEC, IRNA reported.

Iran's gas resources, he pointed out, will be available for 400 years and Pakistan continues to be Tehran's principal gas exports target.

Commenting on CPEC, the Iranian ambassador said that the Chinese initiative should not be seen only as a trade or business venture.

It will be "change the destiny" of the entire region, he added. "Iran has already done its part in extending the pipeline to the Pakistani border and we are looking forward to Pakistan to complete its part as soon as possible to serve its own national interests," Honaridou said.

The ambassador noted that Iran and Pakistan were historically and culturally one nation, having several commonalities in their concerns as well as interests.

He underlined that the two nations should be working together in areas such as trade, energy, regional peace as such cooperation will only be mutually beneficial.

Ambassador (ret'd) Khalid Mehmood, chairman of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISS) who also served as an envoy in Iran, said that Pakistan and Iran have stood by each other in difficult times.

"There have been some ups and downs in their association at times but the essential relationship between the two countries has always remained intact," he said.

"Like China, Pakistan's relations with Iran is also time-tested," he remarked.

Under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) many infrastructure projects are under construction throughout Pakistan.

Originally valued at \$46 billion, the value of CPEC projects is now worth \$62 billion.

The project will link Pakistani Gwadar port to China's Xinjiang Province.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have already expressed desire to join the connectivity project.

Iran signs deals with Danish, Austrian banks, breaking 15-year spell



President of the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran Mohammad Khazaei (C) at the signing ceremony of a finance deal worth €500 million with representatives (R) of Denmark's Danske Bank in Vienna on September 21, 2017.



President of the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran Mohammad Khazaei (2nd L) and Oberbank's Chief Executive Franz Gasselsberger (2nd R) attend a press conference following the signing of a major finance deal between 14 Iranian banks and the Austrian bank in Vienna on September 21, 2017.

From Page 1

The move was groundbreaking particularly given that many banks — mainly those from Europe — are still standing away from Iran's funding prospects over fears that they may fall afoul of remaining US sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Officials in Tehran are hoping that this would set the stage for similar moves by other European banks in the near future.

The Iranian signatories included veteran private banks such as Parsian Bank, Saman Bank, Eqtasad Novin Bank, Bank Paragad, Karafarin Bank and the newly established Middle East Bank. Others were former state banks that were privatized over the past few years such as Bank Mellat, Bank Sepah, Tejarat Bank, Bank of Industry and Mine, Export Development Bank of Iran, Refah Bank and Keshavarzi Bank.

The agreement which envisages a funding ceiling of €1 billion covers projects by Austrian companies in Iran's production and development projects lasting more than two years.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Oberbank's Chief Executive Franz Gasselsberger said, "Today was a great day in the two countries' relations as this was the first finance deal between a European bank and the Islamic

Republic of Iran. Although the negotiations on the deal took long for several months, the outcome was quite favorable and satisfying for both sides."

He added the contract will prepare the ground for Austrian companies and industries in different sectors, particularly health and infrastructure, to invest in Iranian projects and export products and modern technologies to the Middle Eastern state.

"In case on some day in the future, we look back at this day, we will realize that this contract has served as a turning point for the two sides to deepen their relations."

Gasselsberger said Iran's economy, in addition to those in Austria and other European countries, is extremely attractive for the entire world as the Middle Eastern state has a hardworking and smart young generation that can create great opportunities for their own country and other nations.

"There must be a win-win situation for Iran and international companies. Nevertheless, we should not forget about political aspects."

Earlier in September, Gasselsberger told Reuters that the agreement covered projects by Austrian companies in areas that were previously under sanctions.

"We have very concrete projects in the fields of infrastructure, rail, health, hospi-

tal construction, factory building, photovoltaics, hydro power," he had stressed.

Export credit guarantees covering 99 percent of a project's volume will be provided by the Oesterreichische Kontrollbank, the main Austrian body that issues them, Reuters added.

"The sticking point was obtaining an additional guarantee from the Iran," Gasselsberger said. "We negotiated with the Iranian central bank but the guarantee is evidently coming from the Iranian Finance Ministry."

Deal with Denmark's Danske

The other finance contract, very similar to the one with the Austrian bank, was also signed on Thursday, between the Iranian team and Denmark's Danske Bank.

The deal is worth €800 million and sees 10 Iranian banks on the receiving end. Following the contract the Danish bank became the second European lender to ink such an agreement with Iran.

The Iranian signatories to the agreement were Saman Bank, Bank Mellat, Tejarat Bank, Bank Mellat, Bank of Industry and Mine, Bank Sepah, Bank Pasargad, Eqtasad Novin Bank, Keshavarzi Bank, and Parsian Bank.

They will act as the agent banks, providing civil projects in Iran with the Danish fund, according to an announcement

by the website of the Central Bank of Iran.

Danske Bank, founded in 1871 and headquartered in Copenhagen, is the largest bank in Denmark and a major retail bank in the northern European region with over five million retail customers. It was number 454 on the Fortune Global 500 list for 2011.

MoU on infrastructural projects

In addition, the Iranian delegation also signed an MoU late on Thursday with the EKF Bank of Denmark to finance infrastructural projects in Iran.

The memo will make it possible to finance Iranian projects in various sectors later.

The deals with Oberbank and Danske came on the heels of a similar move between China's CITIC Group and a consortium of Iranian banks to provide loans worth a collective of \$10 billion for the country's infrastructure projects.

Iran had also in late August secured an €8-billion credit line from South Korea's Eximbank — what was seen as the country's biggest loan deal since the removal of sanctions against it in early 2016.

Accordingly, officials in Seoul said the deal would finance projects in Iran by companies from South Korea.

AFZ CEO: Iran interested in helping Armenia set up southern free zone



Armenian Minister of Economic Development and Investment Suren Karayan (L) speaks to an IRIB reporter while Managing Director of Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization Mohsen Khadem Arab-Baqi (R) listens.



Managing Director of Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization Mohsen Khadem Arab-Baqi (4th L) accompanies a visiting Armenian delegation headed by Minister of Economic Development and Investment Suren Karayan (6th L) in a tour to a factory in Aras Free Zone in the northwestern Iranian province of East Azarbaijan.

Domestic Economy Desk

Iran is willing to cooperate with Armenia in establishing Meghri free trade zone in southern Armenia and share its experiences with the Armenians in implementing the project, said the managing director of Aras Free Trade-Industrial Zone Organization.

Mohsen Khadem Arab-Baqi made the remarks in a meeting with a visiting Armenian delegation, headed by Minister of Economic Development and Investment Suren Karayan in the northwestern Iranian province of East Azarbaijan, to explore ways to develop

Aras and Meghri free zones, according to a fax sent to Iran Daily.

He said Aras Free Zone (AFZ) has several years of experience in important fields, particularly establishing the infrastructure to guarantee success and facilitate attraction of investments.

Creating Meghri free zone will prepare the ground for Iran and Armenia to expand economic cooperation, Arab-Baqi added.

He noted that increased cooperation between the two zones will lay the groundwork for greater presence of Iranian products in Eurasian states and will encourage economic interactions

between Iran and Armenia.

Arab-Baqi stressed that Meghri free zone will soon be launched in the light of the efficient economic team which is responsible for its establishment.

Addressing the same meeting, the Armenian minister said interprovincial relations and those between the two countries' free zones are of importance to Yerevan.

Karayan said Iran is a very important neighbor to Armenia. "I believe that collaboration between the two free zones will benefit both countries."

tries with common borders will provide the opportunity to foster regional and international economic collaborations and carry out a larger number of trade activities in the region and world.

"Cooperation between AFZ and Meghri free zone will help the two countries make what is impossible, possible. We are obliged that an active and development-oriented free zone is located in the proximity of Armenia."

The Armenian minister added his country plans to expand cooperation with Iran in industry, trade and tourism sectors.

UK banks tasked with clamping down on illegal immigrants



Banks and building societies across the UK have been tasked with carrying out checks on all current account holders starting in January next year, as the government ramps up efforts to create a hostile environment for illegal immigrants.

A spokesperson for the Home Office said that the system was part of its ongoing work to tackle illegal migration and is intended to be "fair to people who are here legally, but firm with those who break the rules", independent.co.uk wrote.

"Everyone in society can play their part

in tackling illegal migration."

It falls under the Immigration Act of last year and will target people who have overstayed their visas, those who have not been granted asylum and foreign national offenders who are facing deportation.

Anyone who is identified as an illegal migrant will be denied access to banking services, making it harder for them to live in the UK.

It is estimated that there more than 65 million personal current accounts currently being used across the UK and the Home Office said that it estimates around

6,000 accounts would be identified in the first year.

