



Trump has no valid reason for requesting visit to Iran's sites: ex-CIA analyst **7**



Eyeing UNESCO status, Great Wall of Gorgan to undergo restoration **10**



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Flare gas recovery deal inked with France



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No religious or racial discrimination, Leader insists

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution has insisted that all Iranians must be treated equally under Islamic teachings and the constitution, calling for concerted efforts to prevent any harm to national unity and dignity. "All elements of the Islamic Republic are duty bound, in accord-

ance with the religious teachings and the constitution, to refrain from allowing any discrimination and inequality among the Iranians from any ethnicity, race or faith," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in response to a letter by Molavi Abdul Hamid, a top Sunni cleric in southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan. **->2**

Rouhani urges end to crimes against Rohingya

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday urged the Myanmar government to put an end to vicious crimes against Rohingya Muslims in the Buddhist-majority country, ISNA reported. At least 123,000 Rohingya have fled from western Myanmar into neighboring Bangladesh since late last month when violence erupted in Myanmar's

Rakhine state, the UN said on Tuesday. During a cabinet meeting, Rouhani pointed to the brutal killing of Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya minority, saying, "In Myanmar, Muslims are in a very difficult situation and hundreds of thousands have been displaced." Rouhani added, "Many have been killed and their bodies burnt, and many houses have also been set on fire." **->2**

Russia, Turkey, Iran make progress on Idlib de-escalation zone

Experts from Russia, Turkey and Iran have made considerable progress in agreeing the parameters, configuration and methods of ensuring security in the de-escalation zone in Syria's Idlib province, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters on Wednesday. "As for the Idlib province, contacts are underway between the guarantor

countries and initiators of the Astana process - Russia, Iran and Turkey," TASS news agency quoted Lavrov as saying. "In the course of [these consultations], we have made considerable progress to agree on the parameters, configuration and methods of ensuring security in the de-escalation zone in Idlib province," Lavrov noted. **->2**

Syria rebels must realize they have not won war: UN

Syria's opposition must accept that it has not won the country's war, the UN envoy said, voicing hope that the realities of the conflict could help forge a peace deal.

United Nations mediator Staffan de Mistura also stressed that the Syrian government cannot "simply announce victory" as such a call would be hollow without a negotiated settlement to end the six year conflict.

"The only answer is a political process," de Mistura, who has led sputtering UN-backed peace talks, told reporters in Geneva.

In the run up to the next round of negotiations, tentatively scheduled to take place in the Swiss city next month, de Mistura has pushed the still-fractured opposition to form a single delegation that can meet face-to-face with the Damascus regime.

"Will the opposition be able to be unified and realistic enough to realize they didn't win the war?" de Mistura said.

The main opposition camp, the Saudi-backed High Negotiations Committee (HNC), has insisted that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must leave office as part of any peace deal.

That hardline stance has put the HNC at odds with two more moderate opposition groups, known as the Moscow and Cairo platforms.

De Mistura has in recent weeks upped the pressure on the groups to unite and said he believed they would be meeting again in Riyadh in the coming weeks, after talks there last month failed to produce a compromise.

With Daesh (ISIL) terrorists facing possibly imminent defeat in the key Syrian locations of Deir Ezzor and Raqa, de Mistura raised the prospect of hosting negotiations with Syria relatively free of active fighting.

That would also require an urgently needed "national ceasefire" among the government and various rebels groups, he said.

The UN has helped broker multiple previous truces during the war that has claimed more than 330,000 lives since 2011, but none have proved lasting. (Source: AFP)

Iran's deft diplomacy in region paying dividends: National Interest

In an article on its website published on Sept. 4, the National Interest said it is Iran which is emerging the winner in the Saudi blockade of Qatar. The article, written by Mohammed Ayoub, said, "Tehran's deft diplomacy and infinite patience have finally begun to pay dividends."

The article, titled "The Saudi-Qatar crisis amounts to a big win for Iran", reads as follows:

Iran has won another round in the Saudi-Iran cold war that currently dominates the political landscape in the Middle East. This outcome is largely the result of Saudi Arabia's own folly. Riyadh forced Qatar into a diplomatic corner believing that Doha, in response to the quarantine imposed upon it by Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf allies, will come running back to big brother hat in hand. This supposition was based on the understanding that tiny Qatar was so dependent upon its larger neighbor for trade, air

traffic, foodstuff and other goods that it would not be able to withstand Saudi economic and travel embargoes. What has happened is exactly the opposite.

Qatar forcefully rejected all Saudi demands, including closing down Al Jazeera and, above all, curtailing relations with Iran, with whom it shares the world's largest reservoir of natural gas. Qatar was able to do so for two major reasons. First, Iran and, somewhat surprisingly, Turkey, which was on good terms with Saudi Arabia, quickly helped Qatar overcome the sanctions by breaking the quarantine and shipping and airlifting supplies to the tiny emirate.

Second, Saudi Arabia failed to take into account the value attached by Washington to America-Qatar relations, based principally on the fact that the largest U.S. airbase in the region is located in Qatar and is deemed

essential by the Pentagon for air operations both in Afghanistan and Syria. Despite President Trump's anti-Qatar remarks, uttered in total ignorance of Qatar's strategic value to the United States, the State Department's response in public and private was very different. Riyadh realized that any threat of force against Qatar would face American opposition and damage the larger goals of its strategic partnership in the Persian Gulf with Washington.

Protected by these two factors, Qatar could thumb its nose at the Saudis. Qatar has now done exactly that with gusto. On August 23, Qatar announced its decision to "strengthen bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields" and return its ambassador to Tehran following a telephone conversation between the Qatari and Iranian foreign ministers. **->13**

Ex-World Bank president: Congress must crack down on Trump's trade policies

The former president of the World Bank on Wednesday urged Congress to act against President Trump's "shipwreck" of a trade policy.

In an op-ed for The Wall Street Journal, Robert B. Zoellick, who served as president of the World Bank from 2007-2012, wrote that "Trump's impulses are strategically incoherent."

"Congress can no longer wait for Mr. Trump to speak and act sensibly," Zoellick said. "It needs to assert its constitutional powers over

trade to stop this president's destruction."

Zoellick's commentary comes after Trump confirmed last week that he is speaking with advisers about the U.S.'s free trade agreement with South Korea.

Zoellick, who also served as the United States Trade Representative under former President George W. Bush, criticized Trump's attack on the trade agreement.

"Especially in Asia, where respect and reliability

in personal relations are valued highly, Mr. Trump's shocking slap to America's Korean friends will be noted and long remembered," he wrote.

"Combined with his withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the president's attack on the Korean FTA signals America's unreliability as an economic partner. Asian countries will inevitably question whether America's economic retreat is consistent with U.S. security commitments across the Pacific." (Source: The Hill)

Haley asks for decertifying Iran's compliance with JCPOA

Implying the nature of the U.S. administration's political approach toward nuclear deal with Iran, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley laid out a case for President Donald Trump to step back from the Iran nuclear deal.

In a carefully read 20-minute address at the American Enterprise Institute, Haley argued that the nuclear deal can't be considered in isolation.

Implying the White House political motive behind its measures and stance toward Iran and the nuclear deal with Iran, she said, Iran's history, its hostility toward the US and its behavior in the Middle East have to figure into Trump's calculus when he decides in October whether to certify if Iran is abiding by the deal.

"What I am saying is should he decide to decertify, he has grounds to stand on," Haley said. "It's very easy to just talk about compliance and the JCPOA," she said, referring to the deal's formal name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "But there's so much more to the story that we need to be looking at," she added, CNN reported.

The deal, reached in July 2015 and implemented in January 2016, essentially eased nuclear related sanctions in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear program, some of which expire after a few years. Congress passed a separate law requiring the president to certify every 90 days that Iran is in fact complying with the deal, something Trump has done twice now.

While Russia, China and the US European partners repeatedly has backed the JCPOA, Asked if the U.S. would end up isolated for leaving a deal that has buy in from China, Russia, Germany, France, the UK and the EU, Haley claimed that European allies, who worked most closely with the Obama administration to craft the deal, understand the new U.S. concerns.

She added that Washington's job wasn't to make sure allies were "comfortable."

"This is about U.S. national security, this is not about European security," she said. **->13**



Deadly exodus: 150,000 Rohingya flee Myanmar in two weeks

Aid agencies warn of a growing humanitarian crisis as persecution of the Muslim ethnic minority pushes around 15,000 people into Bangladesh each day, with border relief camps already at capacity. The United Nations secretary-general, António Guterres, has appealed to Myanmar to end the violence.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani plans to visit New York

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani **d e s k** is scheduled to travel to New York in the coming weeks to attend the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The announcement was made on Wednesday by Presidential Chief Of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session, ISNA reported.

Vaezi also said Rouhani is slated to make a trip to Kazakhstan within the next few days.

He said the trip comes as part of efforts to boost bilateral relations with Kazakhstan.



Lawmaker rejects U.S. calls for inspection of Iranian military sites

POLITICS TEHRAN — A top lawmaker has **d e s k** rejected U.S. calls for inspection of Iran's military sites, saying the country would never give information about its military activities to any country or international organization, Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday.

"U.S. officials are seeking to humiliate and exploit international organizations (by such demands)," said Kamal Dehqani Firouzabadi, the vice-chairman of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

He added that Iran's military sites have nothing to do with its nuclear facilities.



Grand ayatollah asks OIC to take action against Myanmar genocide

POLITICS TEHRAN — Grand Ayatollah Nasser **d e s k** Makarem Shirazi on Wednesday called on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to implement essential measures to end the genocide against Muslims in Myanmar, IRNA reported.

Criticizing the international community's silence over atrocities committed against members of the Muslim minority in Myanmar, the grand ayatollah said Buddhists have decided to annihilate Muslims in that country.

He also expressed surprise over the UN Security Council's silence on the violence against Rohingya Muslims in the Asian country.



Tehran advises Saudis not to meddle in regional countries' affairs

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Akbar Velayati, the **d e s k** senior advisor to the Supreme Leader, said on Wednesday that Iran has no objection to restoring ties with Saudi Arabia but advised the Riyadh officials not to interfere in internal affairs of regional countries.

Pointing to an upcoming visit of a Saudi delegation to Tehran, he said, "Tehran and Riyadh had reached agreements on the issue of Hajj rituals which were held appropriately."

Velayati expressed hope that the visit would be a positive step toward improving ties.



Missile sanctions aimed to undermine Iran's deterrence power: defense chief

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's new defense **d e s k** minister said on Tuesday that threats and sanctions against Iran for its missile program are aimed at undermining Tehran's deterrence power.

"Threats and sanctions against [Iran's] missile power have a completely political objective, which is to weaken the country's deterrence power," Amir Hatami told a national defense conference.

Hatami said Iran's defense policies are in accordance with international law and regulations of the Islamic Republic "but the global arrogance seeks to weaken our country's deterrence power through fabricated interpretations."



'Iran has received over \$1.7b from U.S. in legal settlements'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's deputy defense **d e s k** minister for legal and parliamentary affairs has said the Islamic Republic has received about \$1.71 billion from the U.S. government in legal cases related to military deals signed between the two countries before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Speaking at a televised interview on Tuesday night, Brigadier General Reza Taleae Nik pointed to some of Tehran's open cases in international courts against Washington and said prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution more than 2200 military agreements had been signed between Iran and the U.S.

Japanese PM's special envoy meets Rouhani

President Rouhani says U.S. policy of intimidation will never bear fruit

POLITICS TEHRAN — Masa-**d e s k** hiko Komura, the Japanese prime minister's special envoy, met with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday.

Rouhani pointed to the old history of relationship between the two countries, saying, "Japanese investors and businesspersons can invest in developing rail network and ports in Iran".

He also said, "Facilitating banking relations between Iran and Japan can contribute to developing relations and economic cooperation between Tehran and Tokyo."

Komura also delivered Shinzo Abe's written message to Rouhani and congratulated him on his re-election as president.

"We must attempt to deepen economic and business relations between the two countries more than before in various fields of mutual interest," Komura pointed out.

■ 'No distortions of nuclear agreement must be allowed'

Rouhani also described the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the formal name for the nuclear deal, as an important international agreement, and appreciated



Japan's positive role in the negotiations between Iran and P5+1 group.

"Today, after the conclusion of the negotiations and the implementation of the JCPOA, we should not let this significant agreement to be distorted and any of the parties to the agreement violate their commitments."

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always lived up to its commitments based on reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency, said Rouhani, adding, "The U.S. government has not fully lived up to its commitments."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will never be the first one to violate the agreement but will respond properly to lack of com-

mitment of the other side," the president asserted.

He also said, "Stability and security in the region and East Asia are very important for Iran and we hope that development of co-operation between Iran and Japan contribute to development of stability and security in East and West Asia."

He added, "All issues must be settled through discussion and dialogue and there must not be any threatening and intimidation by another country against others."

In an indirect reference to the rising tension between North Korea and the United States, Rouhani said, "We are against sanctions against countries and we believe that the policy of intimidation of humiliation that the U.S. government has taken up towards other countries will never bear fruit."

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will spare no effort contributing to stability and security in the region."

He also said that people in countries such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen need help. "Iran is ready to cooperate in transferring Japan's humanitarian help to the people of these countries."

Rouhani urges end to crimes against Rohingya

1 → In recent days, as a military crackdown destroyed villages and killed hundreds, desperate people attempted to pass through muddy fields to escape the violence. At least 46 Rohingya died last week when boats capsized while crossing a river between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Rouhani noted that there's no difference between Rohingya Muslims and other Muslims across the world.

"We, as a revolutionary Muslim country, feel responsible for the world's oppressed people, even those who are not Muslims," he said. "We have urged the Myanmar government to put a stop to the brutal crimes against Muslims."

He also urged neighboring and Muslim countries to help the displaced people of Myanmar, and voiced the Islamic Republic's readiness to lend a helping hand to the Rohingya.

The Rohingya are a largely Muslim ethnic group who mainly live in Rakhine state in western Myanmar, where they face severe restrictions on basic rights. There are an

estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar, and up to another million refugees abroad.

Rouhani also called on the United Nations to fulfill its duties in response to the violence.

"Today, we should all take a firm stance against such acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing so that we can help the world's oppressed people, including the people of Myanmar," the Iranian president remarked.

Meanwhile, aid agencies say the Myanmar government has blocked their access to Rakhine state, increasing the risk to people fleeing the violence.

"By blocking access for humanitarian organizations, Myanmar's authorities have put tens of thousands of people at risk and shown a callous disregard for human life," Tirana Hassan, Amnesty International's director for crisis response, said in a statement.

"Rakhine state is on the precipice of a humanitarian disaster," she added.

The continuing violence has also provoked a storm of criticism of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's de facto

leader and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate for her struggle against military rule.

On Monday, Malala Yousafzai, a fellow peace prize laureate, took to Twitter to criticize Suu Kyi, urging her to speak out about the plight of the Rohingya. The governments of several Muslim-majority countries, including Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the UAE and Turkey have also expressed concern over the issue.

Suu Kyi and her government have claimed that the Rohingya are migrants from Bangladesh who do not deserve citizenship rights, although most have roots in the area that go back generations.

On Wednesday, in response to widespread criticism, Suu Kyi claimed during a phone conversation with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan a "huge iceberg of misinformation" about the Rohingya crisis was being distributed to benefit what she called "terrorists."

She also said her government was fighting to ensure "terrorism" didn't spread over the whole of Rakhine state.

Tehran says ready to work with S. Arabia to resolve Muslim problems

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian **d e s k** foreign minister has said his country is ready to work with Saudi Arabia to help resolve the problems facing Muslims in the Middle East and the larger world.

"We are ready to cooperate with Islamic countries on all issues that is important to the Islamic world," Mohammad Javad Zarif said in an interview with

the Arabic-language Al Mayadeen TV network aired on Tuesday.

"Saudi Arabia is an important Islamic country and therefore, we are prepared to work with the country to address the problem of the Rohingya Muslims," he said.

Zarif also emphasized that Tehran is ready to cooperate with Riyadh to help end regional crises, including the

Syrian conflict, crackdown in Bahrain and the "irrational and costly" war on Yemen.

Relations between Tehran and Riyadh have strained over the past years after their conflicting views on regional developments, particularly on Yemen and Syria, became more noticeable.

The relations further deteriorated

after a crush of pilgrims in Mina, near Saudi Arabia's Mecca, in September 2015, which reportedly killed over 7000 Hajj pilgrims, including 464 Iranians.

Tehran blamed the deaths on the Saudi government's mismanagement. Iran has also been criticizing Riyadh for "lack of cooperation" on restoring the rights of families of the victims.

Zarif says Iran respects Pope's stances

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister **d e s k** Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday that Iran respects the Pope's personality and also his stance on international issues.

In a meeting with the Vatican's Foreign Minister Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher in Tehran, Zarif pointed to the "long-standing" and "respectful" relations between Iran and the Vatican and highlighted the need for dialogue and effective cooperation among different religions and civilizations.

He warned against the threat of extremism, which he said is not confined to a specific region in today's world.

The Iranian foreign minister pointed to the violence against the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, calling



on the international community to join hands to halt the massacre and displacement of Muslims in the predominantly Buddhist country.

Top Iranian officials hail Daesh defeat in Dayr al-Zawr

POLITICS TEHRAN — A num-**d e s k** ber of senior Iranian officials have hailed the Syrian army and resistance forces for succeeding to break the siege on Dayr al-Zawr captured by Daesh three years ago.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called it an "important victory" against extremist and terrorist groups.

Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, also in a message, congratulated the Syrian army, resistance forces and people on the victory in Dayr al-Zawr, a city in eastern Syria.