The system, first reported by The Guardian, is likely to be criticized by welfare campaigners in light of the Home Office's recent record of targeting migrants who have a right to be in Britain.

The Independent reported last month that the Home Office had mistakenly informed approximately 100 people that they are to be deported from the UK.

A letter, informing recipients that they were "liable to be detained", was issued in error, it emerged.

Under the Immigration Act 2014, status checks are required by anyone wanting to open a current account with a bank or building society.

Analysis of official government data shows there were 26 percent more enforced removals of EU nationals in the first three months of this year than during the same period last year.

Almost 5,000 EU citizens have been deported from Britain in the last 12 months, which marks the highest since current records began and an increase of 14 percent in the last year alone.

IMF says BoJ should maintain stimulus

The Bank of Japan (BoJ) should maintain its massive monetary stimulus and enhance its communication of how it expects to achieve its two percent inflation target, a senior IMF official said on Friday.

Odd Per Brekk, the International Monetary Fund's mission chief for Japan, said the BoJ will likely lag behind the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank in normalizing monetary policy, Reuters reported.



"But we think this is appropriate, as monetary policy is focused on domestic conditions and domestic conditions are different among countries and regions," he said in a seminar.

Brekke said the BoJ decision last year to shift to a policy targeting interest rates rather than the pace of money printing has made its stimulus program more sustainable.

"The de-emphasizing of the quantitative element... is a good move," he said. "The BoJ bond purchases have tapered off to an (annual) pace of around 50-60 trillion yen (\$446-536 billion). This is fine."

Brekke also said a gradual, steady increase in Japan's sales tax, coupled with steps to curb social security spending, is the most growth-friendly way to achieve medium-term fiscal reform.

"We are worried about the two percentage point increase" in the sales tax scheduled in 2019, because the previous hike in 2014 led to an economic downturn, Brekke said.

"A better strategy is to pre-commit to a smaller but gradual rise of 0.5 percent or one percent each year, until the (tax rate) level reaches around 15 percent," he said, repeating a recommendation the IMF made in annual Article 4 consultations.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to proceed with a sales tax hike to 10 percent from eight percent in 2019, although some of his aides have suggested the government may postpone the increase again for fear of killing off a budding economic recovery.

Abe is expected to call a snap election as early as next month. Sources say that to lure voters, he will pledge to use part of revenues from the scheduled tax hike to boost spending on education and child care, instead of using the bulk for social security costs and repaying debt.

China's small banks face funding crunch

China's small banks are struggling to raise funds through short-term instruments as a regulatory squeeze combines with tight liquidity ahead of the quarter-end and Golden Week holiday.

With few options for funding, some banks have returned to issuing negotiable certificates of deposit (NCDs), a form of non-collateralized short-term funding that regulators have tried to discourage in their battle against speculative financing, Reuters wrote.



The premium paid by lower-rated Chinese banks over higher-rated ones for NCDs spiked last week, highlighting risks to the country's smaller lenders. The spread between three-month AAA- and AA-rated NCDs hit 51 basis points, the highest on record.

While the spread has narrowed, analysts say it points to a trend of higher financing costs for weaker lenders.

"What you see there is a reflection of the fact that (small banks) are forced to seek more expensive liquidity," said Alicia Garcia-Herrero, Asia Pacific chief economist at Natixis. "No matter how much they chase for new markets, they will always be penalized."

A trader at an asset-management firm in Shanghai said tight liquidity reflects ongoing central bank efforts to reduce leverage combined with looming quarter-end tax bills.

Adding to the pressure is the week-long National Day holiday starting on October 1, and NCDs worth 2.3 trillion yuan that have been maturing this month following a surge in issuance in June.

Wall Street's top regulator came under fire on Thursday over its cyber security and disclosure practices after admitting hackers had breached its database of corporate announcements in 2016 and may have used it for insider trading.

The breach involved the US Securities and Exchange Commission's EDGAR filing system, which houses market-moving information with millions of filings ranging from quarterly earnings to statements on acquisitions, Reuters reported.

The SEC said on Wednesday evening it discovered in August that cyber criminals might have used a hack detected in 2016 to make illicit trades.

On Wednesday afternoon, SEC Chairman Jay Clayton gave members of Congress a "courtesy call" about the hack before it was announced publicly, said Representative Bill Huizenga, chairman of the US House subcommittee that oversees the SEC, in a phone call.

"It's hugely problematic and we've got to be serious about how we protect that information as a regulator," Huizenga said.

The SEC disclosure came



two weeks after credit-reporting company Equifax Inc. said a breach had exposed sensitive personal data up to 143 million US customers. This followed last year's cyber attack on SWIFT, the global bank messaging system.

It is particularly embarrassing for the SEC and its new

boss Clayton, who has made tackling cyber crime one of the top enforcement issues.

"The chairman obviously recognizes the irony of the SEC potentially serving as the unwitting tipper in an insider trading scheme," said John Reed Stark, president of a cyber consulting firm and a former SEC staff

member.

The SEC said it was investigating the source of the hack but did not say exactly when it happened or what sort of non-public data was retrieved. The agency said the attackers had exploited a weakness in a part of the EDGAR system and it had 'promptly' fixed it.

Most reports filed with the SEC "generally don't contain super-sensitive information", and any insider trading would have taken place soon after company filings were made but before they were released to the public, said Gary LaBranche, president of National Investor Relations Institute.

"People are shocked and disappointed," LaBranche said.

Members of the institute, who work with 1,600 publicly traded companies, will be examining their trading reports for any unusual activity that could be tied to disclosures, he said.

The SEC did not respond when asked about that review or whether it triggered the disclosure. But Clayton said in his Wednesday statement that he began reviewing the agency's cyber risk in May.

SEC Commissioners did not learn of the breach until recently. In a statement, Republican SEC Commissioner Mike Piowor, who for part of 2017 also served as acting chairman, said he was "recently informed for the first time that an intrusion occurred in 2016".

Energy-rich Norway leaves key policy rate unchanged

For Norway, one of the main suppliers of oil and natural gas in the European economy, there's a need for expansionary monetary policies, its central bank said.

Norge Bank, the country's central bank, said it was leaving its key policy rate unchanged at 0.5 percent. Inflation, meanwhile, should stay below 2.5 percent during the next few years, according to UPI.

"There is a continued need for an expansionary monetary policy," the bank said Thursday.

The bank's decision was the first since Prime Minister Erna Solberg secured another term in office following elections earlier this month. Her Conservative Party lost three seats in the 169-seat Parliament and is expected to sit down to form a new coalition with the majority Labor Party, the Progress Party, which holds 27 seats, and Christian Democrats, which hold eight seats. Solberg's party holds 45 seats.

The Norwegian Oil and Gas Association said four of

the largest parties — Labor, Conservative, Progress and Center — are pro-industry and will ensure stability for the energy sector. Spokesman Tommy Hansen said Solberg wasn't expected to make any changes that would impact the oil and gas industry, though she's been a vocal supporter of the need to advance a low-carbon economy.

Apart from Russia, Norway is one of the leading energy suppliers to the European economy, designating nearly all of its offshore production for exports. The National Petroleum Directorate reported preliminary figures for August were lower than expected, though declines were likely the result of seasonal factors. Total discovered and potential resources are up more than 40 percent since 1990. With 50 years behind it, the NPD estimated Norway is not yet at the halfway point as a producer.

The central bank said it was optimistic about the overall energy sector because oil price futures were



edging higher in the third quarter, while non-oil business investments were expected to improve.

"Higher imports among trading partners will boost exports from Norway," the report read.

Major Currencies			
Currency	To USD	Currency	To USD
Turkish Lira	0.2846	Chinese Yuan	0.1517
Euro	1.1993	UAE Dirham	0.2722
British Pound	1.3589	Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3158
Australian Dollar	0.7949	Iraqi Dinar	0.0008
Japanese 100 Yen	0.0089	Saudi Riyal	0.2666

Major Commodities			
Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Crude Oil	\$50.70	Silver	\$17.03
Gold	\$1300.10	Platinum	\$958.90
Copper	\$2.96	Wheat	\$454.75

Turkey eyes 2018 Ozone Protection Award

Having been awarded the Regional Ozone Network for Europe and Central Asia's Ozone Layer Protection Medal of Honor in 2012, 2014 and 2016, Turkey now has its eyes on winning the UN Environment Program (UNEP) medal for the fourth time.



ytlimg.com

The Medal of Honor is presented to selected countries that have implemented successful practices to stop ozone depletion, dailysabah.com wrote.

Having partnered with Montreal on ozone protection since 1991, Turkey has implemented strict quota measures on the exports of substances that are harmful to the ozone, in adherence with the protocol which was designed to reduce the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances in order to reduce their presence in the atmosphere, thereby protecting the Earth's fragile ozone layer.