"The liberation of Dayr al-Zawr and the lifting of a three-year Daesh blockade over the city with the efforts of the Syrian army and resistance forces have caused much joy and delight," Larijani remarked.

"This sweet victory, which was achieved by breaking the Daesh line in such a strategic zone, was the realization of the promise of victory of the forces of righteousness against wickedness and the great defeat of terrorism and extremism," he explained.

Larijani added, "The city of Dayr al-Zawr

served as the Daesh headquarters in the region, and as such had been putting the citizens through so much pain and suffering. Thank God this heroic victory brought sweet freedom for these people at last."

Larijani further voiced hope for the complete liberation of Syria from takfiri terrorists, and the establishment of peace and order all across the country.

Also, Ali Akbar Velayati, the senior advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, congratulated the Syrian government and nation for breaking the siege on the eastern city.

"I would like to felicitate the strong Syrian nation on the lifting of Dayr al-Zawr blockade, a nation which withstood brutal and inhumane crimes of Daesh terrorists until it witnessed victory and the break of blockade over this important region in Syria," noted Velayati who is also director of the Strategic Research Center of the Expediency Council.

He further expressed hope for the complete eradication of terrorists operating under any name or ideology and targeting the oppressed people of the region.

No religious or racial discrimination, Leader insists

1 → According to Tasnim, the Sunni cleric had recently sent the letter to the Leader, calling for greater attention to the rights of religious minorities in Iran.

In the reply to the Sunni cleric's letter, sent by the Leader's Office director Mohammad Mohammadi Gol-

payegani on August 22, Ayatollah Khamenei said he "strongly holds the belief" that all Iranians must stand together and close ranks to contribute to the national dignity.

The Leader has frequently insisted that unity is the

only solution to the problems facing the Muslims in the world.

The Leader has warned that the "arrogant powers" have created religious wars in Islamic countries to divert attention from the fight against Israel.

Lavrov: Russia, Turkey, Iran make progress in setting up Idlib de-escalation zone

1 → "I hope we will hear more specific news in the near future."

In one of the most concrete steps to end the conflict in Syria after more than six years, Russia, Iran

and Turkey, the main sponsors of the Syria peace talks in Kazakhstan, signed a deal on May 4 to create safe zones inside the war-torn Syria.

Ankara, chief backer of the Syrian opposition,

Moscow and Tehran, which back Bashar al-Assad's government, agreed to establish four "de-escalation zones" which will be monitored by international troops.

Thousands protest against rescinding ‘Dreamer’ immigration program

U.S. reacts to Trump’s move to scrap the DACA program

Mass protests have been held in cities across the United States after President Donald Trump canceled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that protected young immigrants.

The DACA program allowed nearly 800,000 young men and women, often called “dreamers”, who had entered the country as illegal immigrants, to stay in the U.S.

After Attorney General Jeff Sessions made the announcement on Tuesday, thousands of demonstrators held protests in different cities including Chicago, Denver, Phoenix, Washington DC, New York City and elsewhere.

In Chicago, hundreds of protesters marched through downtown to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office. Their demonstration forced the diversion of traffic from an entrance to an expressway.

In Los Angeles, some protesters were holding signs, denouncing Trump’s decision, while some others told their stories.

One woman said her family had come to the U.S. when she was seven to escape violence in Guatemala, but now, “Where do I go from here?” she asked.

“We went through so much things that a 7-year-old should never have to go,” said Yamilex, who asked to only be identified by her first name.

In Manhattan, where activists gathered on Fifth Avenue in front of Trump Tower, police arrested at least 34 protesters, a New York Police Department spokesperson told CBS News.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has come under harsh criticism from all sides of the U.S. political spectrum for its move to scrap a program that protects from deportation hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants who entered the United States as children.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the end to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) scheme on Tuesday, angering many but also drawing some support from staunch Trump allies.

DACA has helped nearly 800,000 young people, referred to as “Dreamers”, get legal status, work permits and driving licenses.

The program’s fate now rests with congress members who will have six months to come to a political solution before DACA officially ends.

Late on Tuesday, Trump tweeted that he would “re-visit this issue” if Congress fails to “legalize DACA” in six months.

While the move was expected for weeks, Tuesday’s



announcement drew strong condemnation from many throughout the U.S.

Barack Obama, the former U.S. president who created DACA in 2012, called the action “cruel” and a “political decision”.

“Ultimately, this is about basic decency,” he said in a statement on Facebook.

“This is about whether we are a people who kick hopeful young strivers out of America, or whether we treat them the way we’d want our own kids to be treated. It’s about who we are as a people - and who we want to be.”

Trump’s move effectively kicks responsibility for the fate of Dreamers to his fellow Republicans who control both Houses of Congress. Members of Congress, however, have been unable to pass any major legislation since the president took office in January and the body has been bitterly divided over immigration in the past.

Obama bypassed Congress and created DACA through an executive order.

Lorella Praeli, director of immigration policy at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), said the decision throws the lives and futures of Dreamers into “disarray”.

“Today is a cruel day for Dreamers, our families and all

Americans,” she said in a statement.

“President Trump just threw the lives and futures of 800,000 Dreamers and their families, including my own, into fearful disarray, and injected chaos and uncertainty into thousands of workplaces and communities across America,” she added.

“He is using the lives of 800,000 people as pawns.”

■ Criticism within the Republican Party

Trump’s move also brought about criticism from some within his own party.

Republican Senator John McCain called the president’s move “the wrong approach”.

Republican Senator Jeff Flake urged Congress to “act immediately” and “pass permanent, stand-alone legislation to lawfully ensure that children who were brought [to the U.S.] ... are able to stay”.

And Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Republican Congresswoman from Florida, said Trump was “wrong on the DACA termination”.

“The decision by the administration to end DACA and shut down the dreams of young immigrants is heart-breaking, reckless and wrong,” she said in a statement.

(Source: agencies)

Myanmar plays diplomatic card to avert UN censure over Rohingya

Myanmar said on Wednesday it is negotiating with China and Russia to ensure they block any UN Security Council censure over the violence that has forced an exodus of nearly 150,000 Rohingya Muslims to Bangladesh in less than two weeks.

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi blamed “terrorists” for “a huge iceberg of misinformation” on the strife in the north-western state of Rakhine but, in a statement, she made no mention of the Rohingya who have fled.

She has come under increasing pressure from countries with Muslim populations, including Indonesia, where thousands led by Islamic groups held a rally in Jakarta on Wednesday, to demand that diplomatic ties with Buddhist-majority Myanmar be cut.

In a rare letter to the UN Security Council on Tuesday, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concern that the violence could spiral into a “humanitarian catastrophe”.

He warned there was a risk of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar that could destabilize the region.

Myanmar National Security Adviser Thawng Tun told a news conference in the capital, Naypyitaw, that Myanmar was counting on China and Russia, both permanent members of the Security Council, to block a UN resolution on the crisis.

“We are negotiating with some friendly countries not to take it to the Security Council,” he said. “China is our friend and we have a similar friendly relationship with Russia so it will not be possible for that issue to go forward.”

Reuters reporters in the Cox’s Bazar region of neighboring Bangladesh have witnessed boatloads of exhausted Rohingya arriving near the border village of Shamlapur.

According to the latest estimates issued by UN workers operating there, arrivals in just 12 days stood at 146,000. This brought to 233,000 the total number of Rohingya



who have sought refuge in Bangladesh since last October.

Newly arrived Rohingyas told authorities that three boats carrying in all more than 100 people capsized in the early hours of Wednesday. Coastguard Commander M.S. Kabir said six bodies, including three children, had washed ashore.

■ ‘Fake information’

The surge of refugees - many sick or wounded - has strained the resources of aid agencies and communities already helping hundreds of thousands from previous spasms of violence in Myanmar. Many have no shelter, and aid agencies are racing to provide clean water, sanitation and food.

“People have come with virtually nothing so there has to be food,” a UN source working there said. “So this is now a huge concern - where is this food coming from for at least the elderly, the children, the women who have come over without their husbands?”

Suu Kyi spoke by telephone on Tuesday with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, who has pressed world leaders to do more to

help a population of roughly 1.1 million he says are facing genocide.

In a statement issued by her office on Facebook, Suu Kyi said the government had “already started defending all the people in Rakhine in the best way possible” and warned against misinformation that could mar relations with other countries.

She referred to images on Twitter of killings posted by Turkey’s deputy prime minister that he later deleted because they were not from Myanmar.

“She said that kind of fake information which was inflicted on the deputy prime minister was simply the tip of a huge iceberg of misinformation calculated to create a lot of problems between different countries and with the aim of promoting the interests of the terrorists,” her office said in the statement.

Suu Kyi on Wednesday met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who said he shared Myanmar’s concern about “extremist violence” in Rakhine state. Modi’s government has taken a strong stance on an influx into India of some 40,000 Rohingya

from Myanmar over the years, vowing last month to deport them all.

■ Landmines

The latest violence began when insurgents attacked dozens of police posts and an army base. The ensuing clashes and a military counter-offensive killed at least 400 people and triggered the exodus of villagers to Bangladesh.

Suu Kyi has been accused by Western critics of not speaking out for the minority that has long complained of persecution, and some have called for the Nobel Peace Prize she won in 1991 as a champion of democracy to be revoked.

Myanmar says its security forces are fighting a legitimate campaign against “terrorists” responsible for a string of attacks on police posts and the army since last October.

Myanmar officials blame militants for the burning of homes and civilian deaths. The government said 26,747 non-Muslim residents had been displaced.

However, rights monitors and Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh say the Myanmar army is trying to force them out with a campaign of arson and killings.

Myanmar has been laying landmines across a section of its border with Bangladesh for the past three days, two government sources in Dhaka said, adding that the purpose may have been to prevent the return of Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence.

Bangladesh will formally lodge a protest on Wednesday against the laying of land mines so close to the border, said the sources who had direct knowledge of the situation but asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter.

A Myanmar military source said landmines were laid along the border in the 1990s to prevent trespassing and the military had since tried to remove them, but none had been planted recently.

(Source: Reuters)

Rousseff, Lula charged in Petrobras corruption probe

Brazil has formally charged two former presidents, Dilma Rousseff and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, with racketeering for plotting to skim funds from Petrobras, the state-owned oil firm.

Brazil’s top prosecutor, Rodrigo Janot, alleged on Tuesday that eight members of the Workers Party, including Lula and Rousseff, committed a series of crimes involving Petrobras, including as cartel formation, corruption and money laundering.

They were the first criminal charges to be levelled against Rousseff, who was impeached in 2016 for breaking budgetary laws.

The news was particularly bad for the uphill battle Lula is waging to win the presidency again.

Lula, who is still Brazil’s most popular politician, is appealing a corruption conviction that would bar him from running for president in 2018.

He faces four other corruption trials.

Rousseff was Lula’s designated successor and Brazil’s first female president.

“The crimes are believed to have taken place at least from mid-2002 to May 12, 2016” when Rousseff was suspended as part of impeachment proceedings, the attorney general’s office said.

Their Workers’ Party allegedly pocketed \$475m in bribe money, “making use of public entities including Petrobras, the National Development Bank (BNDES) and the Planning Ministry”, according to the charges.

Janot alleged that much of what became a transnational corruption operation was run by Lula.

Lula’s lawyer said the law was being misused to persecute the former president.



In a statement, the Workers Party said the charges were baseless and being used to divert attention from other investigations, including one into a former federal prosecutor, referring to a case Janot announced on Monday.

A representative for Rousseff said the prosecutor’s office offered no evidence of the crimes and called on the Supreme Court to guarantee the right to defend against them.

The charges arise from the Operation Car Wash investigation that uncovered a cartel of companies paying bribes to officials to secure Petrobras contracts, revelations that have spawned a host of investigations that has shaken Brazil’s political system and economy.

Dozens of senior leaders across the political spectrum and high-ranking businessmen have been investigated or convicted since the sprawling corruption scandal broke in 2014.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

\$56m compensation awarded to Manus Island detainees

Australia will pay 70 million Australian dollars (\$56m) to asylum seekers detained in Papua New Guinea (PNG), after a senior judge approved a major compensation package.

The state of Victoria’s Supreme Court awarded the funds on Wednesday to more than 1,300 refugees held at a center on Manus Island between November 2012 and December 2014, on the grounds of illegal detention and negligent treatment.

The remainder of the almost 2,000 detainees from that period have been granted an extra two and a half weeks to join the class action and register for payment if they wish to.

Justice Cameron Macauley declared the decision, which is believed to be the nation’s largest human rights settlement, “fair and reasonable”.

■ Compensation deal

Australia offered the compensation agreement in June, more than three years after lawyers initiated the case brought against the government and two service providers operating on the island.

Officials have previously declared the deal “prudent”, but denied wrongdoing.

Australian policy dictates that asylum seekers attempting to reach the country by boat are transferred to detention facilities in the Pacific Ocean on Manus, or the island of Nauru; which was not involved in the litigation.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Nick McKim, immigration spokesperson for the Australian Greens party, said: “The government of Australia wants to appear politically tough on refugees and tough on people seeking asylum.”

As a result, political leaders have a “political imperative” to treat the detainees inhumanely, he said, and “that’s exactly what they’ve done.”

The center on Manus is due to close in October, following a PNG Supreme Court ruling last year that declared the holding of people on the island unconstitutional.

The 803 men currently detained will be moved elsewhere in PNG, or relocated to third countries, according to government officials.

Lawyers representing the refugees who generated the claim said they are seeking to secure the compensation payment before the center shuts.

“These detainees came to Australia seeking refuge, compassion and protection, which were all denied to them by successive Commonwealth governments,” said Rory Walsh of the law firm Slater and Gordon.

“Today, the group has finally been delivered justice through the Australian legal system and the Supreme Court of Victoria. The result ... will allow meaningful compensation to be paid to group members much more quickly than would otherwise have been the case.”

(Source: Al Jazeera)

China’s military practices for ‘surprise attack’ over sea near Korea

China’s air force has carried out exercises near the Korean peninsula, practicing to defend against a “surprise attack” coming over the sea, Chinese state media reported.

An anti-aircraft defense battalion carried out the exercises early on Tuesday, near the Bohai Sea, the innermost gulf of the Yellow Sea that separates China from the peninsula, an official military website www.81.cn reported.

Troops traveled to the site from central China before immediately beginning drills to fend off the “surprise attack” simulating real battle, it said.

“The troops rapid response capabilities and actual combat levels have effectively been tested,” it said.

It was the first time certain weapons, which it did not identify, had been used to shoot down low-altitude targets coming over the sea, www.81.cn said, without elaborating.

China’s Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment.

The exercise came days after North Korea carried out its sixth and largest nuclear test of an advanced hydrogen bomb and there is mounting concern internationally

that the country plans more weapons tests, possibly of a long-range missile.

After weeks of rising tension, South Korea and the United States have been discussing the deployment of aircraft carriers and strategic bombers to the Korean peninsula.

China is deeply suspicious of any U.S. backed military build up in the region and has repeatedly expressed anger at the deployment of a U.S. anti-missile defense system in South Korea.

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Economic growth touches 7% in 3 months yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — According to the latest data released by Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), the country's economic growth was seven percent, including oil revenues, for the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21, 2017).

As reported, economic growth, excluding Iran's oil income, in the said period reached 6.5 percent, compared to the same time span in the year before.

According to the published data, in the agriculture sector growth improved 3.1 percent, industrial sector (including industry, energy, building, mines, and extraction of oil and gas) grew 4.9 percent, and services sector witnessed a growth of 8.3 percent year-on-year from March 21 to June 21, 2017.



Iranian oil delivery to Russia being worked out: Novak

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said that supply of Iranian oil to Russia under the oil-for-goods mechanism is being worked out.

This issue is still under discussion, the minister told TASS.

Earlier Novak said that a contract with Iran to supply 100,000 barrels of oil per day to Russia has already been concluded. The corresponding memorandum was signed by Russia and Iran in 2014.

In February, Iran had announced that it will begin selling 100,000 barrels of oil a day to Russia within the following 15 days and receive payment half in cash and half in goods and services, according to ISNA.

Talks on EAEU-Iran partnership are close to conclusion: Russian official

The negotiations with Iran on partnership with the Eurasian Economic Union (EUEA) are close to conclusion, Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said speaking at the Eastern Economic Forum.

"We are in talks with Singapore and we are close to conclusion of negotiations with Iran," he said, noting that the talks are complicated.

Earlier, trade minister of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Veronika Nikishina said that EEC can request a mandate for signing a temporary free trade zone (FTZ) agreement between Iran and the EAEU in October 2017. Intensive talks with Iran have been on for more than eight months.

EUEA comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. *(Source: TASS)*

France proposes to end oil output by 2040 with exploration ban

France will stop granting new exploration permits next year as it seeks to end all oil and gas production by 2040, according to a draft bill presented at a cabinet meeting Wednesday.

The move would allow the government to turn down more than 40 exploration requests already made, while some existing permits may be extended to respect contracts, the presentation showed. That includes the Guyane Maritime license off French Guiana, in which Total SA has a stake, according to an adviser to Ecology Minister Nicolas Hulot, who briefed reporters in Paris.

The proposed legislation is part of President Emmanuel Macron's broader plan to take the lead against climate change, after U.S. counterpart Donald Trump ditched the landmark Paris agreement to fight global warming. While France's oil and gas output is small, the plan may affect companies such as Vermilion Energy Inc., which has several concessions, and will reduce the prospect of discoveries off French Guiana.

France pumped 6 million barrels of oil in 2015, covering just 1 percent of its demand, according to the presentation. Oil and gas exploration and production on French soil generates as much as 300 million euros (\$358 million) in annual revenue, and accounts for as many as 5,000 jobs, directly and indirectly. Existing production licenses wouldn't be extended beyond 2040 under the proposed law.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Deutsche Bank boss calls on ECB to halt cheap money

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — Deutsche Bank (DBKGn.DE) chief executive John Cryan has called on the European Central Bank to change course on providing cheap money, warning he sees price bubbles in stocks, bonds and property.