The largest hole in the Earth's ozone, on record, measured roughly 30 million square kilometers in 2006. The Montreal Protocol was signed by 197 countries in 1989 and by Turkey in 1991. The protocol is designed to allow countries to respond quickly to new scientific information and form agreements on the acceleration of chemical reduction measures. It has been regarded as one of the most successful international environment agreements so far.

Turkey's Minister of Environment and Urbanization Mehmet Ozhasaki said: "The Earth's climate is changing rapidly and this issue cannot be solved without taking action on a global level. It is possible to reduce the effects of climate change with the precautionary measures we are taking today. We will continue to pursue policies and practices that protect the planet Earth and Turkey's bright future."

Small farmers in Amazon region seek sustainability



MARIO OSAVA/IPS

The deforestation caused by the expansion of livestock farming and soy monoculture appears unstoppable in the Amazon rainforest in the west-central Brazilian state of Mato Grosso. But small-scale farmers are trying to reverse that trend.

Alison Oliveira is a product of the invasion by a wave of farmers from the south, lured by vast, cheap land in the Amazon region when the 1964-1985 military dictatorship aggressively promoted the occupation of the rainforest, IPS reported.

"I was born in 1984, but my

grandfather came from Paraná (a southern state) and bought about 16 hectares, which are currently divided between three families: my father's, my brother's and mine," Oliveira said, while milking his cows in a barn that is small but mechanized.

"Milk is our main source of income: today we have 14 cows, 10 of which are giving milk," he explained. "I also make cheese the way my grandfather taught me, and I sell it to hotels and restaurants, for twice the price of the milk."

But what distinguishes his farm, 17km from Alta Floresta,

a city of about 50,000 people in northern Mato Grosso, is its mode of production, which involves an agroforestry system that combines crops and trees, irrigated pastureland, an organic garden and free-range egg-laying chickens.

Because of its sustainable agriculture system, the farm is used as a model in an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) program, and is visited by students and other interested people.

Oliveira's wife, 34-year-old Marceley Federici da Silva, said, "We want more: A biodigester, solar power and rural tourism, when we have the money to make the

investments."

The couple discovered their vocation for sustainable farming after living for 10 years in Sinop, which with its 135,000 people is the most populated city in northern Mato Grosso, and which owes its prosperity to soy crops for export.

"Raising two small children in the city is harder," she said, also attributing their return to the countryside to Olhos de Agua, a project promoted by the municipal government of Alta Floresta to reforest and restore the headwaters of rivers on small rural properties.

The financial viability of the

farm owes a great deal to the support received from the non-governmental Ouro Verde Institute (IOV), which in addition to providing technical assistance, created a mechanism for on-line sales, creating links between farmers and consumers, Oliveira pointed out.

Zootechnician Cirio Custodio da Silva, marketing consultant for the IOV, explained that the Solidarity-Based Marketing System (Siscos), launched in 2008, is an on-line market that allows direct interaction between 30 farmers and over 500 registered customers.

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و کمیته‌های خارجی نیازمندیم

Thirty minutes of exercise secret to living longer



huffingtonpost.com

Thirty minutes of exercise five times a week could save millions of Britons from dying early, research has found.

A brisk walk, a workout in the gym or tackling the household chores all have the same positive effect, experts.co.uk reported.

The life-lengthening effects of brisk activity are confirmed in a new study of 130,000 people which found the more exercise they did, the lower their risk of heading for an early grave.

It found short, regular bouts of exercise, in whatever form, has the potential to prevent one-in-twelve deaths, Dr. Scott Lear, of Simon Fraser University in Canada, who carried out the study, said, "Meeting physical activity guidelines by walking for as little as 30 minutes most days of the week has a substantial benefit and higher physical activity is associated with even lower risks."

"Physical activity represents a low-cost approach to

preventing cardiovascular disease and our study provides robust evidence to support public health interventions to increase all forms."

The findings of the global study were last night welcomed by British experts who declared exercise more powerful than any pill or medicine.

It comes a month after Public Health England revealed physical inactivity among adults now contributes to one in six deaths in the UK and costs the National Health Service (NHS) more than £900 million a year.

The Canadian study said that achieving this modest figure would slash deaths by eight percent and cardiovascular illness by almost five percent, or one in 20 cases.

Scientists tracked participants aged between 35 and 70 from 17 countries between 2003 and 2010.

They provided information on lifestyle, medical history, weight, height and blood pressure.

They also completed a questionnaire on the types of physical activity they undertook in a typical week.

Results showed 3.8 percent developed cardiovascular disease, compared to 5.1 percent of people who did not.

Risk of death was also higher for people who did not meet the recommended amount of activity — 6.4 percent compared to 4.2 percent.

Overall, almost a fifth of people in the study failed to manage this but almost half or 44 percent were highly active.

The study, published in *The Lancet*, found there was no ceiling on the benefit of exercise, and no risks associated with extremely high levels, considered to be more than 2,500 minutes a week.

John Martin, professor of cardiovascular medicine at University College London, said, "Walking is easy and cheap."

"This study should encourage governments to rebalance health budgets away from high tech treatment of heart disease to promoting simple strategies of prevention like walking."

New antibody attacks 99% of HIV strains

Scientists have engineered an antibody that attacks 99 percent of HIV strains and can prevent infection in primates.

It is built to attack three critical parts of the virus — making it harder for HIV to resist its effects, according to BBC.

The work is a collaboration between the US National Institutes of Health and the pharmaceutical company Sanofi.

The International Aids Society said it was an "exciting breakthrough". Human trials will start in 2018 to see if it can prevent or treat infection.

Our bodies struggle to fight HIV because of the virus' incredible ability to mutate and change its appearance.

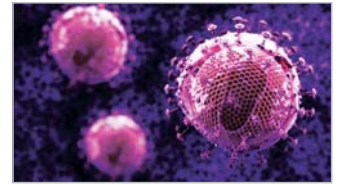
There varieties of HIV — or strains — in a single patient are comparable to those of influenza during a worldwide flu season.

So the immune system finds itself in a fight against an insurmountable number of strains of HIV.

But after years of infection, a small number of patients develop powerful weapons called 'broadly neutralizing antibodies' that attack something fundamental to HIV and can kill large swathes of HIV strains.

Researchers have been trying to use broadly neutralizing antibodies as a way to treat HIV, or prevent infection in the first place.

The study, published in the journal *Science*, combines three such antibodies into an even more powerful 'tri-specific antibody'.



BBC

Dr. Gary Nabel, the chief scientific officer at Sanofi and one of the report authors, said, "They are more potent and have greater breadth than any single naturally occurring antibody that's been discovered."

The best naturally occurring antibodies will target 90 percent of HIV strains.

"We're getting 99 percent coverage, and getting coverage at very low concentrations of the antibody."

Experiments on 24 monkeys showed none of those given the tri-specific antibody developed an infection when they were later injected with the virus.

Nabel said, "It was quite an impressive degree of protection."

The work included scientists at Harvard Medical School, The Scripps Research Institute, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Clinical trials to test the antibody in people will start next year.

Prof. Linda-Gail Bekker, the president of the International Aids Society, said, "This paper reported an exciting breakthrough."

"These super-engineered antibodies seem to go beyond the natural and could have more applications than we have imagined to date."

"It's early days yet, and as a scientist I look forward to seeing the first trials get off the ground in 2018."

"As a doctor in Africa, I feel the urgency to confirm these findings in humans as soon as possible."

Weekly steroid doses promote muscle repair



alghadirhospital.com

Weekly doses of glucocorticoid steroids such as prednisone help speed recovery in muscle injuries, a study of Northwestern University (NU) found.

The study, conducted in mice with implications for humans, also found that the weekly steroids help repair muscles damaged by muscular dystrophy, news.xinhuanet.com wrote.

In the study, normal mice with a muscle injury received steroids just before injury and for two weeks after the injury.

Mice receiving two weekly doses of steroids after the injury performed better on treadmill testing and had stronger muscle than mice receiving a placebo.

Researchers also tested the drug in

a mouse model of muscular dystrophy, since prednisone is normally given for this disease.

Mice with muscular dystrophy that received weekly prednisone were stronger and performed better on the treadmill than those getting a placebo.

Lead investigator Elizabeth McNally, genetic medicine professor at NU Feinberg School of Medicine and a Northwestern Medicine physician, said, "We don't have human data yet, but these findings strongly suggest some alternative ways of giving a very commonly used drug in a manner that doesn't harm, but in fact helps muscle."

Currently, a major problem of

using steroids such as prednisone is they cause muscle wasting and weakness when taken long term and on a daily basis, which is a significant problem for people who take steroids for many chronic conditions, and often results in patients having to stop steroid treatments.

McNally said, "It's been known that long-term daily treatment with prednisone also has the side effect of causing muscle wasting in many people."

Then the study showed weekly doses, rather than daily ones, promote muscle repair.

The study has been published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

Researchers halt brain cancer growth with absence of protein

Researchers at Stanford University reported in a new study that the growth of specific aggressive brain tumors was stopped by cutting off access to a signaling molecule.

The tumors, called high-grade gliomas, are a group of deadly brain cancers that include adult glioblastoma, anaplastic oligodendroglioma, pediatric glioblastoma and pediatric diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, or DIPG, UPI wrote.

New treatments are vital since five-year survival rates the tumors are 60 percent for anaplastic oligodendroglioma, roughly 10 percent for adult and pediatric glioblastoma and nonexistent for DIPG.

The study, published in *Nature*, shows that high-grade gliomas stopped growing in mice when a signaling molecule, neuropilin-3, was absent or the molecule's activity was blocked by drugs.

Dr. Michelle Monje, an assistant professor of neurology, said, "We thought

that when we put glioma cells into a mouse brain that was neuropilin-3 deficient, that might decrease tumor growth to some measurable extent."

"What we found was really startling to us: For several months, these brain tumors simply didn't grow."

"The findings suggested that interrupting the neuropilin-3 signal could be a helpful strategy for controlling high-grade gliomas in human patients."

Researchers examined mice that were genetically engineered to lack neuropilin-3 and had nearly normal brain function.

Once the mice were implanted with any of the forms of human high-grade glioma, the cancer cells could not proliferate and the tumor growth was halted for several months.

Monje said, "Lack of neuropilin-3 doesn't kill the cancer cells; the cells that are there remain there, but they do not grow."

"However, four and a half months

after implantation, tumors in some mice circumvented their dependency on neuropilin-3 and began to grow again."

Researchers conducted follow-up testing to examine the cell signals involved in neuropilin-3's role in the division of glioma cells.

They found that neuropilin-3 activates multiple cancer promoting signaling pathways and increases the expression of genes involved in cell proliferation, promotion of malignancy, function of potassium channels and synapse function.

She said, "We have a really clear path forward for therapy; we are in the process of working with the company that owns the clinically characterized compound in an effort to bring it to a clinical trial for brain tumor patients."

"We will have to attack these tumors from many different angles to cure them. Any measurable extension of life and improvement of quality of life is a real win for these patients."

Amendment			
1396/2889			
Iranian Offshore Oil Company (Private Joint Stock)			
As per publication of announcement about Drilling Fluids Services Tenders, item 1 of table is modified as below:			
Item	Subject	Tender No.	Amount of Bid Bond
1	Drilling fluids services in Siri and Qeshm Districts	099/95/01	Rials 14,976,800,000 or Euro 434,841

Public Relations Department of Iranian Offshore Oil Company

National Iranian Oil Company (Private Joint Stock)

INVITATION TO PUBLIC TENDER (Pre-Qualification)

Chartering of One Fast Crew Boat

First Announcement
Permit No: 1396.2834
Tender No: 98/059/01

Iranian Offshore Oil Company (IOOC) intends to open Pre-Qualification for above tender with the following conditions:

Scope of work:
Chartering of One Fast Crew Boat location: IOOC Oil Fields in Persian Gulf
Performance Period: Two Years
Other items that shall be considered:

- Ability of submission of Bid Bond as in the amount of Iranian Rial 3,692,295,600 or Euro 409,028.00
- Ability of submission of 10 percent of total Contract Price value as performance guarantee in case of winning according to company's procedure.
- Proposals should be submitted with no condition, incomplete, ambiguous or adverse of package specification in deadline.
- Company shall reserve the right to accept or reject any or all of proposals or part(s) thereof without giving any reason or explanation whatsoever.
- The validity of the submitted financial proposals shall be three months from the Closing Date that can be extended for one further period.

For invitation to above tender, it is necessary to achieve the determinate minimum score in the Pre-qualification. Bidders, who have ability and are willing to participate in the Pre-qualification, are requested to submit a written request to Contract Department, within One Week from Second Announcement through a representative and collect the Pre-Qualification Forms.

Closing Date for submission of the Pre-Qualification documents shall be up to 14 days after the deadline of collecting Pre-Qualification documents. Place and time of submission and opening of proposals will be stated in Tender Documents.

Address for those willing to participate and submit Pre-qualification Documents is as follows: Fifth Floor, #12, Touraj St., Khakzad St., Vah-e Asr Ave. Between Bala Mosque and Modares Crossroad, Tehran, Iran, Tel: +9821-23942510

Note: Additional information is available at IOOC website address: www.iooc.co.ir on the day of Second Announcement

Public Relations Department of Iranian Offshore Oil Company

Scientists have observed, for the first time, a jellyfish in a sleep-like state. It's the first time an animal without a brain has been observed sleeping.

Feeling crabby: Plant-eating dinosaurs snacked on crustaceans

Some plant-eating dinosaurs apparently liked a side order of crabs to go with their usual salad.

Scientists said fossilized dung thought to have come from herbivorous duck-billed dinosaurs that inhabited southern Utah 75 million years ago contained pieces of crustacean shells along with vestiges of vegetation, Reuters.com reported.



Reuters.com

University of Colorado paleontologist Karen Chin, who led the research published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, said, "The discovery provides the strongest evidence to date that some large herbivorous dinosaurs sometimes strayed from a purely vegetarian diet."

"This was a very exciting discovery, precisely because it was so unexpected."

Fossilized dung, called coprolites, offers insight into the diet of extinct creatures that cannot be gleaned by merely studying teeth, jaws and skeletons.

Ten coprolites from Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument contained crustacean shells mixed with rotted coniferous wood.

Chin said, "For at least part of the year these duck-billed dinosaurs may have munched on rotting logs because they contained stores of crustaceans and other invertebrates."

"The researchers do not know precisely what types of crustaceans were eaten by the dinosaurs, but it was possible they were crabs."

"A variety of crustaceans also including crayfish and pillbugs are known to shelter in the moist environments of rotting logs. The crustaceans were at least 5cm long."

"Rotting wood and fungal tissues would have offered useful nutritional compounds such as cellulose and fiber, and the crustaceans would have provided good sources of protein and calcium."

"Protein is an important component of animal diets, and is particularly important when animals are breeding."

The researchers think eating crustaceans may have been a seasonal dietary change linked to breeding and egg-laying.

Some birds, the evolutionary descendants of dinosaurs, consume more protein and calcium during breeding season.

Duck-billed dinosaurs, also called hadrosaurs, earned their name because the front of their skull resembles a duck's bill.

They also possessed beaks and specialized teeth for grinding plant material, and are believed to have roamed the landscape in herds.

Two hadrosaurs that lived in the area at the time were: *Parasaurolophus*, roughly 10 meters long with a long tubular head crest; and *Gryposaurus*, about 12 meters long with an arched nasal crest.

Hadrosaurs were common in western North America and other parts of the world during the Cretaceous Period, representing an important plant-eating group alongside armored dinosaurs and horned dinosaurs.

World's first 'molecular robot' can build molecules

Scientists have constructed a robot capable of building molecules — the world's first 'molecular robot'.

The nanoscale robots can use a tiny robotic arm to move and build molecules, UPI wrote.

The molecular robot works by triggering chemical reactions in specially designed solutions.

Eventually, the robot could carry out medical missions or work on chemical assembly lines.

David Leigh, a professor of chemistry at the University of Manchester in England, said, "Our robot is literally a molecular robot constructed of atoms just like you can build a very simple robot out of Lego bricks."

"The robot then responds to a series of simple commands that are programmed with chemical inputs by a scientist."

Leigh likens the robot's production methods to a machine on an automobile assembly line, picking up a panel and riveting it into place.

Leigh added, "Just like the robot in the factory, our molecular version can be programmed to position and rivet components in different ways to build different products, just on a much smaller scale at a molecular level."

One of the benefits of the new robot is its size. The molecular robot can help reduce material waste in various production processes.

Researchers said it could also help



An artistic rendering imagines a robotic arm manipulating a molecule.

UPI

speed up the drug discovery process. Smaller robots can also operate with improved energy efficiency and build smaller products.

Researchers described their breakthrough robot in the journal *Nature*.

Leigh added, "Our aim is to design and make the smallest machines possible."

"This is just the start but we anticipate that within 10 to 20 years

molecular robots will begin to be used to build molecules and materials on assembly lines in molecular factories."