"The era of cheap money in Europe should come to an end - despite the strong euro," Cryan told a room full of bankers in Frankfurt on Wednesday, a day before the ECB's governors meet to discuss policy.

Low interest rates, money printing and a penalty charge for hoarding cash have been at the heart of attempts by the central bank to reinvigorate the 19-country euro zone economy in the wake of the 2008-09 financial crisis.

But the policy, which has seen the ECB print more than 2 trillion euros (\$2.4 trillion) so far, has been politically divisive, prompting fierce criticism from famously thrifty Germans.

Flare gas recovery deal inked with France

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) signed the first deal on flare gas recovery and utilization with a consortium comprising France's Sofregaz Company and Iran's Sanat Sazeh Samin Company in Tehran on Wednesday.

The deal valued at €41.857 million to be funded by NIOC is on recovery and utilization of about half million cubic meters of flare gas in the second refinery of South Pars gas field (phases 2 and 3) in southwest Iran. The project's implementation time is scheduled to be 24 months and it will become operational in six months.

'To be a reference in region'

Addressing the signing ceremony of the deal, Yann Aubry Lecomte, the managing director of Sofregaz Company, expressed his happiness about this project and said: "We are very happy to be in this project because it is a project for the next generation and we are very happy to participate in it. It is a very important project that we are sure will be a reference in the region."

"Three years ago we began the hard work with our partner Samin and we found the collaboration on this project very fruitful", he said and announced that the purpose of the project is to recover at least 25 percent of the flare gas.

"We are very happy for enjoying the economic advantage, the environmental benefits and the best new technology as gas engineering to recover the flare gas", the French director further underlined.

Sofregaz is a worldwide recognized player in the gas market, specialized in high level services covering the full chain of natural gas: field gathering, treatment, transmission, underground storage, liquefaction, and degasification.

'Complete transfer of technology'

Addressing the same ceremony, Kourosh Ahanj, the managing director of Sanat Sazeh Samin Company, said technology will be completely transferred to the Iranian side in this project.

"The cost of project will be returned within one and half years, so it will be a very feasible project for the country", he also highlighted.

Sofregaz started its cooperation with Iran during the sanctions time and this cooperation has been continuous over the past three years, Ahanj noted.

Iranian, Indian companies agree on joint industrial production

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In a meeting between Managing Director of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Mansour Mo'azzami and some high ranking officials and managers from Indian companies active in various industrial sectors the two sides accorded to collaborate on joint industrial production activities.

As the official website of IDRO reported, Co-Chairman of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Naushad Forbes and Indian Ambassador to Tehran Saurabh Kumar also attended the meeting held in Tehran on Wednesday.

Referring to the wide range of areas for cooperation



Sofregaz Managing Director Yann Aubry Lecomte (1st sitting L), Sanat Sazeh Samin Managing director Kourosh Ahanj (1st sitting R), POGC Managing Director Mohammad Meshkinfam (1st standing R), and NIOC Deputy Director for Engineering and Development Gholamreza Manouchehri (1st standing L)

'\$500m for flare gas recovery in other South Pars refineries'

In another part of the ceremony, Mohammad Meshkinfam, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) which is in charge of implementing South Pars development phases, said that his company has already implemented about \$70 billion worth of projects which is planned to reach \$90 billion.

"Of the rest \$20 billion, we will invest about \$500 million for flare gas recovery in the other 12 refineries of South Pars in a bid to remove the flaring problem in the region", he added.

Reducing industrial pollutants is an issue under the spotlight in most of the country's upstream projects and it is one of the serious concerns of the Iranian officials, Meshkinfam stated.

Fortunately, in the past two years and after the implantation of Iran's nuclear deal (known as Joint Compre-



hensive Plan of Action) many fruitful measures have been taken in this due that today's deal is one of their results, he explained and said: "It is hoped that it will be a beginning for the other South Pars phases and we will apply the flare recovery system in 13 refineries of the region."

"Our planning for South Pars refineries is no flaring, but unfortunately because of the sanctions and lack of cooperation from the international companies, our repair operation faced some challenges during the sanctions time. We hope that now after the sanctions there will be good cooperation between the manufacturers and developers in a way that the flaring problem will be resolved noticeably", the POGC managing director concluded.

South Pars is a giant gas field Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. It is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

between IDRO and the Indian partners, Mo'azzami said that "the held negotiations and the made cooperation on making investments and commencing joint industrial production with Indians in Iran can pave the way for joint cooperation in the long run."

During the meeting, Forbes voiced CII's readiness for starting cooperation with Iranian industrialists as well as state-run and private companies.

Referring to possible industrial areas for cooperation, the Indian Ambassador, for his turn, announced that the Indian government is ready to ease joint industrial activities with Iranian companies.

Iran's exports to Turkey grow 80% in 7 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's exports to its western neighbor, Turkey, witnessed an increase of 80 percent during the first seven months of 2017 and stood at \$4.5 billion, Tasnim news agency reported on Tuesday.

According to the latest data pub-

lished by Turkish Statistical Institute, Iran-Turkey trade transactions in the said period increased 16 percent in comparison with the preceding year, and reached \$6.3 billion from its previous \$5.4 billion.

As reported, the growth in trade between the two countries is due to the boost in imports of Turkey from Iran.

From January to July 2017, Turkey imported \$4.5 billion of goods from Iran, registering 80 percent growth from the same time span in 2016 when the figure stood at \$2.5 billion.

Meantime, Turkey's exports to Iran in the same period decreased 37 percent dropping down to \$1.8 billion in the said

period in 2017 from its previous \$2.9 billion in January-July, 2016.

Oil and gas constitute major imports of Turkey from Iran.

Iran is recognized as the 10th destination of Turkey for exporting its goods while it is the 7th supplier of goods for Turkey, the same report confirmed.

Pakistan likely to revive strategically vital Gwadar LNG project

The Pakistani government is likely to revive the stalled \$2.3 billion Gwadar LNG pipeline project, an alternative plan for laying the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, keeping in view its huge strategic importance in respect of diversification of fuel supplies and protection from the impact of any international sanctions on Iran.

Earlier, the Cabinet Committee on Energy, chaired by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, had shelved the liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline project, apparently succumbing to pressure from Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia, which has cut diplomatic

and economic ties with Qatar due to the latter's alleged support for terrorism, also forced Pakistan to sever its relationship with Qatar and Iran.

The energy committee only cited the higher cost estimated at \$2.3 billion for setting aside the project. However, according to officials, the cost also included \$600 million in duties and taxes.

Now Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, who was petroleum minister earlier, has signaled that the project would be taken up for review because of its strategic importance.

Oil up after Harvey fallout; Hurricane Irma heads into Caribbean

SINGAPORE/LONDON (Reuters) — Oil prices rose on Wednesday as strong global refining margins and the reopening of U.S. Gulf Coast refineries provided a more bullish outlook after sharp drops due to Storm Harvey.

Brent LCOC1 had gained 28 cents to \$53.66 a barrel by 0952 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures C1c1 were up 15 cents at \$48.81.

"Hurricane Harvey was bearish for crude and speculators went massively short WTI but now there is a reversal to positions pre-Harvey. Strong margins are helping underpin crude ... gasoil is at its highest point this year", Olivier Jakob of Petromatrix consultancy said.

Many refineries, pipelines and ports that were knocked out by Harvey 10 days ago are restarting. As of Tuesday, about 3.8 million barrels per day (bpd) of refining capacity, or 20 percent of the U.S. total, was shut. This compares with 4.2 million bpd at the height of the storm.

Focus was also being drawn to the Category 5 storm Hurricane Irma, which is barreling toward the Caribbean and Florida and could knock out other refineries and cause more fuel shortages.

Around 250,000 barrels of daily refining capacity in the Dominican Republic and Cuba lies in the immediate path of Irma, Thomson Reuters Eikon data showed.

Fuel storage data due on Wednesday

from the American Petroleum Institute and on Thursday from the Energy Information Administration is expected to give a better view of the extent of Harvey's impact on U.S. fuel inventories, although analysts say it will take a few weeks longer to get a complete picture.

There is also another tropical storm on Irma's heels in the Atlantic, and another one active in the Gulf of Mexico.

Longer-term, the oil industry outlook is for ample supplies and low prices as crude output remains high in the three biggest producing regions: Russia, the Middle East and North America.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Wednesday he expects the 2018



price of Brent to be \$45 to \$55 per barrel.

Analysts said oil companies had adjusted to lower prices by cutting costs and thanks to improved refinery margins.

"The oil majors are looking more comfortable at lower oil prices, posting strong quarterly results in Q2 despite weaker upstream revenue," BMI Research said in a note.

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Merkel and Schulz deliver a masterclass in stability

By Frederick Studemann

Given the frenzied nature of global politics, a bit of plodding is welcome relief.

It ran for getting on to 100 minutes, covered issues from Turkey's chances of EU membership to the raising (or not) of the pension age, but in the end the television debate between Angela Merkel and Martin Schulz could be summed up in one word: Musterfeststellung-sklage. Even by German standards this one is a cracker. Establishing an exact translation for non-native speakers



is even more of a brain teaser. Try and think along the lines of "motion for a declaratory judgment" or "petition for a sample proceeding". Rolls off the tongue, doesn't it? Yet at one point in Sunday night's primetime face-off between the two leading candidates in Germany's general election campaign, the chancellor and her Social Democrat challenger could talk of little else. Viewers lost count of the number of references to you-know-what as they crossed swords over what to do for car owners whose diesel vehicles had lost value thanks to the shenanigans of the manufacturers. (For the record: the legal instrument they were spitting about is the means for establishing the groundwork for something akin to a class-action lawsuit.) For anyone with a passing knowledge of German public life, the parsing of judicial process is wearingly familiar. The country has a highly legalistic culture that reveres detail and process. As such, the Merkel-Schulz set-to was in keeping with the style and tone of German political debate, something of a masterclass in showcasing the country's solid and serious approach.

■ Leader of the free world

Yet this year's TV debate was no normal occasion. Unlike past confrontations, this one garnered much more international attention. With Germany now cast in the role of bastion of stability and leader of the free world, many more people are following the election, ahead of the September 24 poll. To help them, Deutsche Welle, the state-owned foreign-language broadcaster, live-streamed the debate in English. The Twitter sphere was on hand to provide its characteristic flourish of erudition, moderation and wise counsel. They must have been thrilled. Forget the vicious, circus-like atmosphere of much political debate elsewhere: the cage fighting of a Trump v Hillary bout; the snippy put-downs of political set pieces in Britain; or the icy confrontation of a Macron v Le Pen rendezvous.

Instead, settle down for a courteous, often consensual exchange of views. The range of topics also raised a few eyebrows. A long section on migration, which, believe it or not, is not top of the list of issues concerning German voters right now; a bit of friendly knockabout over road tolls; how to handle the Turkish president and the approach towards Islam. If you were after a substantial view on the eurozone or how to stand up to Russia; if you wanted to learn something about the future of education or the challenge of digitalization to Europe's biggest economy; or even just one mention of Brexit — then German TV on Sunday night was not the place to find it. Some no doubt see this as a good thing.

Given the frenzied nature and tone of global politics these days, a bit of plodding stability is a welcome break. And it is not as if Germany has not provided enough fireworks in the past — something its political class is only too aware of and often addresses with a studiously measured, at times controlling, response. Perhaps. Another thing one might draw from Sunday's tête-à-tête was that it did little to banish the specter that after too many years of grand coalition between Ms Merkel's Christian Democrats and Mr Schulz's SPD, voters are being offered few real choices.

Another thing one might draw from Sunday's tête-à-tête was that it did little to banish the specter that after too many years of grand coalition between Ms Merkel's Christian Democrats and Mr Schulz's SPD, voters are being offered few real choices. One received wisdom of this so far rather dull campaign is that the real question is which party comes third and thus determines the make-up of the next coalition government. A more telling revelation came at the end of the debate when, in her closing statement, the chancellor took a stab at those future challenges — from artificial intelligence to globalization — facing Germany. In a country that is, to quote Mr Schulz, prosperous but in which not everyone is prosperous, such concerns may not be front of mind right now. That will change. And then — who knows — may well be the subject of the next "TV-Duell" in four years' time. Be sure to tune in, and invite a lawyer friend.

(Source: FT)

North Korea throws down the gauntlet to U.S. and China

Donald Trump's confusing strategy and Beijing's complacency are unlikely to stop Pyongyang's ambition to become a nuclear power.

The road seems traced. The nuclear test conducted by North Korea on September 3 shows the direction. Within the next decade, North Korea, the small poor country, closed on itself and its obsessions to be a nuclear power. It will have the full panoply: intercontinental missiles, nuclear warheads and mastery of them all. The world will be a bit more dangerous.

After a few missile shots, Sunday's test — perhaps a hydrogen bomb — marks one more step in Pyongyang's race to the absolute weapon.

Since 2003 and the cessation of Washington's negotiations in the mid-1990s, nothing has intimidated North Korea: the U.S. military gesture, international economic sanctions, the cyberattacks from the United States, the remonstrance of China. North Korea was still experiencing terrible famine in 1990, but it was looking after its laboratories.

Last of the Kim dynasty, partly raised in Switzerland, the young man at the head of North Korea (having 25 million inhabitants) does not bluff. He wants his country to be recognized as a nuclear power. He wants guarantee that his government will not be overthrown.

Kim not only addressed the United States — a Cold War enemy — that in 2003 called North Korea an "axis of evil", but also addressed China. Sunday's nuclear test took place as President Xi Jinping inaugurated a summit of major emerging economies. Kim wants Beijing to pressure Washington to admit North Korea as a nuclear power.



Since 2003 and the cessation of Washington in the mid-1990s, nothing has intimidated North Korea — nor the U.S. military gesture, nor international economic sanctions, nor the cyber attack from the United States.

The United States has continued to change its strategy vis-à-vis North Korea. The breakdown of the negotiations in 2003 had no effect other than accelerating Pyongyang's race towards nuclear power. Donald Trump making unbelievable apocalyptic threats, while his team maintains that the diplomatic channel should remain open. There are so many confused

and ineffective signals.

China, that North Korea's economic survival is dependent on it, is complacent, if not complicit. The prospect of this uncontrollable neighbor equipped with the nuclear weapon does not please Xi. But imagining a collapse of the Pyongyang system, resulting in a reunification of the Korean peninsula under the protection of South Korean

military, an ally of the United States, is much less pleasing. China accepts Kim's risk too easily.

Only a Sino-U.S. united front seems capable to prevent Pyongyang from acquiring nuclear weapons, if not other containing measure could, at least, result in the destabilizing effects. Trump and Xi are accountable for the Korean issue.

(Source: Lemodine.fr)

What is DACA and who are the Dreamers?

Donald Trump is scrapping the Obama-era program for children brought to the U.S. illegally. Here is everything you need to know about it

By Joanna Walters

Trump ends 'Dreamers' program, leaving fate of 800,000 uncertain.

The Trump administration announced on Tuesday it plans to scrap the program giving temporary legal immigration status to people who arrived in the U.S. illegally as children. Attorney general Jeff Sessions said the U.S. would end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy in March 2018, throwing almost 800,000 people who currently benefit from the program into a state of turmoil and fear. Congress now has up to six months to find a legislative alternative, after Sessions announced that new applications will no longer be accepted. But what is DACA, who are the people affected (known as "Dreamers"), and what will happen to them?

■ What is DACA?

DACA is a federal government program created in 2012 under Barack Obama to allow people brought to the U.S. illegally as children the temporary right to live, study and work legally in America. Those applying are vetted for any criminal history or threat to national security and must be students or have completed school or military service. If they pass vetting, action to deport them is deferred for two years, with a chance to renew, and they become eligible for basics like a driving license, college enrollment or a work permit.

■ Who are the 'Dreamers'?

Those protected under DACA are known as "Dreamers" and 787,580 have been granted approval. To apply, they must have been younger than 31 on 15 June 2012, when the program began, and "undocumented", lacking legal immigration status. They must have arrived in the U.S. before turning 16 and lived there continuously since June 2007. Most Dreamers are from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and the largest numbers live in California, Texas, Florida and New York. They currently range in age from 15 to 36, according to the White House.

■ Why are they called Dreamers?

The DACA program was a compromise devised by the Obama administration after Congress failed to pass the so-called Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act, which would have offered those who had arrived illegally as children the chance of permanent legal residency. The bipartisan act was first introduced in 2001 and has repeatedly failed to pass.

■ What has Trump announced?

During last year's divisive election campaign, Trump promised to rip up DACA immediately, and make the deportation of the U.S.'s estimated 11 million undocumented persons a top priority, along with his threats to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S., and build a wall along the entire border with Mexico. He has not yet successfully executed any of these threats.

The administration has now announced it will begin "an orderly, lawful wind down" of DACA, including "the cancellation of the memo that authorized this program", which was a memo from homeland secu-



ity secretary Janet Napolitano to immigration chiefs in 2012 telling them not to enforce deportation of Dreamers. Trump is now giving Congress six months to come up with a legislative solution to resolve the Dreamers' status. Because Obama created the DACA program as an executive policy decision, Trump had the power simply to reverse his policy. Meanwhile, he has indicated that the government will "generally not take actions" to remove law-abiding DACA recipients.

■ What will happen to the Dreamers?

New applications under DACA will no longer be accepted. For those currently in the program, their legal status and other DACA-related permits (such as to work and attend college) will begin expiring in March 2018 — unless Congress passes legislation allowing a new channel for temporary or permanent legal immigration status — and Dreamers will all lose their status by March 2020. Technically, as their statuses lapse they could be deported and sent back to countries of birth many have no familiarity with. It is still unclear whether this is the fate the government now has in store for them. Fear of this had been rising in the run-up to Tuesday's announcement. Those with work permits expiring between 5 September 2017 and 5 March 2018 will be allowed to apply for renewal by 5 October.

■ What has Trump said about Dreamers?

On the campaign trail in 2016, Trump said his administration would "immediately terminate President Obama's two illegal executive amnesties," by which he meant DACA and another order protecting some parents of children in the U.S., where the children had legal status but the parents were illegal immigrants. Trump did scrap the second program, which had been blocked in the courts and had never come into effect. In a speech in August 2016, in North Carolina, when talking about poverty and the elusiveness of the so-called American dream for many U.S. citizens, Trump

indirectly criticized DACA and its beneficiaries, saying: "We want our children to be Dreamers, too." But since becoming president, Trump said that he wanted to "work something out" for Dreamers. "We don't want to hurt those kids," he said. "We love the Dreamers." On Tuesday, he said: "I have advised the Department of Homeland Security that DACA recipients are not enforcement priorities unless they are criminals, are involved in criminal activity, or are members of a gang."

■ Why were Republican state attorneys general suing Trump over DACA?

After watching Trump fail to issue an executive order rescinding DACA upon taking office, and publicly dither over the Dreamers, anti-immigration Republican state leaders decided to force his hand. Many in Trump's hardline conservative base argue that DACA is unconstitutional and Dreamers are illegal and threaten American jobs and culture. Ken Paxton, the attorney general of Texas, sent a letter to Sessions (who opposes DACA) in June, threatening to add DACA to another anti-immigration lawsuit already under way against the federal government unless it cancels the program by 5 September. That letter was also signed by the attorneys general of Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. Tennessee has since reversed course and now supports DACA and finding a permanent legislative solution for those in immigration legal limbo.

■ Who supports DACA?

In addition to immigration advocates and most Democratic politicians, a majority of national politicians in the Republican party reportedly did not want Trump to scrap DACA, including such prominent figures as House speaker Paul Ryan and Arizona senator John McCain. A prominent group of evangelical leaders wrote to Trump last month telling him that Dreamers "are leading in our churches and our communities".

(Source: The Guardian)

Trump has not a valid reason for requesting visit Iran's sites: ex-CIA analyst

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Paul Pillar, who was CIA intelligence analyst for 28 years, tells the Tehran Times that "No legal or technical barriers would prevent the other parties to the JCPOA from continuing to observe the agreement even if the US withdrew."

Pillar also says "The JCPOA lays out clearly a procedure governing inspection visits to non-nuclear sites. There must be a specific reason to suspect that prohibited activity is occurring at such a site, before the IAEA can request a visit."

He also adds that "If the IAEA and Iran are unable to reach agreement regarding such a visit, than the matter goes to the Joint Commission, where if necessary Iran could be outvoted. So far neither Ambassador Haley nor anyone else in the Trump administration has presented any specific reason for an inspection visit to a non-nuclear site."

Professor at Georgetown University also adds that Trump administration has not "come up with a valid reason for requesting a visit, but it probably is searching for anything it could portray as such a reason."

Following is the text of the interview

■ **Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi has recently suggested that regardless of possible US retreatment from JCPOA, Iran will stay committed to nuclear obligations as long as EU has not pull back from it. In fact Iran tries to preserve JCPOA in case of Washington's breach of promises. What are the technical barriers to this idea? Do all European countries are required to keep their commitment despite the US withdrawal?**

A: No legal or technical barriers would prevent the other parties to the JCPOA from continuing to observe the agreement even if the US withdrew. The JCPOA as written does not explicitly address such a situation. Generally when a bargain or trade has been made that is incorporated into an international agreement, and one party fails to live up to that bargain, then the other party is re-



lieved of its commitment. In the case of the JCPOA, clearly it would be Iran, and not the European countries, that would have reason to say that it should no longer be bound to the agreement if the United States were to renege on its obligations regarding sanctions relief.

■ **What might be the reaction of 5+1 partners in case of this very likely act by Trump to pull back from JCPOA?**

A: The reaction probably would be mixed. The other P5+1 partners have declared their intention to stick to the agreement, but if placed under pressure from the U.S. administration, at least one of the European states might feel the need to follow that administration's lead. A further question is how businesses in Europe would react, which is a different question from how governments would respond. Some businesses would curtail commerce with Iran out of fear of losing the ability to do business in the United States.

■ **In a new report, IAEA reconfirmed Iran's JCPOA compliance and refused to visit the Iranian military sites despite Washington's hostile stance. However, Nikki Haley US ambassador to UN, in her recent trip to Vienna, urged IAEA to inspect all military and non-military sites. In fact, the first step of the US scenario is to put**

pressure on IAEA to ask for free access to Iran's military sites, an act Tehran shrugs off as US "dream demand". The next step is to use Iran refusal as a pretext to accuse Tehran of breaching its terms. The fact is that Trump's administration wants to breach JCPOA at the expenses of Iran. As Washington has no legitimate right to ask for inspections and it falls on IAEA to make the decision, Isn't it a political game by the US to reach some specific goals?

A: The JCPOA lays out clearly a procedure governing inspection visits to non-nuclear sites. There must be a specific reason to suspect that prohibited activity is occurring at such a site, before the IAEA can request a visit. If the IAEA and Iran are unable to reach agreement regarding such a visit, than the matter goes to the Joint Commission, where if necessary Iran could be outvoted. So far neither Ambassador Haley nor anyone else in the Trump administration has presented any specific reason for an inspection visit to a non-nuclear site. Pressing for such a visit and getting Iran to say no is one of the possible tactics that the Trump administration reportedly is considering as a way to get out of the JCPOA. The administration has not come up with a valid reason for requesting a

visit, but it probably is searching for anything it could portray as such a reason.

■ **What might be the future of JCPOA if Trump declares his withdrawal in the next report to US congress? What is Trump's alternative for Iran's nuclear deal?**

A: Trump does not have an alternative to the nuclear agreement. He just wants to fulfill his campaign rhetoric about killing the agreement. He could do any of several possible things that would be viewed as a withdrawal. He could stop issuing waivers of sanctions. He could also refuse to certify Iranian compliance. Such a refusal would be an invitation to the U.S. Congress to re-impose sanctions. A refusal to certify also could take either of a couple of different forms. Trump could contend that Iran really wasn't complying, regardless of what the IAEA had said. Or he could not say anything directly about Iranian compliance and still refuse to certify on grounds that certification was not in U.S. interests.

■ **What might be Iran's possible reaction to Trump's withdrawal from JCPOA?**

A: That is an open question, and it is unlikely that the Iranian leadership has decided what it would do. Continuing to observe the agreement, as Salehi has said, would enable Iran to enjoy commerce with the other parties to the agreement besides the U.S., and it would make it clear that any risk of complete breakdown of the agreement was the fault of the United States and not of Iran. But not having the United States on board would mean a significant reduction in the economic benefit that Iran had expected to get from sanctions relief. Iran would be experiencing anew any sanctions that the United States reimposed, as well as the reluctance of some European companies to do business with Iran because of the fear of running afoul of the extraterritorial reach of the U.S. Treasury. So there undoubtedly would be some political pressure inside Tehran to say that a U.S. withdrawal means Iran would no longer be bound by its nuclear obligations under the JCPOA.

Why is Gabriel angry with Erdogan?

By Saeed Sobhani

Sigmar Gabriel, one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party in Germany, strongly harbored Erdogan and his positions on the prohibition of German-speaking Turkish citizens from voting for Social Democrats and Greens in the election.

Turkish-German affairs are under the influence of new developments every day. As it happens, it is becoming more critical. Despite the fact that the Turkish foreign minister, Chuvash Oghlo, has long ago promised to reform the relations between Berlin and Ankara in the near future, current evidence suggests a dominant crisis-influence on German-Turkish relations.

In the latest crisis between the two countries, the arrest of a German-Turkish writer in Spain has prompted German officials and politicians on the orders of the Turkish government. The writer has been captured by Turkey following an interpol police investigation in Spain.

The Turkish action has been condemned by German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and other officials in the country. Also, a few days ago, German authorities accused Turkey of political interference in the national elections in Germany.

The problem is that, according to German authorities, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has asked Turkish citizens in Germany not to vote for the Christian

Democrats, Social Democrats and Green parties in the upcoming elections.

Erdogan called these three parties Turkish enemies. The existence of about 1.2 million qualified Turk citizens in Germany has caused the German authorities' sensitivity to Erdogan's request.

Meanwhile, the German Social Democrats are most concerned about the fact that most German-born Turk people traditionally vote for the Social-Democratic Party. Accordingly, about 65 percent of German people usually turn their voices to the Social Democratic party, and the rest, turn their votes for the Left, the Greens and the Christian Democrats.

It is not unreasonable that Sigmar Gabriel, as one of the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party in Germany, is very angry with Erdogan and his positions. Gabriel is well aware that Erdogan's order to boycott the election by Turk-German citizens is more likely to end at the expense of his party, and on the other hand, paves the way for the victory of Angela Merkel and the Christian Democrats. Erdogan recently claimed that the tensions between Berlin and Ankara would be reduced by holding national elections in Germany!

However, such a claim does not conform to existing facts. Probably the next German government will be formed by Christian Democrats and Christian-party coalition, or jointly by Christian Democrats and Democrats.



The occurrence of both of these probabilities would be Erdogan's loss, since the Turkish president has named both the traditional German parties, who have the most votes among the Germans, the enemy of Ankara.

In such a situation, the confrontation between Berlin and Ankara will remain strong regardless of any outcome achieved in the national elections in Germany. One of the things that we have witnessed in this regard is the expression of Germany's more open opposition to Turkish membership in the European Union. Merkel and Sigmar Gabriel have intensified their opposition to Ankara over the past year, especially after the failed coup in Turkey and the holding of a referendum on increasing President's power in the country. A trend that will certainly continue in the next German government.

British Exit from Europe; yes or no?

By Ana Sadat Hosseini

Over the past few days, controversial news has been heard about Brexit. It seems that the British exit from the European Union will not come to an end soon. The warnings by the British and European institutions regarding Brexit are indicative of a targeted plan pursued by both sides of the British and Europeans. In this regard, there are some points that need to be addressed:

First, British public opinion looks more confused than ever. The approach of British and European politicians has intensified this trend. The outcome of this process will be the British public opinion's withdrawal from the Brexit.

As noted above, the British and European authorities are seeking to lead British public opinion to collective opposition against Brexit. Under such circumstances, European officials may force British citizens to vote in a new referendum. Recently, Malta's prime minister, whose country is a member of the European Union, has announced that Brexit will not happen!

This comment suggests that Europe is pursuing a purposeful and sophisticated game on Brexit. People like former British Prime Minister Tony Blair play an important role in this game. Recently, Tony Blair has announced that he will return to the political world to cope with Brexit.



This statement by Tony Blair at the time was not taken seriously by some English and European media, but at this moment, the meaning of Blair's commentary is better understood. An overview of recent polls about Brexit highlights this issue.

For example, the Independent reported that The outcome of Brexit referendum would be reversed if it was held once again, a poll suggests. This poll has been released on 3 July 2017. The Survation survey showed a clear majority of Britons (54 per cent) would vote to Remain in the European Union if another referendum was

held, while 46 per cent would back Brexit. What is obvious is that the British public's opposition to Brexit has risen after the referendum last year. The joint approach of British and European officials has strengthened this trend.

The second point is the political situation of Theresa May, the prime minister of Britain and the conservatives. The general dissatisfaction with May's performance has increased in recent months in Brexit negotiations. The same thing encourages the British prime minister to wipe out the whole issue. May knows well that Brexit talks can turn into Achilles' heels of her power. If the British prime minister cannot succeed in this field, she will face dissatisfaction of the opposition parties and public opinion. Under such conditions, May will become the second victim of Brexit (after former British prime minister, David Cameron.)

Hence, stopping talks and returning to the pre-2016 referendum will be more desirable for Theresa May and her party. However, supporters of British withdrawal from the European Union will do their best to prevent a return to pre-2016 time. They know well that there are ongoing efforts by Britain and the European Union to prevent London from leaving EU. What is certain is that the riddle of Brexit can't be easily solved! This is a problem that Britain will face for years to come in its foreign policy and economy.

Reducing the level of U.S.-Russian relations

By Saeed Sobhani

President Donald Trump still remains confused about the "Moscow riddle". On the one hand, there are evidences suggesting Trump's reluctance to increase the level of relations with Moscow, and on the other hand, the current facts in the international system have shown that relations between Russia and the United States have declined since the presence of Trump at the White House.



The expulsion of American and Russian diplomats along with warnings given from both sides reveal an abnormal situation in relations between the two countries. On the other hand, the recent condemnation of Russia by the US Congress and the signature of these sanctions by Donald Trump, has made the White House and the Kremlin's opposition more prominent.

The fact is that during the 2016 presidential election, Russia wanted a victory for Donald Trump and the failure of Democrats. The disclosure of Hillary Clinton's emails on the one hand and the connections that existed between Trump and Russia election teams are issues that cannot be easily ignored. However, Trump faces hurdles to revive Washington-Moscow relations. One of these obstacles is the pressure of Democrats and even traditional Republicans on this issue.

Many traditional Republicans, such as Arizona State Senator John McCain, have warned Trump about restoring ties with Russia. In other words, the threat posed by the American authorities, including the Democrats and the Republicans, remains strong in Moscow.

It should not be forgotten that, in the current circumstances, one of the main charges brought against Donald Trump is his secret connection with Russian authorities (during the presidential campaign and the 2016 elections). Of course Trump has repeatedly rejected this charge. However, security officials in the United States continue to investigate this issue. In this situation, Trump has preferred to continue the previous approach of US presidents in opposition to Moscow.

Issues such as the inspection of Russian Consulate in San Francisco have raised the anger of Russian officials from Washington. Russian officials have announced that if Russia's consulate gets checked by the FBI in San Francisco, this would be a violation of the Russian diplomat's immunity law.

It should be noted that the US State Department recently called on Moscow to close its consulates in San Francisco, Washington and New York. Russian Foreign Minister Arkady Lavrov warned Americans in this regard.

However, Sergei Lavrov and other Russian officials know that the normalization of relations between the United States and Russia is not possible at least in the near future! Trump knows well that any action taken by him and his associates that may improve the ties with Russia will strengthen the security and political pressure on his team at the White House. For example, we saw this issue after the G20 summit in Hamburg.

At that meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Donald Trump. Although the presidents of the United States and Russia considered the visit to be useful, afterwards we witnessed the deterioration of the relation and full diplomatic confrontation between Washington and Moscow. Also, many members of the party have opposed the normalization of relations with Moscow. The sanctions imposed by the Senate and the House of Representatives against Russia (with the vast majority of delegates and senators) showed that Trump's maneuver for restoring ties with Moscow was much more limited than it was thought!

Hence it is impossible to talk about reviving Russian-US relations in the near future. Anyhow some political analysts believe that a promotion in Russian-American relations is possible only during Trump presidency, since there are few Presidents in the White House who would like to be in touch with Moscow.

Since his presence at the White House, Donald Trump has received advice from Henry Kissinger, the American veteran strategist about restoring relations with Russia, but as mentioned, Trump is facing difficult obstacles in performing these recommendations. Will Democrats And Republicans allow Trump to Increase the relationship between Washington and Moscow in future?

Obviously, the answer to this question is not positive. Even if he wants to, Trump can't do anything about the difficult obstacles that Congress and US security agencies have created against him. Russian officials have recently stressed that US-Russian relations have reached its lowest level during Trump presence at the White House. In other words, the Russian authorities' desire to improve bilateral relations has not been met after the arrival of Trump at the White House. The process which Trump will at best be able to maintain unchanged in coming years. Otherwise, he does not have the power to change this situation fundamentally.

Why Serbia must recognize Kosovo's independence

Brussels insists Serbia normalize relations with Kosovo before it can join the European Union. So far 114 countries have recognized Kosovo's independence. However, Serbia campaigns against Kosovo's efforts to gain greater global recognition.

It also supports parallel private structures in North Kosovo, which undermine Kosovo's sovereignty and foment unrest among Kosovo Serbs. The Kosovo-Serbia conundrum can be solved with more effective international mediation. Diplomacy works best when Europe and the United States work together.

Recent statements by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic give rise to optimism. He called on the Serbian nation to "stop burying its head in sand" on the issue of Kosovo, and start an "internal dialogue." He told Serbs to "be realistic."

A grand bargain may be in the works. While normalization starts by addressing many bilateral issues, it all comes down to Serbia's recognition of Kosovo's independence. Recognition would lead to Kosovo's membership in the United Nations. Kosovo and Serbia would negotiate the EU's membership criteria, ultimately entering the EU at the

same time.

■ Framework of negotiations

A framework for negotiations already exists. The Kosovo-Serbia dialogue was launched by the EU in 2011. Kosovo and Serbia finalized agreements on technical issues such as freedom of movement, integrated border management, and license plates. However, implementation has been uneven. The 2013 Brussels Agreement affirmed a "European future" for Kosovo and Serbia. At best, there is patchy progress on the political track.

Existing agreements must be enforced. The EU should suspend its mediation if either side stonewalls its commitments. An official EU Monitoring Mechanism would report to member states via the Political Security Committee of the EU Council.

The EU should condition funds provided to Kosovo and Serbia through its Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance Program. "No progress, no chapters" would be the guiding principle, linking progress in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue to Serbia's EU aspirations.

Mediators need an end game to their diplomacy. The Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Martti Ahtisaari, who served as

UN special envoy from 2005 to 2008, knew the outcome of his efforts before taking the job.