Though the construction process is complex, the molecular robot is built the same way it builds new molecules, through a series of precisely controlled chemical reactions and the steady assemblage of atoms and smaller molecules into bigger

molecules.

Leigh added, "It is the same sort of process scientists use to make medicines and plastics from simple chemical building blocks."

"Then, once the nano-robots have been constructed, they are operated by scientists by adding chemical inputs which tell the robots what to do and when, just like a computer program."

Sleep deprivation is effective anti-depressant for nearly half of depressed patients

Sleep deprivation — typically administered in controlled, inpatient settings — rapidly induces symptoms of depression in roughly half of depression patients, according to the first meta-analysis on the subject in nearly 30 years, from researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine at the

Psychiatry.

Although total sleep deprivation or partial sleep deprivation can produce clinical improvement in depression symptoms within 24 hours, antidepressants are the most common treatment for depression.

Such drugs typically take

for roughly 40-60 percent of individuals, yet this response rate has not been analyzed to obtain a more precise percentage since 1990 despite more than 75 studies since then on the subject.

Study senior author Philip Gehrman, PhD, an associate professor of Psychiatry and

administered."

Reviewing more than 2,000 studies, the team pulled data from a final group of 66 studies executed over a 36 year period to determine how response may be affected by the type and timing of sleep deprivation performed (total vs early or late partial sleep deprivation), the clinical sample (having depressive or manic episodes, or a combination of both), medication status, and age and gender of the sample.

They also explored how response to sleep deprivation may differ across studies according to how 'response' is defined in each study.

Lead author Elaine Boland, PhD, a clinical associate and research psychologist at the Cpl. Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center, said, "These studies in our analysis show that sleep deprivation is effective for many populations."

"Regardless of how the response was quantified, how the sleep deprivation was delivered, or the type of depression the subject was experiencing, we found a nearly equivalent response rate."

The authors note that further research is needed to identify precisely how sleep deprivation causes rapid and significant reductions in depression severity.

Also, future studies are needed to include a more comprehensive assessment of potential predictors of treatment outcome to identify those patients most likely to benefit from sleep deprivation.

University of Pennsylvania. Partial sleep deprivation (sleep for three to four hours followed by forced wakefulness for 20-21 hours) was equally as effective as total sleep deprivation (being deprived of sleep for 36 hours), and medication did not appear to significantly influence these results, sciencedaily.com wrote.

The results are published in the *Journal of Clinical*

weeks or longer to experience results, yet 16.7 percent of 242 million US adults filled one or more prescriptions for psychiatric drugs in 2013.

The findings of this meta-analysis hope to provide relief for the estimated 16.1 million adults who experience a major depressive episode in 2014.

member of the Penn Sleep Center, said, "More than 30 years since the discovery of the antidepressant effects of sleep deprivation, we still do not have an effective grasp on precisely how effective the treatment is and how to achieve the best clinical results."

"Our analysis precisely reported how effective sleep deprivation is and in which populations it should be

Neanderthal brains 'grew more slowly'

A new study found that Neanderthal brains developed more slowly than ours.

An analysis of a Neanderthal child's skeleton suggested that its brain was still developing at a time when the brains of modern human children are fully formed, according to bbc.com.

This is further evidence that this now extinct human was not more brutish and primitive than our species.

The research has been published in the journal *Nature*.

Until now it had been thought

He said, "It was a surprise. When we started the study we were expecting something similar to the previous studies."

Rosas and his team believe they are right and the previous studies are wrong because for the first time they were able to study a relatively complete skeleton of a child at a crucial stage in their development.

It was of a boy who was nearly seven-and-a-half years old when he died found in the 49,000-year-old site of El Sidrón, in Spain.

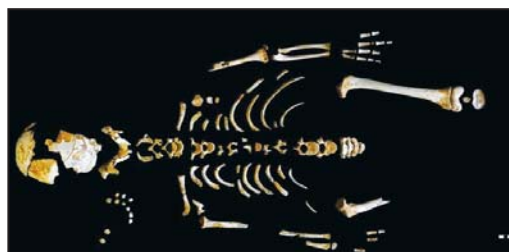
The boy's remains are excep-

finding shows that Neanderthals were similar to us.

"The British primitive picture of Neanderthals is an old one. In the last few years there has been growing evidence to suggest that they were a human species with some small differences."

"Now we can say that the way their growth pattern is similar to ours too."

The finding raises the intriguing possibility that the Neanderthals' slightly slower brain development may mean that their brains may



bbc.com

The skeleton of a boy that shattered researchers' view of Neanderthal brain development.

that we were the only species whose brains develop slowly.

Unlike other apes and more primitive humans modern humans have an extended period of childhood lasting several years. This is because it takes time and energy to develop our large brain.

Previous studies of Neanderthal remains indicated that they developed more quickly than modern humans — suggesting that their brains might be less sophisticated.

But a team led by Prof. Antonio Rosas of the Museum of Natural Sciences in Madrid found that if anything, Neanderthal brains may develop more slowly than ours.

tionally well-preserved and include a mix of baby and adult teeth, which enabled the team to accurately determine his age.

This brain is estimated to have been 87.5 percent of the size of an average adult Neanderthal brain upon death, whereas a modern human child the same age would have on average a brain that was 95 percent the size of an adult.

The researchers also found that reveals that some of the small bones forming the boy's back bone were not fused. In modern humans, these bones tend to fuse by the time children reach the age of six.

According to Rosas, the

have been more advanced than ours. But Rosas prefers a more precise interpretation.

"Neanderthals have a larger brain and larger body and so it is logical to think that the brain of the Neanderthal continues to grow for a little longer to allow their brains and bodies to get to their adult size."

Before this finding scientists believed that modern humans were the slowest growing species.

Now we know that Neanderthals took slightly longer, suggesting that both species inherited this growth pattern from a now extinct common ancestor.

Experts: UK faces 'winter of discontent'

The UK is facing a new 'winter of discontent', experts have warned, as a record number of low-income families are driven into poverty.

A major report from the University of Birmingham's School of Social Policy suggested the poorest households in Britain are set to be 'crushed completely', with financial challenges having seen reliance on additional support such as food banks soar to unprecedented levels across the country, independent.co.uk reported.

With rising inflation brought about by the Brexit vote's impact on the pound having further reduced levels of real pay and placed more strain on household budgets, the report warned that millions are still struggling to make ends meet.

It reveals that many people who have tried their best to work and save since the global financial crisis have barely returned to the situation they were in nearly a decade ago, with a sharp rise in the number of people who said they would be unable to find £200 to meet a one-off expense.

One in five Britons believe they are now more likely to lose their jobs, the findings show — a pessimism researchers attribute in part to fresh uncertainty brought on by the UK's imminent departure from the EU.

The study found that almost half of those surveyed (46 percent) believed the outcome of June's General Election would make their household's economic situation worse, while 35 percent believed the result of the poll would make no difference to their financial fortunes and just 6 percent thought they would benefit over the next 12 months.

The report's coauthor, Professor Karen Rowlingson, of the University of Birmingham's Center on Household Assets and Savings Management, warned that unless there are changes, the UK would fall into a 'winter of discontent' akin to that in the Seventies, which saw widespread strikes by trade unions demanding larger pay rises.

"Things have definitely got tougher. Five years ago the situation was improving for some people, but in the past two or three years, as we can see from all sorts of data, things have clearly taken a turn for the worse," she said.

"Unless things change, the outlook for a lot of people appears very challenging — so much so that we could be about to enter a new winter of discontent."

"Since the global financial crisis many people have done their best to work and save — yet today, after nine years of lost growth, they're maybe only back where they started."

"If the current state of play continues then the people in the 'squeezed middle' could be more squeezed than ever — and the people at the very bottom may well be crushed completely."



caribflame.com

The report, which is released annually and has come to be widely regarded as the foremost source of information and insight on financial inclusion in the UK, acknowledges several positive trends, including falls in unemployment, insolvencies and mortgage possessions and a rise in workplace-based pensions.

But it highlights many more negatives, including declining wages and savings rates, rising levels of personal debt and higher inflation placing greater strain on family budgets.

As a result of these and other factors, the report's authors said more households are facing a 'real struggle' to make ends meet and cover one-off expenses.

More than one in five people (22 percent) were living in poor, low-income households last year — a rise on the 21 percent figure in 2013-2014. Of these, more than half (55 percent) of those in working families are now living in poverty — marking a record high.

With this rise in poverty, there has been a dramatic increase in demand for emergency food and support, with food bank provider the Trussell Trust providing three-day emergency food and support to more than 1.2 million people in the past year, compared with just over 61,000 in 2010-2011.

The so-called 'poverty premium', which forces the poorest members of society to pay more for goods and services than those who are able to pay upfront, remains

a key issue.

Professor Rowlingson, a professor of social policy, also warned that the universal credit system of benefit payments could prove 'catastrophic' to debt levels if implemented as planned.

"We can clearly see from the latest available data that the people at the bottom are being pushed further down, and benefit changes are only likely to make that even worse," she said.

Report coauthor Professor Stephen McKay, a distinguished Professor of Social Research at the University of Lincoln, warned that the gap between the richest and poorest in society was growing, with others being 'squeezed' in the middle.

The authors are now calling for the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Pensions and Financial Inclusion Guy Opperman to formulate a new strategy to improve levels of financial inclusion.

The latest figures show that more than 1.5 million adults in the UK personally lacked access to a bank account in 2015-2016, with the savings ratio falling to a new low in 2016 at 3.3 percent, compared to 11.5 percent in 2010.

In 2017, more than one in five (21 percent) of people said they would need to borrow money to meet a one-off expense of £200, while 11 percent said they would not be able to meet this expense.

Why don't all women get C-sections?

Childbirth is one of the most painful experiences a human can endure. As the baby's head — 11.4cm in diameter on average — passes through the vagina it can tear the perineal area, and afterwards the opening can become drier and looser.

So, why don't all women opt to have a caesarean birth, or a C-section, where the baby is delivered from the womb in an opening in the abdomen? On paper, the procedure seems less painful and risky than vaginal childbirth, independent.co.uk wrote.

Alice Jones, a 32-year-old civil servant from South Wales and a spokeswoman for the pregnancy resource Emma's Diary, gave birth to her five-month-old son via c-section.

As a petite size six standing at 4ft 10in, she was nervous about the prospect of giving birth vaginally.

"I had a lot of anxiety about childbirth in general as a first time mum and read so much information about sections," she said. When scans showed that her baby was in a breech position, where they are positioned feet first, she was booked in for a section at 41 weeks.

"I was relieved as I really didn't want to try and go natural knowing that I had a small pelvis and a large baby for my frame. I didn't want a traumatic birth and it gave me terrible anxiety at the thought of it!"

Jones added, "I would definitely have another section. It was such a calm experience. I could organize and prepare myself beforehand and knew exactly what was happening. The staff were amazing and although it was painful at first it was a quick recovery. I avoided possible complications and I am so pleased to be able to say I had a lovely birthing experience."



independent.co.uk

"My scar is neat, I have no numbness, I have no pouch or overhang people talk about and I was back to normal by three to four weeks."

Nevertheless, Jones said that she wouldn't recommend all women to have C-sections.

"I think if your body and mind can cope with a natural delivery then that should be the first option," she said.

Experts chime with Jones' view. "Like walking and breathing, pregnancy, labor, birth and infant feeding have evolved over millennia to ensure the best possible survival and health of humans as a species," explained Professor Soo Downe OBE, professor in midwifery studies at the University of Central Lancashire.

"Because of this, giving birth naturally usually results in healthy, happy babies and mothers."

"There are certain circumstances in which a caesarean delivery is safer for the mother such as in the case of a placenta previa as labor followed by a trial of vaginal birth could lead to life threatening hemorrhage," said Ilona Goldfarb, MD, an obstetrician for high-risk pregnancies at Massachusetts General Hospital.

And as was the case with Jones, babies who are breech at term are at less risk of harm if they are delivered via c-section. However, women are generally up and out of bed the same day after a vaginal birth, don't require strong pain killers, and can care for themselves and their infant more easily. Caesareans also put mothers at increased risk of deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism in rare cases. Complications in subsequent pregnancies include uterine rupture, where the old scar on the uterus tears open.

"Labor and birth are complex dynamic processes that have evolved not only to ensure the physical birth of the baby, but also to prime the mother and baby for their lives after the birth. This includes priming the mother for breastfeeding, and through the stress of labor, priming the baby for life outside the womb," said Downe.

For the baby, caesarean delivery, compared with vaginal birth, is associated with an increased risk of respiratory problems at birth.

Claire Gibson, a 33-year-old child development office based in Glasgow suffered accidental nerve damage following her c-section, and said she would have preferred a natural birth.

"I went through seven hours of labor and got to 9cm dilated when the baby's heart rate dropped. They took a scrape from his head to determine his stress levels and he was in distress so I had to have an emergency C-section. Now I have nerve damage and loss of sensation down my left leg to just above my knee obstetrician says I probably won't get worse but might not get better either."

"I think you should only get sections if it is necessary I don't think I would ever elect to have one now I've been through it," she said.

But for women like Jones, C-sections are a welcome, and sometimes life-saving, option. "My top tip for women who have a section is just keep moving and accept any help that is offered in the first few days," concluded Jones.

"And remember just because you had a section does not mean you failed or took the easy way out."

Reported child abuse in Japan exceeds 30,000 cases in the first half

Reports of suspected child abuse reached a record high of 30,262 cases to welfare authorities in the first half of 2017, exceeding the 30,000 mark for the first time since comparable data became available in 2011, the National Police Agency said Thursday.

The number of victims aged below 18 reported by police to child consultation centers rose 5,751 from a year earlier amid increased public awareness of the issue, japantimes.co.jp reported.

The police offered emergency protection to 1,787 children due to endangerment from January to June — up 236 from a year earlier.

The increase in reported cases may be due to heightened public awareness that prompts more people to alert authorities to potential child abuse, an agency official said.

The child consultation centers



indiewire.com

provide temporary shelter to children or dispatch welfare staff to look into suspected cases of abuse as a way to keep problems from getting worse.

The number of minors who suffered from psychological and verbal abuse accounted for 70.7 percent of the total at 21,406. Among them, the number of

children witnessing acts of domestic violence within their homes saw more than a fivefold increase to 13,859 from the first half of 2012.

The figure for physical abuse stood at 5,723, neglect at 3,036, and sexual abuse at 97.

Child victims in criminal cases stood at 519, including 27 deaths. Girls accounted for 273 criminal cases, of which 26 percent involved sexual abuse.

The police launched criminal investigations in 511 cases, down 17 from a year earlier, with physical abuse making up 411 cases.

The police identified 528 suspected perpetrators, including 72 investigated for sexual abuse. Among the sexual abuse suspects, 26 were the victims' fathers, 27 adoptive fathers or stepfathers and eight common-law husbands of the victims' mothers.

susceptible to violence, substance abuse, and homicide.

While there is increasing acceptance for girls who want to dress or act like boys — particularly in Belgium, China, India and the United States — there is "almost zero tolerance for boys" who push back against typical gender roles, said the report.

"Boys who challenge gender norms by their dress or behavior were by many respondents seen as socially inferior," and were often bullied, teased and beaten, it said.

"We found children at a very early age — from the most conservative to the most liberal societies — quickly internalize this myth that girls are vulnerable and boys are strong and independent," said Robert Blum, director of the Global Early Adolescent Study.

"And this message is being constantly reinforced at almost every turn, by siblings, classmates, teachers, parents, guardians, relatives and coaches."

difference."

The study included 450 early adolescents matched with a parent or guardian.

Interviews were conducted in Bolivia, Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Scotland, South Africa, the United States and Vietnam.

Researchers found that gender stereotypes which emphasize female passivity can encourage abuse.

These stereotypes "leave girls at greater risk of dropping out of school or suffering physical and sexual violence, child marriage, early pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections," said the report.

Boys on the other hand are encouraged to spend time outside of the home, unsupervised, to explore the world.

Boys, too suffer from stereotypes that emphasize physical strength and independence, which can make them more

Global study: Gender stereotypes are firmly rooted by age 10

Gender stereotypes are firmly rooted in today's youth by age 10, according to a global study that warns such beliefs can raise the risk of depression, suicide, violence and HIV.

The investigation, which spanned 15 countries, suggested that vast amounts of money are wasted on stereotype prevention programs for teenagers, because efforts must begin far earlier, AFP wrote.

"Adolescent health risks are shaped by behaviors rooted in gender roles that can be well established in kids by the time they are ten or 11 years old," Kristin Mmari, lead researcher for the qualitative research at the Global Early Adolescent Study, a partnership between the World Health Organization and Johns Hopkins University.

"Yet we see billions of dollars around the world invested in adolescent health programs that don't kick in until they are 15, and by then it's probably too late to make a big

Spanish motorcyclist becomes first woman to win Solo Championship Motorcycle Race



Ana Carrasco has become the first woman to win a world championship motorcycle race in Portugal. The 20-year-old Spaniard took the lead on the final stretch to win the FIM Super sport 300 World Championship, sunnyskyz.com wrote. Carrasco started riding motorcycles when she was three and debuted in international competition as a 16-year-old. "I am very happy about this result," Carrasco told World SBK. "I want to share it with all my team. We have worked very hard and we have been making progress in each race."