Today's mediators need strategic and moral clarity.

A new format could galvanize negotiations. The EU should appoint an international heavyweight as special envoy. Wolfgang Schauble, Germany's finance minister, has clout and negotiating experience. He would be formidable in this role. Given her overall experience and work in the Balkans as U.S. secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice would be ideal as the U.S. special representative.

Dialogue cannot be open-ended. Mediators should set a deadline of 18 months. The clock would start ticking when the dialogue is upgraded and relaunched.

The people of Kosovo and Serbia must be kept informed. The Kosovo and Serbia delegations could include a "unity team," comprised of major political parties and civil society representatives.

A deal won't be easy. There is a plethora of bilateral issues to be addressed. There are up to 1,500 missing persons from the war. A Regional Commission for Facts about War Crimes could help assuage the families of victims. An estimated \$1.5 billion in Kosovo pension funds and a \$600,000

privatization fund were seized by Serbia. In turn, Serbia wants to recover the value of its investments in Kosovo. A compensation plan is needed. Kosovo needs a comprehensive plan to integrate Kosovo Serbs, while providing local autonomy to enhance minority rights.

■ International system

Lack of progress has a negative impact in both Kosovo and Serbia. Failure to fully integrate into the international system undermines Kosovo's economy, which suffers from 30 percent unemployment and even higher youth unemployment. Lack of economic development has fueled an underground economy.

Serbia is stigmatized by its genocidal practices during the 1990s. It remains a borderline failed state, caught between its dark history, European aspirations and Russia's nefarious influence. Absent economic reforms, Serbia has become a hub for organized crime and all sorts of trafficking. North Kosovo is run by a criminal gang under Belgrade's control. A mutually symbiotic relationship exists between gangs in North Kosovo and their mafia counterparts in Serbia and the region.

(Source: The Washington times)

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How your sleep position affects your health

You turn off the lights and get yourself ready to snooze. Are you on your back, side, or stomach? Your sleep position can be linked to things like back pain, snoring, and how often you wake up during the night. It may even say some things about your personality.

■ **On your belly**

Are you a tummy sleeper? If so, do you have problems sleeping? Your slumber pose may not be helping. You're more likely to be restless and toss and turn to get comfortable when you sleep on your belly. It can strain your neck and your lower back, too. If this is how you like to sleep, you may want to use a very soft pillow or none at all to keep your neck comfortable.

■ **Belly position: Freefall**

About 7% of the population sleeps this way. You lie on your belly with your arms around a pillow and your head turned sideways. If this is your favorite sleep position, some research suggests you may be more likely to speak your mind and be sociable and outgoing. You also may not be very open to criticism.

■ **Back sleeping**

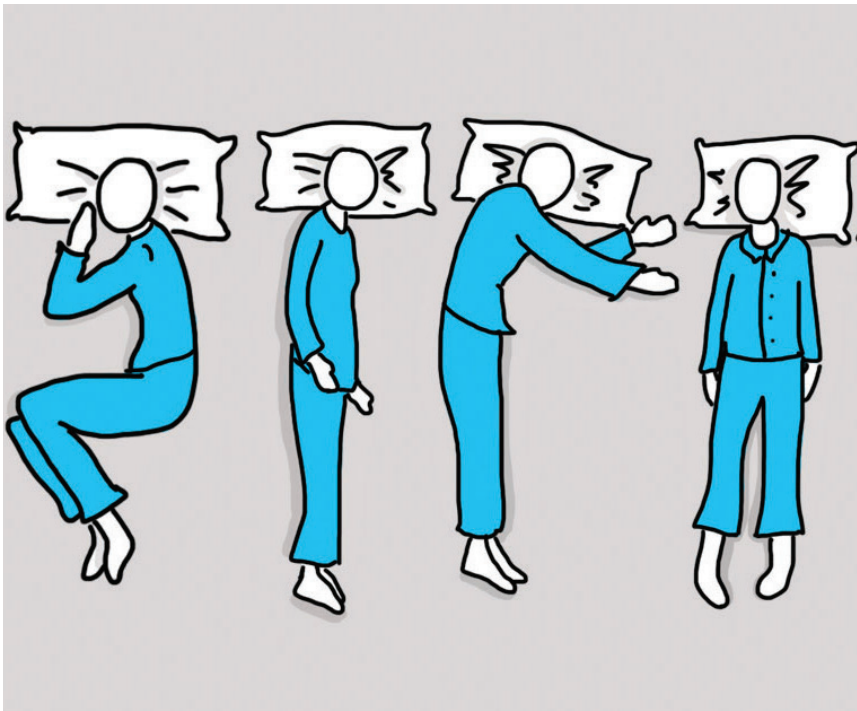
This position can cause low back pain for some people. And if you already have that, it can make it worse. If you snore or have sleep apnea, it can make those bigger problems, too. If you have one of these issues and can't get comfortable another way, talk to your doctor about what might help.

■ **Back position: Soldier**

This position is favored by about 8% of the population. You sleep with your arms down and close to your body. Some research suggests you may be more likely to be quiet and keep to yourself. You also may expect a lot from yourself and from others.

■ **Back position: Starfish**

Only about 5% of people sleep this way. You lie on your back with your arms up near your head. According to some studies, you may be more likely to be a good listener



If you are pregnant, it's usually more comfortable -- and healthier for you and your baby -- if you sleep on your side, because it may get more blood and nutrients to your baby.

and not want to be the center of attention.

■ **Side sleeping**

There are many ways to sleep on your side, but the most comfortable is with your knees bent slightly toward your chest -- the fetal position.

■ **Side position: Fetal**

More than 40% of people sleep in this curled-up side-sleeping position. It's the most common position for women -- they're twice as likely as men to sleep like this. Some research suggests you may be more likely to be warm, friendly,

and sensitive, but you also may have a protective shell around you.

■ **Side position: Log**

This is when you sleep on your side with both arms down. About 15% of people "sleep like a log." Some research says you may tend to be social, easygoing, and trusting.

■ **Side position: Yearner**

About 13% of people sleep in this side position with their arms out in front of their bodies. If you sleep like this, some studies say you may be open-minded, but

suspicious, and stubborn about sticking to a decision once you've made it.

■ **Side position: Spooning**

With your body close to your partner, you may wake up more often, but cuddling can be good for you. It makes your body release a chemical called oxytocin that can help lower your stress, bond you to your partner, and help you get to sleep faster.

■ **If you snore**

To keep the noise level down at night, side sleeping is best. If you like to sleep on your back, stacking up a few pillows may help. See your doctor if your snoring makes you gasp for breath or feel tired the next day, or if it wakes you (or your partner) up. Loud snoring can be a sign that you may have sleep apnea -- a condition that stops and restarts your breathing when you sleep. It can lead to stroke, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

■ **If you have back pain**

Side sleeping wins for this, too. To take even more pressure off your hips and back, you can put a pillow between your legs. If you're a back sleeper, you might put one under your knees to keep the natural curve of your back.

■ **If you're pregnant**

It's usually more comfortable -- and healthier for you and your baby -- if you sleep on your side. And the left side may be better, because it may get more blood and nutrients to your baby. If you have back pain, put a pillow under your belly to support the weight. It can also help to bend your knees and put a pillow between your legs.

■ **What about your mattress?**

A mattress that works with your sleep style and body type can help with many issues. It should be firm enough to support your back and sleep position, but soft enough to fit the shape of your body. This isn't always easy to figure out. Some stores will let you test a mattress for several weeks and change it out if it doesn't work for you.

(Source: webmd.com)

Putting off retirement may benefit your brain, health, and longevity

The purpose and engagement of a job you love can keep you healthy and connected.

While many women dream of kicking back and relaxing into retirement, there's increasing evidence that in some cases, it's better for your brain and your health to keep your nose to the grindstone a little longer.

"The research to date is mixed, but it tends toward the positive -- that is, for many people, there are health benefits to working longer," says Dr. Nicole Maestas, associate professor of health care policy at Harvard Medical School.

The right job, she says, can keep you connected socially; it can help you stay physically active; and it can give you a purpose, a challenge, or a creative outlet. These factors have all been shown to contribute to health over the long term.

■ **Retirement on the brain**

One 2016 study in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health suggests that retiring early may actually increase your risk of dying early. Findings showed that healthy people who postponed retirement and chose to retire a year later than those in a comparison group had an 11% lower risk of dying from any cause during the study period (1992 to 2010). Retirees with health problems also lived longer when they postponed retirement. Another study, by the French government's health research agency, linked a later retirement to a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Working longer may also help you retire more comfortably when you do decide it's time. Women who stay on the job longer can earn back income lost during breaks they took earlier in their careers. In one recent study, Dr. Maestas found that women gain more financial return than men do from continuing to work through their

50s and 60s. "And it has the added benefit of boosting their Social Security benefits," she says.

However, it's important to note that while the research may be leaning in favor of working longer for better health, not all studies show benefits -- or even a connection. In a study in the Journal of Health Economics, Australian researchers concluded that it's actually your overall health -- not your retirement age--that affects longevity.

The variation in findings may reflect two challenges inherent in this area of study. First, it's difficult for researchers to determine which came first, health problems or retirement. "While work may affect your health, at the same time your health affects your ability to work," says Dr. Maestas. A second challenge is that existing research has studied the effects of retirement on different groups of people. Some may benefit from retiring sooner, others from working longer. "Researchers haven't figured out yet who gets the benefits and who doesn't," says Maestas.

These mixed findings make sense when you think about how the job you do and the environment you work in can influence your health. While a positive work environment may improve your health, the opposite may be true for women who work in hostile environments that cause them physical or psychological stress, involve physical risks, or are monotonous and uninspiring, says Dr. Maestas. "So, if there is one message to women, it is to continue to work if you experience the work environment in a positive way; otherwise, you might consider transitioning to a new position--perhaps even within the same company," she says.

The good news is that today women have more flexibility than ever when mulling whether to retire or stay at work a few years longer. "One helpful trend in this regard



is that 'retirement' is no longer an all-or-nothing decision like it used to be," says Dr. Maestas. In some cases, women reshape their jobs rather than leave them altogether. "Many people reduce hours, change jobs, downshift to less demanding positions, or change occupations. Some people take short breaks to reboot skills or take a trip," says Dr. Maestas. "Some people will later upshift for a period of time if a great opportunity comes along. They may even start a business."

Ultimately, for most women, the decision about when to retire will depend on a variety of considerations, from family needs to health and future plans. "But it is worth placing more weight on the long view -- working longer can enhance financial security and, under some circumstances and for some people, may even boost your health," says Dr. Maestas. "In my opinion, women should try to maintain engagement in the workforce for as long as possible."

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Common sore throat or something else?

We all know that raw, scratchy feeling in the back of the throat. It could just be dry winter air, seasonal allergies, or a plain old cold. But it also could be a bacterial condition, like strep, or a viral infection or something else. Only your health care provider can tell for sure. But you can look for a few signs on your own.

■ **Take a good look**

Grab a flashlight, look in the mirror, and say, "Ahhh." You could find some important clues. You might see white dots or patches in the back of your throat. Your tonsils -- the bumps on either side at the back of your throat -- might be red and swollen, too. These could be signs of bacterial infection like strep throat or oral thrush, or a viral infection like oral herpes or mononucleosis. They also might be something else, like tonsil stones, which are painful calcium deposits on your throat.

■ **Do you have cold symptoms?**

If you have a cough and drippy nose along with your sore throat, that could be good news. You may feel crummy, but you're less likely to have a serious infection. You probably just have a common cold virus and post-nasal drip.



■ **Do you have a fever?**

Colds can cause a fever, but it's usually just a mild one. If you have a sore throat and a fever over 101 F, it's more likely to be a throat infection like strep than a simple cold. But these don't always raise your temperature -- so watch for other symptoms.

■ **Are your lymph nodes swollen?**

The most common reason is infection -- viral or

bacterial. Lymph nodes trap and destroy germs, and they can swell up when they start to fight an infection. You might feel them under your jaw or on either side of your neck. But it doesn't always mean anything serious. Even the common cold can cause swollen lymph nodes.

■ **How much does it hurt?**

When a cold causes your sore throat, it can be plenty painful, but it usually goes away after a couple of days. Bacterial infections, like strep throat, tend to cause more severe pain that doesn't get better. With strep, it may hurt so much that you can barely swallow. Sometimes, it can cause nausea, loss of appetite, headaches, or stomach pain as well.

■ **Is there a rash?**

A rash on your neck and chest that sometimes spreads to the rest of your body can be a sign of a group of bacterial infections called streptococcal infections. The most minor of these is strep throat, but they also include more serious ones, like scarlet fever, bacteremia (bacteria in the blood), and toxic shock syndrome. They all need to be treated by a doctor -- usually with antibiotics -- as soon as possible.

(Source: webmd.com)

4 things I learned about grief, loss, and healing after my dad's death

By Susie Moore

My dad died when I was 19, when he was almost 60. He was a writer like me. He was also an addict. It was expected (he had a bad heart and no plans to surrender his vices), but it was still a shock when it actually happened. Sometimes it feels like 14 years ago. Sometimes it feels like it all happened so recently--especially when he visits me in dreams.

When I reflect upon what I've learned about loss, grief, and life in the years since, these are four truths I know for sure:

1. Love is stronger than death.

I still have a father. He lives within me and my sister and in our memories. When I make an English roast dinner, drive a car (he taught me how), play Scrabble or cards, read the classics, watch English television, and even sit down to write, I feel his presence. The first time I held the book I'd authored in my hands, I felt him say, "I told you so! You did it."

When someone leaves your life, all that's gone is his or her physical form. That notion has been tremendously comforting to me.

2. Spending real time with loved ones is important.

I visit my mum in the U.K. twice per year. Life is busy, yes. But making time for the people you love matters. Spend time with your parents (and everyone who's important to you). And try not to spend all the time you're with them on your phone.

Ask them questions. What did they think about the world when they were your age? What were they doing? What year were they the happiest? What are their favorite memories of you? Write it down too! You'll revisit those stories many times in your life.

3. Just because someone looks OK doesn't mean they are OK.

After losing her husband suddenly last year, Sheryl Sandberg said, "Don't ask someone who's grieving, 'How are you?' Ask, 'How are you today?'"

Emotions for someone who's grieving are a roller coaster-- they can go from laughter to tears in seconds. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and we should never judge anyone who is experiencing grief. The process is deeply personal. I don't talk about my father unless it's with my family or I'm speaking to someone going through a similar experience. I don't want sympathy or questions. This is my way of handling things, and that's OK.

4. Death can inspire you to live life to its fullest.

If I live to my dad's age (and I hope to live much longer than that), my life is already more than halfway through. This sounds scary, but to me, it's motivating. Death gives life meaning. When I contemplate my own imminent death one day, I feel courageous, fearless, and powerful. You're allowed to feel this way too. The hardest lessons bring the greatest freedoms.

I think of my dad every day--especially when something funny happens. And I talk to him every time I achieve a significant milestone. I admit: I'm jealous when I see other people with their dads. And that's OK too. I practice compassion for my own emotions, which I consider the highest form of self-care.

My grief has changed shape over the years, but it's true what they say about time. My physical pangs of suffering are fewer now. And in moments of questioning, the most healing thing I can think to do is live a life he would be proud of. Because we'll always be in it together.

(Source: greatist.com)

Health buzz: This group of drugs is trying to help you age healthily

By David Oliver

Someday, aging and developing chronic diseases might not be so synonymous. At least that's what Mayo Clinic researchers are hoping to change.

They say if certain drugs -- which have already been proven to help animals age healthily -- could prove safe and effective for humans, they could halt or delay such diseases all at the same time, according to a review article published Monday in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

The drugs in question are known as senolytic agents that target senescent cells -- cells that have stopped dividing and started secreting toxic chemicals, thus hurting nearby cells. These cells add up as people age and are linked to conditions like diabetes, dementia and most cancers.

Mayo Clinic researchers were the first to create senolytic drugs to go after these cells and published their efforts in Nature Communications. Now they're looking at the challenges ahead as they move toward clinical trials.

■ **And what could those clinical trials look like?**

Study author Dr. James Kirkland, director of the Kogod Center on Aging at the Mayo Clinic, told CNN they might involve testing whether the drugs could aid older adults with frailty or treat diseases linked to chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

The possibilities don't stop there. "One possible clinical trial strategy is to test this class of drugs in an age-related disease, such as neurodegeneration, like Parkinson's disease, to see if it can reduce clinical severity of the disease and improve tissue functions," Dr. Kang Zhang, founding director of the Institute for Genomic Medicine at the University of California-San Diego, told CNN. Zhang did not work on the paper.

One caveat to keep in mind is that not every development will prove fruitful -- or timely. "I think it's important to recognize that a drug discovery is among the most important of all human activities ... but it takes time, and there must be a recognition of that, and it takes patience," Unity Biotechnology's president, Nathaniel David, told CNN. His company is striving to pioneer the finding that taking out senescent cells could mean curing human diseases.

(Source: usnews.com)

Grape festival time in northwest Iran

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN**—The fifth grape festival of Iran kicks off today in Urmia, the capital of



A poster for the fifth Urmia Grape Festival

Hundreds of acres of vineyards lie within the limits of the northwestern province.

Iran's tourism industry is booming

By Zahraa Alkhalisi

Once off limits to many because of international sanctions, Iran is making a big comeback as a tourist destination.

More than 6 million people visited Iran in the year ending March 2017, up 50% on the previous year and three times the number in 2009, according to official data.

The surge in visitors follows the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers that resulted in many sanctions being lifted early the following year.



A foreign tourist looks at a Sassanid era (224–651 CE) bas-relief carving at the Naqsh-e Rostam necropolis northwest of Persepolis, near Shiraz in southern Iran.