GETTY IMAGES

Top 10 quotes from 'The Alchemist'



'The Alchemist', dazzling in its powerful simplicity and inspiring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. Along the way, he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. No one

knows what the treasure is, or if Santiago will be able to surmount the obstacles along the way. But what starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasure found within. Lush, evocative, and deeply humane, the story of Santiago is an eternal testament to the transforming power of our dreams and the importance of listening to our hearts.

There is only one way to learn. It's through action. Everything you need to know you have learned through your journey.

There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: The fear of failure.

God and with eternity.

People are capable, at any time in their lives, of doing what they dream of.

When each day is the same as the next, it's because people fail to recognize the good things that happen in their lives every day that the Sun rises.

When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.

Remember that wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure.

Tell your heart that the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself. And that no heart has ever suffered when it goes in search of its dreams, because every second of the search is a second's encounter with

I don't live in either my past or my future. I'm interested only in the present. If you can concentrate always on the present, you'll be a happy man. Life will be a party for you, a grand festival, because life is the moment we're living now.

National Geographic unveils contenders for the best nature photographs

These stunning photographs have been compiled by editors at National Geographic magazine for its famous Nature Photographer of the Year competition.

The publication is seeking out 'spectacular' pictures showing animals, lands and environments around the globe, dailymail.co.uk reported.

Among the editors' picks so far are a sublime shot showing a tidal pool in Norway, a mother bear and her cub walking together through water and a macaque receiving a head massage in Japan.

The winner of the competition — which is open until midnight on November 12 — receives a £5,300 prize.

To enter, visit the magazine's special website.



dailymail.co.uk

Octo-Cross

1	2	3	4		5	6	7
8					9		
10					11		
				12	13		
14	15	16					
17				18	19	20	21
22				23			
24				25			

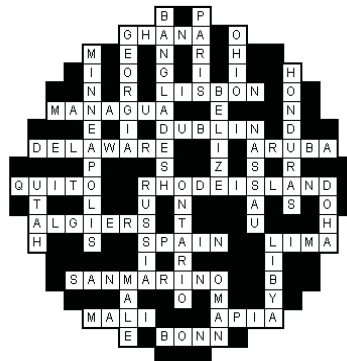
DOWN

- Pouch
- Chromaticity
- Large vase
- Snappy
- Rind
- Fruit
- Eclat
- Relating to a city
- Location of something
- Affirm
- Sort
- Anger
- Prevarication
- Boy or man

ACROSS

- Eschew
- Young canine
- Nimbus
- Self
- Coin
- Type of tree
- Bulbous plant
- Woodland deity
- Type of vine
- Beak
- Summit
- Elaborate song for solo voice
- Female sheep
- Requirement

Thursday's solution



Sudoku

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

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

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

Iran, team to beat in Ashgabat



ashgabat2017.com

An exciting match awaits today as Iran will face Thailand in the quarterfinals of the Ashgabat 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games men's futsal.

Iran booked its place after beating Kyrgyz Republic 10-0 on Thursday to top Group D as Japan, the other undefeated side in the competition, avoided facing the defending champion by beating Thailand 6-4 in Group C, the-afc.com reported.

Iran's Saied Ahmad-Abbasi and Farhad Tavakkoli stole the show with eight goals between them while Ahmad Esmailpour scored the 10th goal a minute before the final whistle.

Ahmad-Abbasi finished with five goals scoring in the ninth, 11th, 18th, 23rd and 32nd minutes while Tavakkoli fired three in the 17th, 24th and 34th minutes.

Kyrgyz Republic's Dilshat Kadyrov conceded an own goal in the 27th minute. Ahmad-Abbasi who has scored six goals in the competition, said his teammates are focused on their fifth title.

"Every match we played against Thailand has always been difficult and very hard. We are concentrated on the next one and we have to remember we are the (reigning) champion and we came here to win one more time," said Ahmad-Abbasi.

"It doesn't matter which team is on our way. We are just concentrated and focused on the title," he added.

Also in the quarterfinals, Japan will face Jordan later today while Afghanistan and Vietnam will be playing the other tie of the last eight and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan square off in a Central Asian fixture.

Iran finishes runnerup in world military wrestling

Sports Desk

Iran's freestyle team sealed the second spot at the 32nd edition of the World Military Wrestling Championship in Lithuania.

Iranian wrestlers managed to clinch four medals including one gold and 50 points to give the country a runnerup finish in the competitions held in the city of Klaipeda. Alireza Karimi outmuscled his

South Korean counterpart in the 86kg final bout to grab the gold medal.

Karimi's compatriots, Reza Afzali (74kg), Hossein Shahbazi (97kg) and Amin Taheri (125kg) also put a decent end to their campaign by adding three bronzes to Iran's medals tally in the tournament.

The Russian freestyle team claimed the top spot while Azerbaijan finished third.

The World Military Wrestling Championship started on September 18 and will finish on September 25.

The tournament has reportedly brought together 241 athletes from 22 countries, including Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Ukraine and the United States.



Nadal, Federer hit back at Laver Cup critics

GETTY IMAGES

Rafael Nadal dismissed suggestions the Laver Cup is nothing more than an exhibition and insists Team Europe are determined to 'play with passion' and win the tournament.

A European team consisting of Nadal, Roger Federer, Marin Cilic, Dominic Thiem, Alexander Zverev and Tomas Berdych will face Team World in a three-day event in Prague which started on Friday, Metro reported.

Some have criticized the tournament and questioned its worth, particularly as two ATP events are taking place at the same time.

But Nadal, who could team-up with Federer in a doubles match later today, said at the pre-tournament press conference, "It's not an exhibition at all."

"We are here to try our best. I wake up today at 6 a.m. in the morning to practice. I don't practice for an exhibition match. We

are here to try our best and try to win."

"We want to play with passion and to play for our continent, we have a great team behind us and want to do it well, let's see if we are able to do it."

Federer was also keen to stress the value of the tournament, saying Team Europe have been 'strategizing' for several days and are ready to give 'everything' they have to win.

"The guys all arrived a day early, they were supposed to arrive on Wednesday, but they all came in on Tuesday," said Federer.

"We have been strategizing, so from our side, I think we will be ready and we are giving everything we have."

"Without that, the fans are just going to sit there and maybe enjoy some tennis but they're not going to get into it."

Giggs was set for United job before Guardiola went to City, Keown says



GETTY IMAGES

Manchester United was set to appoint Ryan Giggs as manager before Pep Guardiola went for Manchester City, according to former Arsenal center-back Martin Keown.

Giggs left Manchester United after 29 years last summer, having spent two years as Louis van Gaal's assistant, the Daily Express reported.

The former Wales international opted to call time on his Old Trafford career after being overlooked for the top job, which was given to Jose Mourinho.

But Keown said Giggs was likely to take over Van Gaal's position at Manchester United, but Manchester City's appointment of Pep Guardiola prompted the board to go for a proven manager in Mourinho instead.

"We're seeing what we expected to see last year," Keown told the Daily Mail. "Guardiola came into town. Prior to that it seemed as though Giggs was being lined up for the job at Old Trafford."

"When Guardiola came in, they went, 'We want Mourinho in'."

"We shouldn't be surprised by it. I think there's a lot more to the Premier League than just those two."

"I wouldn't underestimate Chelsea. Conte won three titles on the trot with Juventus. He's a serial winner. They have a special group of players. They are definitely in the mix."

Speaking back in June, Giggs said that Mourinho did not offer him a job and the sacking of Van Gaal forced him to depart. "There was no offer from Jose Mourinho. No offer. It was my choice to go," Giggs said.

"As soon as Louis was going I had made my decision to go."

"I had done two years and I wanted to do three years under Louis. It didn't happen. That was my plan to do my three years and see what happened after that."

"Unfortunately, that was cut short. It happens. That's football. But I didn't really feel I could go on at the club in any other capacity apart from manager."

At the start of the season, in the aftermath of the thumping of Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup, Real Madrid was considered to be favorite to win everything.

by the clinical nature of its lineup of forwards. Indeed, the infamous "BBC" triumvirate has played a large part in the side's recent successes. So far this season, though, Real has lacked cut-

ous epidemic of stage fright in front of its own fans. Whilst a draw against Valencia should come as little surprise, poor performances against recently promoted Levante as well as Betis

five-match ban. The referees came under fire again on Wednesday evening as protestations of time wasting from Real Betis players were dismissed.