European airlines such as British Airways and Lufthansa (DLAKY) resumed direct flights to the country, and Iranian authorities relaxed visa requirements. And as more people arrive, demand for accommodation is skyrocketing.

That's creating opportunities for local entrepreneurs and foreign businesses.

Unlike some Western firms, who are reluctant to invest in Iran because they fear President Trump could yet torpedo the nuclear deal, international hotel chains are moving fast to meet the need for more rooms.

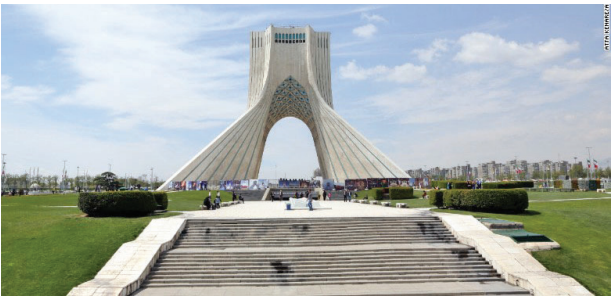
France's Accor (ACCYY) was the first chain to open in Iran in 2015. It now operates two hotels there.

Spain's Melia (SMIZF) will open its first hotel next year. Rotana of the United Arab Emirates also has one hotel in the pipeline for early next year and plans three more by 2020.

EasyHotel, a U.K.-based budget chain, is reported to have signed a deal in July to deliver 500 rooms. It did not respond to a request for comment.

And the market clearly has room for many more players. Iran wants to attract more than 20 million visitors by 2025, according to the state tourism agency.

Many of the new visitors are young backpackers from Europe and Asia, drawn by Iran's history and culture. The most popular destinations include the ancient cities of Esfahan and Shiraz. It's also home to Persepolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Azadi Tower in the Iranian capital, Tehran

Many of those travelers are looking for budget accommodation, said Jalal Rashedi, who runs five hostels across the country. He offers bed and breakfast for as little as \$15 a night, including internet access.

"During the past few years we have had a rise in the number of tourists who are young, and they're individual travelers," he told CNN. "They're young, curious, adventurous people who want to discover the truth about Iran, and they mostly stay at hostels."

A World Economic Forum report earlier this year named Iran as the world's cheapest travel destination.

But travelers still face obstacles.

Americans, Brits and Canadians need to apply for a visa in advance, while citizens of many other Western countries can get one on arrival.

And because some sanctions remain in place, the country has few links to international banking networks and Western credit cards won't work there.

That means it can be difficult to make payments in advance to secure reservations. To get around that, Rashedi launched a website to allow travelers to make reservations at his hostels, and those operated by others, without payments.

(Source: CNN)

Eyeing UNESCO status, Great Wall of Gorgan to undergo restoration



An undated photo depicts previously excavated parts of the Great Wall of Gorgan in northern Iran.

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — The ancient Great Wall of Gorgan, northern Iran, is projected to be restored with an eye to get UNESCO World Heritage status.

Sections of the gigantic monument, dated from Sasanian-era (224 to 651 CE), have already been unearthed. The vestiges and remains of certain parts of the wall can be visited today, though they're not easy to find.

Built from 420s to 530s CE, the Great Wall of Gorgan served as a defense system stretched along southeastern parts of the Caspian Sea near modern Gorgan in Golestan Province.

The wall stretches for almost 200 km

and is dotted by a total of 38 forts. It is the longest fort-lined ancient barrier between Central Europe and China, it is longer than Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall put together.

It is also more than three times the length of the longest late Roman defensive wall built from scratch, the Anastasian Wall west of Constantinople. The combined area of the forts on the Gorgan Wall exceeds that of those on Hadrian's Wall about threefold. These figures do not take into account that a substantial section in the west appears to be buried under marine sediments of the Caspian Sea.

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism and

Handicrafts Organization has set an agenda for compiling an all-inclusive dossier on the landmark monument to be submitted to the United Nations' cultural agency, Mehr quoted CHTHO Deputy Director Mohammad-Hassan Talebian as saying on Monday.

Commenting on difficulties to collect such comprehensive data, the official explained "Historical studies are relatively time-consuming and different from those of development projects."

The organization will also conduct an extensive restoration work on parts of the ancient monument which have already been excavated, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Talebian emphasized the importance of worldwide recognition of the great wall, adding "We hope that the global registration of the site will come to a conclusion next year."

The Great Wall of Gorgan and its associated monuments provide a unique testimony to the engineering skills and military organization of the Sassanian Empire, which, in its heyday, was involved in a series of wars at its northern frontiers, first against the Hephthalites or White Huns and later against the Turks.

In some archeological sources, the Great Wall of Gorgan is referred to as the Red Snake due to the color of its bricks.

Rehabilitation work restarts at Takht-e Soleyman

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A new round of restoration works on the UNESCO-registered Takht-e Soleyman ("Solomon's Throne") in northwest Iran has recently been commenced by a team of Iranian and German experts.

"The new season for refurbishing and buttressing the archeological ruins of Takht-e Soleyman has been started in close collaboration with experts from Germany's Dresden University of Technology," manager of the ancient site told IRNA on Tuesday.

"The site is being rehabilitated continuously and annually, with a total budget of 16 billion rials (about \$420,000) allocated for the current [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 21)," Mohammad Fat'hi added.

Under a memorandum of understanding, the Dresden University experts will participate in various conservation projects across the massive site until 2021, Fat'hi said, adding the current season is expected to end by the next two months.

Situated in the southeastern highlands of West Azarbaijan province, Takht-e Soleyman encompasses a lake roughly 80 by 120 meters and a Sassanid-era Zoro-



Scaffolding poles support portions of Takht-e Soleyman, a UNESCO-registered historical site in northwest Iran.

astrian temple complex dedicated to Anahita, an ancient goddess of fertility, parts of which were rebuilt in the 13th century during the Ilkhanid era.

The ensemble was established in a geologically anomalous location as the base of the temple complex sits on an oval mound roughly 350 by 550 meters. It draws local and foreign travelers who want even for min-

uets revel in its peaceful atmosphere.

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, its surrounding landscape was probably first inhabited sometime in the 1st millennium BC. Some construction on the mound itself dates from the early Achaemenian dynasty (559–330 BC), and there are traces of settlement activity from the Parthian period.

Intl. Festival of Tribes Culture underway



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A photo collection depicts artisans participating in and visitors to the 11th International Festival of Tribes Culture in Golestan province, northern Iran, September 5, 2017.

The first leg of the event opened in the city of Gorgan on September 4 and will last for four days. The city of

Gonbad-e Kavus will host the second leg from September 9-11.

The event features nationwide handicrafts, souvenirs, ethnic rituals, and traditional music performances. It is also mingled with an outdoor venue for setting up massive ethnic tents called siah chador (black tent) where

regional cuisine and dishes are under spotlight.

Over the past couple of years, dozens of Iranian handicrafts have been honored with the UNESCO Seal of Excellence. In 2010, a total of 65 crafts on various themes including enamel, tile, metalwork, leatherwork, wood carving received the privilege.

Iranian researchers develop a new combo method to combat cancer

Iranian researchers at the Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, have introduced a new method to combat cancer by combining photodynamic therapy and cold atmospheric plasma.

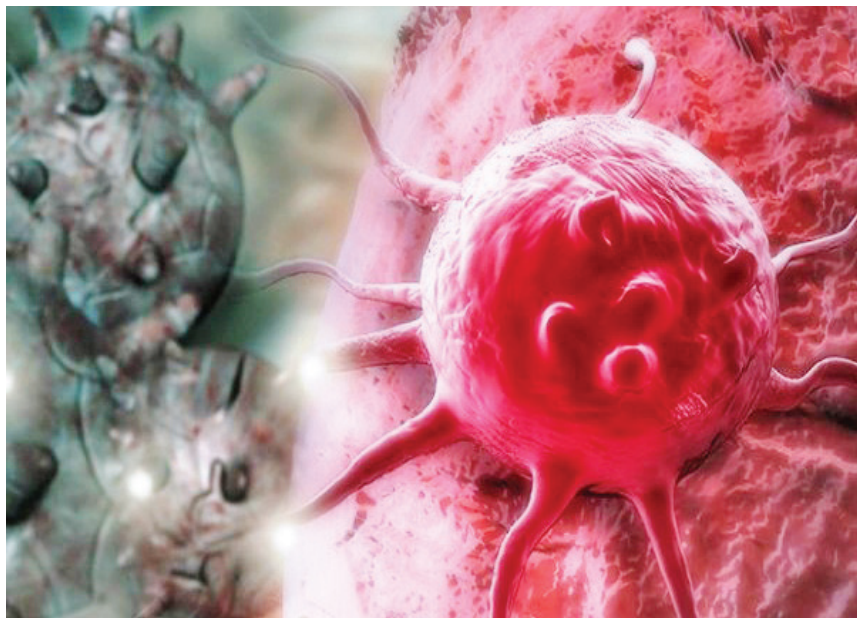
Leila Karami, Ph.D. student of Radiology Engineering and a researcher at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, said her project has been conducted on human lung cancer cells and it took her three years to prove the hypothesis of the thesis.

Photodynamic therapy (PDT) is recognized as an effective way to treat a variety of types of cancer, especially skin cancer. Although the method is relatively inexpensive and non-invasive, its effectiveness is less than that of radiotherapy.

New method

Karami went on to add, a "newer method is currently under investigation in the world and also in the Physics Research Center of the Science and Research Branch, which is called cold atmospheric plasma (CAP) and is used in treatment of various types of cancer, especially skin cancer."

"Each of these two methods has their own limitations. For example, the application of PDT will reduce the amount of



"Each of these two methods has their own limitations. For example, the application of PDT will reduce the amount of oxygen in the tissues under radiation," says the researcher.

oxygen in the tissues under radiation, while the oxygen atoms generated by the plasma are recombined at the radiation site and provide the required oxygen," she explained.

"In this research, which was introduced to the scientific community for the first time in the world, we have succeeded in combining photodynamic therapy (PDT) and cold atmospheric plasma (CAP) to increase the efficacy of treatment by 37% compared to PDT and 41% compared to CAP," she said.

Observing medical ethics

She went on to add that the next stage of the project will be carried out directly on human bodies while observing medical ethics.

"Today, photodynamic therapy is used in cancer treatment with the help of optical fibers and plasma with the help of miniature needles, and this means that this combination method can be highly effective in the treatment of various types of cancers," she said.

Results of the research have been published in Clinical Plasma Medicine with a Q1 ranking (the quarter of the journals with the highest values).

(Source: mehrnews.com)

Mobile phone use while pregnant not linked to child neurodevelopment problems

Mobile phone use during pregnancy is unlikely to have any adverse effects on child neurodevelopment, according to new research published in the open access journal BMC Public Health. These findings provide further evidence that exposure to radio frequency electromagnetic fields associated with maternal use of mobile phones during pregnancy is not linked to neurodevelopment in children.

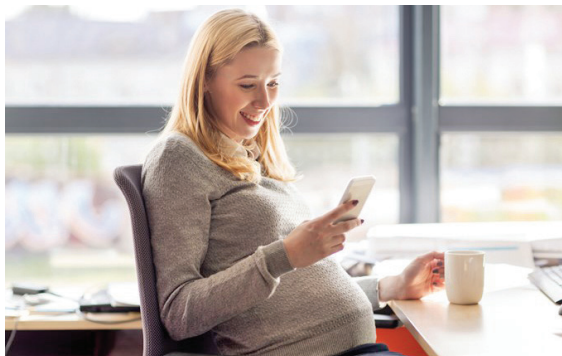
Dr. Eleni Papadopoulou, lead author from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, said: "The concern for harm to the fetus caused by radio frequency electromagnetic fields, such as those emitted by mobile phones, is mainly driven by reports from experimental animal studies with inconsistent results."

Even though this is an observational study, our findings do not support the hypothesis of adverse effects on child's language, communication and motor skills due to the use of mobile phone during pregnancy."

Population-based pregnancy

The researchers analyzed data from a large Norwegian population-based pregnancy cohort study called MoBa, which involves a range of data collected from mothers and children during and after pregnancy.

Data used in this study included 45,389 mother-child pairs for whom self-reported questionnaire data was available



on maternal mobile phone use and neurodevelopment follow ups of the children at ages 3 and 5.

Professor Jan Alexander, senior author from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, said: "Our investigation revealed for the first time that maternal mobile phone use may actually have a positive impact. More specifically, mobile phone use in pregnancy was associated with lower risk of the child having low language and motor skills at 3 years of age."

Socio-demographic characteristics

Although we adjusted for important socio-demograph-

ic characteristics as well as maternal personality and psychological factors, we think this protective effect is more likely to be explained by factors not measured in this study having an impact on the mobile phone use and child's neurodevelopment, rather than the maternal mobile phone use in itself."

The researchers found that children born to mobile phone users had a 27% lower risk of having lower sentence complexity, 14% lower risk of incomplete grammar and 31% lower risk of having moderate language delay at age 3, compared to children of mothers who reported no mobile phone use. They also found that children born to mobile phone users had an 18% lower risk of low motor skills at age 3, compared to children born to non-users of mobile phones.

Professor Alexander said: "Our large study provides evidence that pregnant women's use of cell phone is not associated with risk of harming neurodevelopment of the fetus. The beneficial effects we report should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations common in observational studies, but our findings should at least alleviate any concern mothers have about using their mobile phone while pregnant."

(Source: EurekAlert)

How our brains learn to recognize faces

Scientists have long deemed the ability to recognize faces innate for people and other primates -- something our brains just know how to do immediately from birth. However, the findings of a new study cast doubt on this longstanding view.

However, the findings of a new Harvard Medical School study cast doubt on this longstanding view.

Working with macaques temporarily

deprived of seeing faces while growing up, a Harvard Medical School team led by neurobiologists Margaret Livingstone, Michael Arcaro, and Peter Schade has found that regions of the brain that are key to facial recognition form only through experience and are absent in primates who don't encounter faces while growing up.

Neuro-developmental conditions

The finding, the researchers say, sheds

light on a range of neuro-developmental conditions, including those in which people can't distinguish between different faces or autism, marked by aversion to looking at faces. Most importantly, however, the study underscores the critical formative role of early experiences on normal sensory and cognitive development, the scientists say.

Livingstone, the Takeda Professor of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School,

explains that macaques -- a close evolutionary relative to humans, and a model system for studying human brain development -- form clusters of neurons responsible for recognizing faces in an area of the brain called the superior temporal sulcus by 200 days of age. The relative location of these brain regions, or patches, are similar across primate species.

(Source: farsnews.com)

Official Urges All Municipalities to Invest in Bank Shahr

Chairman of Mashhad City Council Mohammad-Reza Heidari called for all municipalities to embark on investing at Bank Shahr, the Public Relations and Communications Center of the bank reported.

Turning to the key role of this bank and said: "Bank Shahr enjoys high potentials and capabilities and plays an important role in the growth and development of metropolitan cities across the country."

While placing special emphasis on

using all available tools and facilities for the progress of this bank, he said: "Bank Shahr is a member of urban management family and the more progress of facilities of the bank is focused, the more urban management will be witnessed."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the councilor said: "the 5th Mashhad City Council decides to take advantage of capacities and potentials of the bank in order to meet public demand in this respect."

He pointed to the existence of some municipal resources in other banks in

the country and emphasized: "Strengthening economic sector in the field of urban management is one of the main priorities of the 5th City Council. As long as we are not restricted by the law, we will bring about our financial resources to the Bank Shahr, so that will provide our credit lines through this bank."

In the end, Chairman of Mashhad City Council Mohammad-Reza Heidari added: "The organizations that own one financial tool have always faced with the growth and progress, so that the mu-



nicipality also takes advantage of salient specifications of Bank Shahr in the best form possible."

Finance Contract Inks between BMI and K-EXIMBANK

A contract within the framework of finance was inked between Bank Melli Iran and South Korea's EXIM Bank, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, Chief Executive of Bank

Melli Iran (BMI) Dr. Mohammad-Reza Hosseinzadeh announced the above statement and said: "This contract was concluded between Bank Melli Iran along with 11 other Iranian banks and

South Korea's Exim Bank licensed by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and guaranteed by the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran, valued at €8 billion.

According to this contract, various economic projects of the country will be empowered to receive long-term currency facilities with very suitable financial cost.

Joint Cooperation Agreement Underway between IDRO and Indian Companies

In his meeting with a number of senior managers of Indian companies active in the fields of oil, energy, auto, tire and parts production and also modern technology industries and also chairman of Indian Confederation of Industry, Chairman of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Dr. Moazzami explored avenues for broadening mutual cooperation and cooperation in relevant field.

He pointed to the several capabilities and capacities of joint cooperation in the field of activities of IDRO as a development organization in Iran and said: "Negotiations and interaction created in the field of investment and joint production in Iran by the large and most prestigious Indi-

an companies can be troubleshooter for a joint long-term activity."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior official of the Organization pointed to the high potentials and capacities of IDRO for manufacturing industrial products in Iran and said: "With its 50 years of fruitful experience in the field of industry, IDRO is fully familiar with the rules and regulations of international cooperation in the best form possible."

In the end, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade pointed to the expansion of relation between Iran and India and said: "IDRO tries to pave suitable way for active presence of Iranian firms in India and also Indian companies in Iran."



New graphene filter could remove salt from saltwater

Water covers 71 percent of the Earth's surface, and yet it can still be a scarce resource. That's because nearly all the Earth's water is held in the oceans, and it's incredibly difficult to purify that salt water to make it drinkable. Typical desalination works through flash heating or reverse osmosis, both of which require huge amounts of energy. This makes desalination impractical in remote areas or on a large scale.