4. Injury woes

Madrid's poor form has certainly not been helped by a series of injuries to star name players. Zinedine Zidane has had to make do without stars the likes of Karim Benzema, Mateo Kovacic, Theo Hernandez, and more recently, Marcelo, and the lack of continuity in the squad has had a negative effect on their results.

5. New signings yet to make impact

Despite a number of high-profile signings during the transfer window, the likes of Dani Ceballos, Marcos Llorente and Jesus Vallejo have yet to receive opportunities to make much of an impact. Meanwhile, Theo and Borja Mayoral have yet to impress despite both having featured in parts this season.

6. Fullbacks lack penetration

Both Dani Carvajal and Marcelo are regarded two of the world's best fullbacks, and when in fine form, both have proven to be tough to handle in attack and defense. Thus far, though, both have done little to offer the side an additional option in the final third and have been exposed on occasion

in their own half.

7. Stars out of touch

The star-studded frontline have not enjoyed their best start, having missed a host of clear-cut chances against Valencia, Levante and Real Betis. With Ronaldo back though, one hopes they'll find their finishing touch soon enough.

8. Zidane's changes

It's fair to say that some of Zidane's substitutions have cost the side dearly so far. Against Betis, for instance, instead of replacing like-for-like players, the French tactician opted instead to overload the side with attackers. However, with the key midfielders on the bench, Madrid failed to carve its opponents apart in the final third.

9. Shaky defense

On their day, Sergio Ramos and Raphael Varane make up arguably the most formidable center-back pairing in world football. However, the fact that they have conceded five goals already in their first five matches demonstrates how far they've sunk already.

10. Lifeless midfield

The midfield trio of Luka Modric, Toni Kroos and Isco are known for their vision and accuracy to pick out a pass. Their inability to dominate play in recent weeks will be a worrying sign for Zidane.

10 reasons Real Madrid has faltered this season



GETTY IMAGES

Now, though, Los Blancos are on the brink of a crisis following a series of lackluster performances at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu which has left them trailing league leader Barcelona by seven points after five matches played, MARCA reported.

Here are 10 factors which have led to the recent downturn in form.

1. Faltering forwards

If anything, Madrid's success throughout its history has often been characterized

ting edge in front of goal, particularly at the Bernabeu where La Liga champion has scored just three goals in three matches with a brace from Marco Asensio and a goal from Lucas Vazquez helping the side claim draws against Valencia and Levante respectively.

2. Anxiety at home

Los Blancos' strength in the past has often been based around their formidable form at home. This season, though, the side has been struck by a seri-

ously left the team claiming just two points from a possible nine. This is in stark contrast to the club's impressive performances at the Camp Nou, Estadio Riazor and the Estadio Anoeta.

3. Dubious refereeing

Real's poor form has certainly not been helped by some dubious decisions made by officials in recent weeks, with president Florentino Perez hitting out at the poor state of officiating in La Liga following Cristiano Ronaldo's hefty

Art & Culture

1,000-year-old Viking boat found in Norway

A 1,000-year-old Viking boat grave measuring more than 13 feet (4 meters) was unearthed in Norway with bones and sheet bronze still inside.

The tomb was found during excavations beneath the market square of the Norwegian city of Trondheim, daily.mail.co.uk reported.

While none of the vessel's wood remains, preserved lumps of rust and nails indicate a boat was buried at the site between the 7th and 10th centuries AD.



daily.mail.co.uk

Ships were a Viking's most prized possession, and if a high-born clansman did not die at sea he would be buried in a ship on land, often with weapons and pottery.

The newly uncovered grave, which pointed north to south, was found with two long bones inside.

Like the boat, these bones were oriented north to south, and experts will now perform DNA analyses to confirm that they are human.

Other finds included a small piece of sheet bronze propped against one of the bones, as well as what are likely personal items from the grave.

The boat-shaped cavity and its contents was uncovered last week by archeologists from the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), based in Oslo.

In a pothole dug through the middle of the boat, the team found a piece of a spoon. "We also found a key to a small box in the grave," team member Julian Cadamarteri told Norwegian daily *Adresseavisen*.

"If it originates from the grave, it [the site] is likely to date from anywhere between the 600s and the 900s."

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Iran's 'Flatland' wins European festival award in Moscow

Art & Culture Desk

Iranian video art 'Flatland', directed by Alireza Keymanesh and Amir Pousti, won the Best Video Art Award at the Second European Film Festival — Mainstream and Underground in Russia.

The publication is based on the book 'Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions', written by the English schoolmaster Edwin Abbott Abbott in 1884.

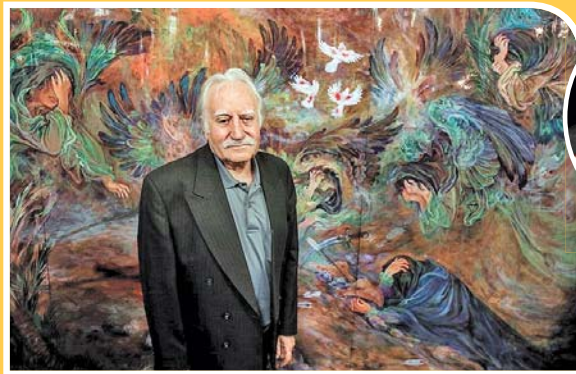
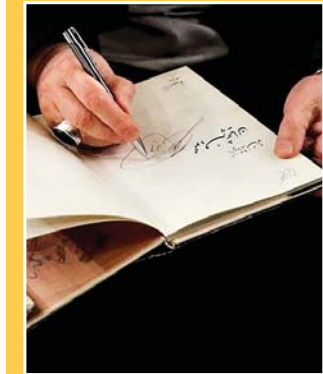
'Flatland' is a two-dimension world, an inhabitant of the land, tells his life story recounting his experience in the one-dimensional and the three-dimensional worlds and beyond.

Mehr News Agency wrote.

A satirical novella, the book continues to stimulate the mind of young people after more than 130 years. Several feature and short films have been made from the story so far.

European Film Festival — Mainstream and Underground is one of the few festivals in the world that have a multicultural mission. Russia has always been a multicultural country.

Other awards of the festival include Best Feature Film, Best Short Film, Best Documentary, Best Animation, Best Music Video, Best Experimental, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography and Best Editing.



HAMED MALEKPOUR/TASNIM NEWS AGENCY



A ceremony to unveil three printed conundrums of paintings by miniature virtuoso Mahmoud Farshchian was held in Tehran on Thursday. Top Iranian cultural figures and senior politicians attended the event at Vahdat Hall.

Veteran singer Golchin passes away



Art & Culture Desk

Veteran singer Nader Golchin, famous for his renditions of memorable old-time songs, died due to respiratory disease.

Among the songs made popular by Golchin are: 'Plaything', 'Arrow of Eyelashes' and 'Song of Caravan', IRNA reported.

Golchin worked with many contemporary artists including Faramarz Payvar, Mansour Saremi, Parviz Yahaqqi, Habibollah Badiee, Ali-Asghar Bahari, Jalil Shahnaz, Farhang Sharif, Fazlollah Tavakkol, Jahangir Malek, Amir-Naser Efteah, Mohammad Esmaceli, Abtin Ejlali and Mansour Nariman.

Author Proulx to receive honorary Nat'l Book Award

The Pulitzer Prize and numerous other awards didn't prepare Annie Proulx for her latest honor: A National Book Award medal for lifetime achievement.

"I was astonished when first I heard that news," Proulx told AP during a recent email interview. "I simply had not thought of my various writings as a body of work that might be considered as a contribution to American letters. It almost seemed that I had been negligent in writing what I considered discrete novels and stories instead of shaping a holistic something that might be regarded as a life work."

The National Book Foundation praised the author of 'The Shipping News', 'Brokeback Mountain' and other fiction for her "impressive lyricism and wit that captivates readers of all ages".

Anne Hathaway, who starred in the film version of 'Brokeback Mountain', will present the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to Proulx during a November 15 ceremony in Manhattan, when competitive prizes will be given for the year's best fiction, nonfiction, poetry and young people's literature books.



AP

Earlier recipients of the Distinguished Contribution medal include Toni Morrison, Philip Roth and Joan Didion.

"Annie Proulx's ability to explore the nuances of the human spirit and render deeply moving reflections on rural life have solidified her place in American Letters," Lisa Lucas, the foundation's executive director, said in a statement.

"In addition to her astounding literary accomplishments, film adaptations of Proulx's work have reached scores of viewers who may not have encountered her work on the page."

Proulx, 82, won the Pulitzer and National Book Award for 'The Shipping News', and her novel 'Postcards' made her the first woman to win the PEN/Faulkner award. She has also expressed reservations about literary prizes, worrying that their overshadow the work.

Weather