Fortunately, a group of researchers from Shinshu University and Pennsylvania State University may have developed a better way to purify water. The group developed a type of molecular sieve using hybrid graphene oxide membranes to filter out the salt from saltwater more cheaply.

"Our dream is to create a smart membrane that combines high flow rates, high efficiency, long lifetime, self-healing and eliminates bio and inorganic fouling in order to provide clean water solutions for the many parts of the world where clean water is scarce," says study author Mauricio Terrones. "This work is taking us in that direction."

Using filters to remove contaminants from water is nothing new-the filter on your kitchen tap can remove hazardous chemicals-but salt is tricky to remove because salt ions are smaller than water molecules.

They turned to a graphene oxide membrane, which has previously shown promise as a salt filter. Graphene oxide is great at blocking salt ions while letting water through, but the challenge is building a membrane durable enough to survive for long periods of time. In particular, chlorine-a common water treatment chemical-rapidly degrades pure graphene oxide membranes, so the group wanted to find a better solution.

The scientists developed a kind of hybrid filter that incorporated pure graphene into the graphene oxide membrane to better resist the effects of chlorine. (Source: Popular Mechanics)

Solar energy might get cheaper with new honeycomb design: study

Solar panels have already taken off with companies such as Elon Musk's SolarCity investing in it, but the fact remains that even though solar energy is cheaper over time, the infrastructure is costly to install.

This might change with solar panels made using a material called Perovskites, a calcium titanium oxide mineral made of calcium titanate, which in 2009 was discovered to absorb sunlight and generate electricity. It is widely available in nature and therefore cheaper than silicon, of which conventional solar panels are made.

"Perovskites are promising, low-cost materials that convert sunlight to electricity as efficiently as conventional solar cells made of silicon," Reinhold Dauskardt, a professor of materials science and engineering at Stanford University.

The only drawback of substituting silicon with perovskites was its fragility and vulnerability to the elements.

To find a solution to this drawback, Dauskardt led a study and zeroed in on the answer in the structure of insect eyes.

The study titled "Scaffold-reinforced perovskite compound solar cells" proposes a honeycomb structure of perovskites microcells, each encapsulated in a hexagon shaped scaffold made of an inexpensive epoxy resin widely used in the microelectronics industry.

Packing microcells, which make up solar cells, in such a way makes them more durable when the cells come into contact with heat, moisture or mechanical stress.

"We were inspired by the compound eye of the fly, which consists of hundreds of tiny segmented eyes. It has a beautiful honeycomb shape with built-in redundancy: If you lose one segment, hundreds of others will operate. Each segment is very fragile, but it's shielded by a scaffold wall around it," Dauskardt further explained. (Source: IBT)

Monster black hole discovered at center of Milky Way

Scientists believe they have discovered a huge black hole near the center of the Milky Way hiding within a massive cloud of molecular gas. With an estimated mass of around 100,000 times that of our sun, they believe it could be a special type of black hole that has long been hypothesized but never officially identified.

Intermediate-mass black holes (IMBHs) are considered the missing link in the evolution of the cosmic objects and could help explain how supermassive black holes are formed. However, no direct evidence of an IMBH has ever been found.



In a study published in Nature Astronomy, scientists led by Tomoharu Oka from Keio University, Japan, announced a new candidate for an IMBH. They found a "peculiar" molecular cloud sitting near the center of the Milky Way which displayed some highly unusual properties not seen in similar structures—properties that could be explained by a "gravitational kick" caused by an "invisible compact object with a mass of about 105 solar masses."

Using numerical simulations of the hidden object, they interpret it as being an IMBH that is not currently accreting matter—the accumulation of particles by gravitationally attracting more matter. If it is a black hole, it would be the second largest in the Milky Way after Sagittarius A. It is also the second IMBH candidate within the Milky Way.

Finding an IMBH would open up a new avenue of research in understanding supermassive black holes — black holes that can be billions of times the mass of the sun that sit at the center of most massive galaxies, including the Milky Way. (Source: Newsweek)

WHO endorses Iran’s obesity prevention program

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Officials from the World Health Organization have endorsed Iran’s obesity prevention program which aims to curb overweight and obesity among teenagers and preschoolers.

During a meeting held in Tehran on Tuesday, Dr. Francesco Branca, WHO Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development and Dr. Ayoub Al Jawaldeh, WHO Regional Advisor on Nutrition, explained that the program can be implemented in other Eastern Mediterranean countries as well, ISNA reported.

Regarding the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Iranian teenagers and preschoolers Iran has drawn up a program containing strategies to prevent obesity in the country, director for Health Ministry nutrition office Zahra Abdollahi said.

The two WHO officials Branca and Al Jawaldeh also made suggestion to make improvements upon the program over the session held yesterday at the ministry, Abdollahi added.

In a study conducted jointly by the Ministry of Health and universities of medical sciences 20 to 25 percent of the school children are affected by overweight or obesity nationwide. Unfortunately on average 20 percent of the under-two year olds are also suffering overweight and obesity nationwide.

Branca and Al Jawaldeh will attend Public Health Nutrition International Symposium (September 7-8) in Mashhad, northeastern Khorasan Razavi province.

Red balloons are popping up on storm grates ahead of ‘It’ movie

A Pennsylvania police department is asking a “local prankster” to stop tying red, helium-filled balloons to storm grates, with the eerie sight easily drumming up comparisons to the upcoming horror movie, “It”

The Lititz Borough Police Department, located about 40 miles southeast of Harrisburg, posted photos of the frightening display on Facebook Tuesday, suggesting that it was the work of an amateur “promoting” the film’s remake.

In the scream-inducing horror story by famed author Stephen King, a killer clown named Pennywise lures children to storm drains with floating red balloons before attacking them. That story, however, takes place in Maine.

“We give points for creativity,” the police department wrote, “however, we want the local prankster to know that we were completely terrified as we removed these balloons from the grates and we respectfully request they do not do that again.”

Last week, Pennsylvania State Police issued a warning that “creepy clown” sightings could be on the rise due to the movie’s release. That warning followed sightings reported in 16 states, including Pennsylvania, police said.

“The creepy clown craze in September 2016 resulted in at least a dozen people arrested in Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia for either taking part in the menacing stunt or for making false reports,” they stated.

(Source: huffingtonpost.com)

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Life - He’s not a Good Fit

A: So, Lauren, I just wanted to talk to you quickly about our new customer support representative, Jason Huntley.

B: Sure, what’s up?

A: Basically, I’ve got a few **concerns** about him, and the bottom line is, I don’t think he’s a good fit for our company.

B: Okay... what makes you say that? I thought you were pleased with his **overall performance**. Didn’t you just tell me last week how impressed you were with his attitude?

A: Yeah, his attitude is great, but he’s really **unreliable**. Sometimes he’s really **productive**, but then other times... take last Tuesday for instance, he was forty-five minutes late for our morning meeting!

B: Well, I’m sure he had a **perfectly good** reason...

A: But that’s not the only thing... you know, he really doesn’t have the best **work ethic**. I’m constantly catching him on MSN and Facebook when he should be talking to clients.

B: Yeah, but come on, Geoff, as if you don’t check Facebook at work. Look, you hired this guy, we’ve invested a lot of time and money in his training, so now it’s up to you to **coach** him. Make it work, Geoff!

A: Make it work, Geoff. You would say that, wouldn’t you, he is your cousin; what a jerk, make me hire your stupid, useless, cousin.

■ **Key Vocabulary**
concern: worry
overall: general
performance: how well someone does their job
unreliable: not able to be trusted
productive: doing a lot in a short amount of time
perfectly good: having no problems, just fine
work ethic: attitude to work
coach: teach and train someone new skills

■ **Supplementary Vocabulary**
poor judgment: regularly makes bad decisions
poor work ethic: bad attitude to work
dependable: able to be trusted and relied upon
a bad apple: a bad member of a group who makes things more difficult for others
unproductive: not productive, not doing a lot

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Iran-e Man, a campaign bringing color to deprived schools

By Setareh Behroozi

With the summer drawing to a close, it is time for millions of children around Iran heading back to school.

In Iran, the academic year officially begins on the first day of autumn, which falls on September 23.

However autumn air to sweep across cities from weeks earlier and with back-to-school season makes everyone think about schoolchildren.

During recent years, with spreading of social media like Instagram and Telegram in Iran, some users initiate viral online fundraising campaigns to collect money to provide stationery products for deprived schoolchildren during last weeks of summer.

However there are some campaigners who think more deeply about the educational problems that underprivileged schoolchildren deal with during academic year.

Iran-e Man, a campaign initiated by the private sector three years ago, focuses on building schools in deprived areas and holding programs toward sustainable development of such regions.

■ **Iran-e Man, an ambitious fundraising for schoolchildren**

The campaign was launched with the aim of building 100 schools in deprived parts of the country, mainly border regions, the executive manager of the program Mina Kamran told the Tehran Times.

“We have built 40 schools up to now



and we plan to achieve sustainable development goal in these schools,” Kamran explained.

All the schools are named ‘Iran-e Man’, literally meaning ‘my Iran’.

“In fact, we plan to make the schools as a place to help attain rural development in the future,” she said, adding that empowerment of teachers working in remote areas is one of the main aims of the campaigns after building schools.

“What we plan for is a process not projects. Actually we are building schools so that we can provide a place for edu-



cation and also build trust among locals,” Kamran explained.

■ **Zang-e Hayat: A chance to enjoy education**

Zang-e Hayat is another campaign followed over the course of past weeks.

The name of the campaign wisely uses the word ‘Hayat’ in Persian language, which means both ‘life’ and ‘yard’, so the combination means in English ‘Life/Yard Bell’.

It aims at raising fund to renovate and build schoolyards in Rekhneh Village in Khorasan Razavi Province.

Iran’s health sector welcomes German investment

SOCIETY **TERHAN** — Iran welcomes investments by German government and private sector companies to upgrade technology and create jobs in the healthcare industry, Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi said.

He made the remarks on the sidelines of a meeting in Tehran on Monday with a German delegation headed by Lutz Stroppe, the State Secretary at Germany’s Federal Ministry of Health, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

The meeting was also attended by the German Ambassador to Iran Michael Klor-Berchtold.

“Germany has been a good business partner for Iran and we hope that the two countries have a good cooperation in the field of health as well,” Qazizadeh-Hashemi said.

He pointed to cooperation between Iranian and German medical equipment manufacturers for more than 50 years.

“We urge to finalize our agreement for buying 45 helicopter for air medical services with support of Stroppe and Klor-Berchtold,” he announced.

He also talked about plans to create jobs via construction of hospitals with cooperation of Germany.



Scotland plans deposit return scheme for bottles and cans

The Scottish government is planning to introduce a deposit return scheme for bottles and cans.

Customers would pay a surcharge when purchasing bottles or cans under the program, which will be refunded when they return them to a shop.

The Scottish government has been consulting Zero Waste Scotland on the design of the deposit return scheme, which the organization estimates could save local authorities between £3m and £6m on litter clearance alone.

Zero Waste Scotland reviewed schemes in Sweden, Denmark and Norway as part of the consultation.

A Scottish government spokesperson said: “We have already confirmed that we are looking at new ways to ensure we keep as many valuable materials in

circulation for as long as possible and deposit return is one of those options. We have asked Zero Waste Scotland to model a deposit return system to help us assess impacts and benefits.”

Zero Waste Scotland received 63 responses in its call for evidence on deposit return scheme design, including those from Coca-Cola, major supermarkets and Scottish environment groups.

An opinion poll conducted by the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland revealed that 78% of the Scottish publish are in favour of the scheme, but some major drinks companies disagree.

AG Barr, the maker of Irn Bru, warned that “the cost to the consumer would be in the region of £150m extra per year” in its submission.

It added: “The scope for fraud in a Scottish DRS is huge. On a small scale we could see people scavenging in bins for containers, as is the US experience. On a medium scale there is the potential for local authority amenity centre looting. And on a larger scale there is the very real possibility of cross-border trafficking of deposit-bearing containers. It costs around £400 to move a lorry load of cans from England to Scotland. A single lorry could carry 160,000 crushed cans or £32,000 worth of deposits.”

AG Barr put an end to its own 30p deposit return scheme for glass bottles in August 2015, which had been in operation for more than 100 years.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

One in four Iranians suffering from prediabetes

While 10 percent of Iranians are diagnosed with diabetes, 25 percent of the population are suffering from prediabetes.

“That means if they don’t get treatment, it will lead to type 2 diabetes,” ISNA quoted the deputy health minister Reza Malekzadeh as saying.

In this case, about one third of Iranians would suffer from the disease in the next 15 years, he added.

He named urbanization and industrialization as the main risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Having a body mass index (BMI) of higher than 25, a lack of regular exercise, and an unhealthy diet could also increase the risk of diabetes, he noted.

More than 80 percent of disabilities are caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs), he said, referring to IraPEN, as a national health reform plan, which was launched in 2014 by the health ministry to provide general health coverage, including access to NCD prevention and care, and mental health services.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Too many cooks spoil the broth

■ **Explanation:** If too many people are involved in something, it will not be done properly

■ **For example:** Without a conductor, every player had an idea for how the music should go-too many cooks spoil the broth.

PHRASAL VERB

Wire up

■ **Meaning:** Make electrical connections

■ **For example:** She wired her new stereo system up as soon as she got home.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Wax lyrical

■ **Explanation:** speak enthusiastically about an event in a poetic or sentimental way.

■ **For example:** My grandfather and his friends started to wax lyrical about the ‘good old days’

Putin says sanctions, pressure alone won't resolve North Korea crisis

Resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis is impossible with sanctions and pressure alone, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday after meeting his South Korean counterpart, adding that the impact of cutting oil would be worrying.

Putin met South Korea's Moon Jae-in on the sidelines of an economic summit in the eastern Russian city of Vladivostok amid mounting international concern that their neighbor plans more weapons tests, possibly a long-range missile launch ahead of a weekend anniversary.

Putin denounced North Korea's sixth and largest nuclear bomb test on Sunday, saying Russia did not recognize its nuclear status.

"Pyongyang's missile and nuclear program is a crude violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, undermines the non-proliferation regime and creates a threat to the security of northeastern Asia," Putin said at a joint news conference.

"At the same time, it is clear that it is impossible to resolve the problem of the Korean peninsula only by sanctions and pressure," he said.

No headway could be made without political and diplomatic tools, Putin said, later telling the TASS news agency that Russian and North Korean delegations might meet at the Vladivostok forum.

Moon, who came to power this year advocating a policy of pursuing engagement with North Korea, has come under increasing pressure to take a harder line.

He has asked the United Nations to consider tough new sanctions after North Korea's latest nuclear test.

Diplomats say the U.N. Security Council could consider banning North Korean textile exports, barring its airline or stopping supplies of oil to the government and military.

Other measures could include preventing North Koreans from working abroad and putting top officials on a blacklist aimed at imposing asset freezes



and travel bans.

"I ask Russia to actively cooperate as this time it is inevitable that North Korea's oil supply should be cut at the least," Moon told Putin, according to a readout from a South Korean official.

Putin said North Korea would not give up its nuclear program no matter how tough the sanctions.

"We too, are against North Korea developing its nuclear capabilities and condemn it, but it is worrying cutting the oil pipeline will harm the regular people, like in hospitals," Putin said, according to the South Korean presidential official.

Russia's exports of crude oil to North Korea were tiny at about 40,000 tonnes a year, Putin said. By comparison, China provides it with about 520,000 tonnes of crude a year, according to industry sources.

Last year, China shipped just over 96,000 tonnes of gasoline and almost 45,000 tonnes of diesel to North Korea, where it is used across the economy, from fishermen and farmers to trucks and the military.

■ 'Freeze for freeze'

Sanctions have done little to stop North Korea boosting its nuclear and

missile capacity as it faces off with U.S. President Donald Trump, who has vowed to stop it from being able to hit the U.S. mainland with a nuclear weapon.

China and Russia have advocated a "freeze for freeze" plan, where the United States and South Korea stop major military exercises in exchange for North Korea halting its weapons programs, but neither side is willing to budge.

North Korea says it needs to develop its weapons to defend itself against what it sees as U.S. aggression.

South Korea and the United States are technically still at war with North Korea after the 1950-53 Korean conflict ended with a truce, not a peace treaty.

China objects to both the military drills and the deployment in South Korea of an advanced U.S. missile defense system that has a radar that can see deep into Chinese territory.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said the four remaining batteries of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system would be deployed on a golf course in the south of the country on Thursday.

Two THAAD batteries have already been installed.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang reiterated China's opposition to the system, saying it could only "severely damage" regional security and raise "tensions and antagonism".

"China strongly urges the United States and South Korea to pay attention to China and other regional nations' security interests and concerns, immediately halt the progress of the relevant deployment, and remove the relevant equipment," Geng said.

BIG BLAST

Asian stocks fell on Wednesday after a slide on Wall Street overnight while the dollar was on the defensive with Korean tension showing few signs of abating.

Sunday's test of what North Korea said was an advanced hydrogen bomb was its largest by far.

Japan upgraded its assessment of the North Korean test to 160 kilotons from 120 kilotons after the size of the earthquake it generated was revised to magnitude 6.1.

"We estimate this was far bigger than previous nuclear tests," Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera told reporters.

Satellite imagery appeared to show the blast caused landslides at North Korea's Punggye-ri test site, according to 38 North, a Washington-based North Korean monitoring project.

South Korean officials said they were watching for radioactive fallout from the test and for signs of preparations for more activity.

British Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said on Wednesday China held the key to resolving the crisis, reiterating comments made by Prime Minister Theresa May and Australian leader Malcolm Turnbull after they spoke with Trump.

"China holds the key, the oil to North Korea flows from China ... China has not just influence but has many of the levers that are needed to change behavior in North Korea," Fallon told BBC radio.

(Source: TASS)

Erdogan compares anti-Turkey statements by Germany to 'Nazism'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday compared anti-Turkey statements by German politicians to "Nazism" after Chancellor Angela Merkel said she would seek to end talks on Ankara's accession to the EU.

"I'm not saying you're a Nazi, a fascist. I am explaining the incident... This incident is Nazism. This is fascism," Erdogan said, reacting to comments made by Merkel and Martin Schulz, her Social Democratic rival, during a televised debate ahead of elections on September 24.

"You have entered into the election campaign in a competition for this title," he told local ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) officials in Ankara.

Relations between Turkey and Germany have been tense since last year's attempted coup and Berlin's reaction to the subsequent crackdown during which over 50,000 people have been arrested including German citizens.

Ties were further strained by last week's arrest of two German citizens, one of whom has since been released according to her lawyer.

It is not the first time Erdogan has used the Nazi



comparison. In the run up to an April referendum to boost his powers, he accused Berlin of "Nazi practices" after the cancellation of rallies to drum up support from Turkish voters in Germany.

In the TV showdown with challenger Schulz on Sunday, Merkel said it was "clear that Turkey should not become a member of the European Union".

And Merkel told parliament on Tuesday that she

would discuss with EU partners at the next summit in October whether to "suspend or end" Ankara's long-stalled accession talks to the club.

"I tell Merkel: if you cannot tolerate the EU's relationship with Turkey, bravely say it and do what's necessary!" Erdogan said.

He repeated his call for ethnic Turks in Germany not to "give your vote to Turkey enemies," which last month infuriated German politicians.

Erdogan called the EU's stance towards Ankara's accession bid "hypocrisy and political immorality," and urged Brussels to make a clear decision "at once" on the process.

"We didn't have any problem with the EU. You've kept Turkey waiting. Turkey has complied with all its commitments. It's the EU that should take a step.

"They must either keep their word... or come out and say 'we don't want to continue on this path'."

Erdogan insisted that Turkey had not moved away from its "strategic goal of EU membership" and was fulfilling its duties.

(Source: AFP)

Iran's deft diplomacy in region paying dividends: National Interest

1→ This is a remarkable victory for Iran and a major breakthrough in its attempt to normalize relations with members of the (P)GCC, which Saudi Arabia dominates by sheer size.

What is equally important is that this formal rapprochement between Iran and Qatar is likely to have significant implications on the Syrian front. Iran and Qatar had been ranged on opposite sides of the Syrian conflict so far, with Iran supporting President Bashar al-Assad, and Qatar, like Saudi Arabia and Turkey, supporting a motley crew of opposition forces increasingly dominated by Sunni extremists. Qatar, now preoccupied with its quarrel with Saudi Arabia, in which it has Iran's support, is likely to downgrade its involvement in Syria and reduce, if not stop, funding anti-Assad forces.

What is also important is that Iran's rapprochement with Qatar comes on the heels of Tehran's improved relations with Turkey. Saudi Arabia's ill-considered moves against Qatar has also contributed to the rapprochement between Ankara and Tehran. Turkey has major

stakes in Qatar. It is setting up a military base in Qatar as part of its power projection plan in the Middle East. Moreover, the emir of Qatar and President Erdogan of Turkey are on close terms and it has been reported that the former sent a 150-strong contingent of elite Qatari troops to protect Erdogan in the wake of the attempted coup against the latter in July 2016.

Now it is Turkey's turn to reciprocate the favor and the Turkish Parliament has authorized the deployment of three thousand to five thousand Turkish troops to Qatar to help the emir maintain "internal security." Turkey has thus decisively broken with Saudi Arabia and lined up with Iran on the Qatar issue, despite their differences over Syria.

Both Ankara and Tehran have been working to reduce these differences as well, and Ankara seems to be making all the concessions. It has accepted the reality that Assad, who is supported by Iran, cannot be removed by force. The shift in Turkish policy, in the making for a year, was announced publicly on August 20 by the Turkish prime minister, who declared that Turkey is will-

ing to "settle the crisis with the involvement of all the key players, including Syrian President Bashar al-Assad."

This is a major victory for Iran. Tehran is resolute in its support for Assad and continues the deployment of its ally Hezbollah, as well some elements of its elite Quds Force. Saudi Arabia, as a result of its miscalculations—based more on hubris than anything else—has paved the way for the latest Iranian diplomatic victories. Tehran's deft diplomacy and infinite patience have finally begun to pay dividends. Shia Iran's simultaneous rapprochement with Qatar and Turkey—both predominantly Sunni countries—has also begun to bust the myth that the struggle in the Middle East is based on the 1,400-year-old Sunni-Shia rift. Given that the large majority in the Arab world is Sunni, this was a major weapon in the Saudi propaganda armory. It is being increasingly discredited as it becomes clear that it is the reason of state and pure power politics and not age-old sectarian animosities that are driving the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Haley asks for decertifying Iran's compliance with JCPOA

1→ Haley's remarks appeared to draw a quick response from the French ambassador to the US, Gerard Araud, who tweeted a rebuke at the Trump administration's apparent attempt to move the goalposts on the Iran deal.

"The Iran deal is about the nuclear issue, nothing else," Araud tweeted. "So far, Iran is abiding by the commitments taken in this mutually agreed framework."

Haley rejected suggestions that decertifying the Iran deal could send a mes-

sage to others involved in negotiations with the U.S. -- particularly North Korea -- that Washington is an unreliable deal-maker, prone to back out of agreements as easily as it makes them.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is currently trying to pressure Pyongyang back to the negotiating table through an international "peaceful pressure" campaign.

"What's more important is that we let others know we will stay in a deal as long

as it protects the security of the United States," Haley said.

Even though the U.S. allies in the Middle East confirm the white House support for terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq, she accused Iran of supporting terrorism and proxy wars as reasons to pull back from the agreement.

"Everyone hoped the deal would make the Iranian government good people," Haley added continuing her baseless claims, "but no one looked at the history

of Iran, no one looked at all the past aggressions they have shown."

When limits on Iran's uranium enrichment or centrifuge production expire, Iran may be able to send a nuclear warhead to the US, as North Korea can now, Haley claimed. "What if we just gave them 10 years, and all the money they wanted to do what they want to prepare for, when that 10th year hits and they start nuclear war?" Haley asked.

(Source: MNA)

North Korea: 'More gift packages' coming for the U.S.

North Korea has threatened to send "more gift packages" to the United States, days after testing the biggest nuclear weapon it has ever detonated.

Han Tae-song, ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to the United Nations in Geneva, addressed the UN-sponsored Conference on Disarmament on Tuesday after his country carried out its sixth nuclear test.

"I am proud of saying that just two days ago on the 3rd of September, DPRK successfully carried out a hydrogen bomb test for intercontinental ballistic rocket under its plan for building a strategic nuclear force," Han told the Geneva forum.

"The recent self-defense measures by my country, DPRK, are a gift package addressed to none other than the U.S.," Han said.

"The U.S. will receive more gift packages from my country as long as it relies on reckless provocations and futile attempts to put pressure on the DPRK," he added without elaborating.

Military measures being taken by North Korea were "an exercise of restraint and justified self-defense right" to counter "the ever-growing and decade-long US nuclear threat and hostile policy aimed at isolating my country."

"Pressure or sanctions will never work on my country," Han declared. "The DPRK will never under any circumstances put its nuclear deterrence on the negotiating table."

■ 'Threat to us all'

Robert Wood, U.S. disarmament ambassador, said North Korea had defied the international community once again with its test.

"We look forward to working with our partners in the [Security] Council with regard to a new resolution that will put some of the strongest sanctions possible on the DPRK," he told the conference.

"Advances in the regime's nuclear and missile program are a threat to us all ... Now is the time to say tests, threats and destabilizing actions will no longer be tolerated," Wood said.

"It can no longer be business as usual with this regime."

Amid rising tensions with North Korea, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he would allow Japan and South Korea to buy more "highly sophisticated" US military equipment.

The North Koreans have massive military assets stockpiled on what is the world's most heavily-fortified border with South Korea.

The U.S. has roughly 28,000 troops in South Korea, and there are hundreds of thousands more American citizens just in Seoul, the capital, with a metro area population of 25 million.

Anthony Ruggiero, a sanctions expert at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the next logical step is for the US to impose "secondary sanctions" targeting banks or businesses in China that do business with North Korea - a tactic the U.S. used effectively to push Iran to the table over its nuclear program several years ago.

"The chance for sanctions to work is that playbook," Ruggiero said.

■ 'Global catastrophe'

But Russian President Vladimir Putin said imposing tougher sanctions on North Korea over its nuclear missile program would be counterproductive, warning that threats of military action could trigger "a global catastrophe".

"Russia condemns North Korea's exercises; we consider that they are a provocation ... [But] ramping up military hysteria will lead to nothing good. It could lead to a global catastrophe," Putin said on Tuesday after a BRICS summit in Xiamen, China.

"There's no other path apart from a peaceful one."

China, backed by Russia, has been urging an immediate return to talks, predicated on the U.S. halting joint military exercises with South Korea and North Korea suspending its weapons development.

But few in the U.S. government have advocated direct talks with the North Koreans until their behavior significantly changes.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Turkish police gun down suspected bomber in Mersin

Turkish police have shot dead a suspected bomber, who wanted to attack a police station, in the southern city of Mersin.

Turkey's private Dogan news agency reported that the incident took place in Mersin's Yenisehir district on Wednesday, when police began trailing a suspicious man and opened fire as he refused to stop near the police station.

The targeted police station is said to be situated next to the regional headquarters of Turkey's MIT national intelligence agency.

Mersin Chief Public Prosecutor Mustafa Ercan told state-run Anadolu Agency that police teams had "averted an important attack."

The victim, who was wearing an explosive vest, was suspected of being a member of the Daesh terrorist Takfiri group, Ercan added.

Bomb disposal experts are now working to defuse the bomber's explosive device.

Daesh has previously carried out deadly gun and bomb attacks in Turkey.

Over 5,000 Daesh suspects have been detained and about 3,290 foreign militants deported from Turkey in recent years, officials say.

(Source: TRT)

FIFA to use seeding in European playoff draw

FIFA have confirmed that teams will be seeded when the soccer governing body makes the draw for the play-off round in the European World Cup qualifiers, avoiding a potential clash between Portugal and Italy.

The winners of the nine European groups go directly to Russia next year while the best eight of the nine runners-up play off over two legs for a further four spots.

The top four teams according to the FIFA rankings would go into one pot for the draw on Oct. 17 while the remaining four will be in another, the world governing body said.

The teams currently in second place in the groups are Sweden (19th in the FIFA rankings), Portugal (6th), Northern Ireland (23rd), Wales (18th), Montenegro (52nd), Slovakia (22nd), Italy (12th), Bosnia (30th) and Iceland (20th).

There are two qualifying matches left to play for each team. FIFA said the best eight runners-up would be decided on points, then goal difference, goals scored, goals scored away from home and finally disciplinary ranking.

Matches against the last-placed teams in the groups will not be taken into account.

Wales, in Group D, currently have the worst record of the nine second-placed teams with eight points, not including the two wins against bottom-placed Moldova.

(Source: Eurosport)

PSG chief says nothing to hide over Neymar, Mbappe transfers

Paris St Germain's new striker Kylian Mbappe said he joined "for the project" and not just to play alongside Brazil's talisman Neymar, as the French club's president added that his record summer transfers had been carried out in complete transparency.

Mbappe joined PSG on an initial season-long loan from Monaco weeks after the Ligue 1 club signed Neymar for a world record 222 million euros (£203.01 million).

PSG will complete a permanent deal for Mbappe in 12 month's time in a deal worth about 180 million euros, which would make him the world's second most expensive player.

"For me it was the project that was going to allow me to develop, to learn while winning. And win right away. We only have one career and it goes quickly," the 18-year-old France forward told a news conference on Wednesday.

PSG's deals for Neymar, who they signed from Barcelona after meeting the price in his buyout clause, and Mbappe has triggered an investigation into a possible breach of Financial Fair Play rules by UEFA, soccer's European governing body.

But club president Nasser al-Khelaifi, sat beside Mbappe, said PSG had nothing to hide.

"We're very confident in our position, in our recruitment," al-Khelaifi said. "We paid everything in a transparent way. We have nothing to hide."

Mbappe, who grew up in a gritty Parisian suburb, said his price tag will not affect his performances and that he would enter the changing room full of humility.

The teenager had been linked with a host of top European clubs during the close season. Mbappe told Wednesday's news conference he had wanted to remain in France and PSG offered him the dream opportunity to return to his home city.

(Source: Mirror)

Murray likely to miss rest of season with hip injury

Britain's world number two Andy Murray will "most likely" miss the rest of the season due to a hip injury that kept him out of the U.S. Open, he announced on Wednesday.

"...I won't be able to compete in (next month's) events in Beijing and Shanghai, and most likely, the final two events of the season in Vienna and Paris due to my hip injury which has been bothering me the last few months," he wrote on Facebook.

"Having consulted with a number of leading hip specialists over the last week, along with my own team, we have decided that this is the best decision for my long-term future," Murray added.

The Scot, who sustained the injury at the French Open in June, said he would begin his 2018 season in Brisbane in preparation for the Australian Open and would feature later this year in Glasgow against Roger Federer for a charity event.

(Source: Reuters)

Ronaldo is fuming at Barcelona boss Valverde - report

Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo is fuming about Andre Gomes' treatment at Barcelona.

Gomes is deemed surplus to requirements at the Bernabeu despite being signed just 12 months ago from Valencia.

However, he doesn't feature in Ernesto Valverde's plans and the former Athletic Bilbao boss is keen to get rid.

Spanish news outlet Don Balon say Ronaldo is shocked to learn that Gomes isn't wanted by Barca.

It's suggested the duo discussed his predicament while they were on international duty with Portugal.

Despite Barca's desire to get Gomes off the books, they aren't willing to sell him on the cheap.

Valverde is demanding at least £32m to part with the 24-year-old. Don Balon say Juventus were serious suitors for his signature but the two clubs couldn't agree a fee.

Juve were initially keen to secure a loan deal for Gomes with a purchase option.

That offer was rebuffed and Juve tabled £18m.

Barca deemed the cash bid derisory and a transfer failed to materialize.

(Source: Daily Star)

Lionel Messi and Argentina in danger of missing World Cup 2018

Despite the drab display against Uruguay last Thursday, a point from the trip to Montevideo's imposing Estadio Centenario wasn't the worst result for Argentina. However, back in Buenos Aires on Tuesday against a Venezuela side, rooted to the foot of South American qualification without a chance of reaching Russia, nothing less than a convincing three points were expected of Jorge Sampaoli's side.

The stage was certainly set for Argentina to get their floundering qualification back on track. By the time proceedings got underway in the Monumental, Chile had lost away to Bolivia, Colombia had drawn with Brazil and Peru had beaten Ecuador, meaning despite La Albiceleste starting the game in sixth, a win could have seen them as high as second.

Sampaoli was sticking with his attacking three-man defense, the exhilarating trio of Lionel Messi, Paulo Dybala and Mauro Icardi were getting another outing and Argentina were supposed to take a giant step towards Russia. The reality however, is that Argentina are now no closer to that goal and only have two increasingly difficult looking matches to confirm their place at the World Cup.

The result was a dominant opening 45 minutes with the lively Mauro Icardi doing everything right except apply the final touch and the ever-impressive Wilker Fariñez adding to his burgeoning reputation with a string of saves.

Di Maria, so ineffectual against Uruguay, looked dangerous darting in behind full back Victor Garcia but even after an apparent pulled hamstring forced him off, the home side still looked the far more likely to score.

Sampaoli's early goal never came and like a boxer soaking up punishment in the early rounds, there was always the concern that a counter could follow. Five minutes after the break and that sucker punch arrived as a lightening quick break exposed Argentina's sluggish back three and saw Jhon Murillo stun the Monumental.

Before panic became too wide-spread, Argentina were level when Rolf Feltscher turned Acuña's low cross into his own net, under pressure from Icardi, but with 35 minutes remaining it should have provided the



springboard for Sampaoli's side to settle and go on to win. Quite the opposite was in fact true.

Desperate for a second, any of the incisiveness from the first half disappeared as Argentina became increasingly ragged with Messi attempting to generate the slightest of spark from a group of players who suddenly looked like complete strangers.

"It's difficult to remove this 'Messi-dependency' from a team when Leo is there. When you know you have the best player you will always look toward him," Sampaoli said when addressing the familiar criticism of Argentina leaning too heavily on their captain.

Jorge Sampaoli has much to ponder ahead of October's colossal double-header. The fiery coach was

full of praise of his side's first half display but admitted qualification is now complicated.

Argentina remain in fifth and are grateful to Chile's blip that it isn't worse but can't afford any further setbacks.

A resurgent Peru, who are now in fourth after dropping only two points from their last four matches, are the next visitors to Argentina before the critical final day encounter in the altitude of Ecuador.

Neither on present form are straightforward. Without significant improvement Argentina can forget about holding on to fifth spot and the subsequent playoff against New Zealand, let alone the World Cup.

(Source: Independent)

UEFA chief Ceferin backs shorter transfer window

UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin has backed calls for the close-season transfer window to end before the start of the domestic league season across Europe.

The chairmen of the 20 English Premier League clubs will vote at a shareholders meeting on Sept. 7 to decide if their window should close before the season starts and several managers have voiced their support for the change.

The current transfer deadline is on Aug. 31 while the Premier League began on Aug. 11. The proposed change to the window requires 14 out of 20 votes to go through.

The idea has received support as it removes uncertainty and prevents the loss of key players after the start of the season.

"I am aware there are serious discussions around Europe regarding the shortening of the summer transfer window and we are following them closely," the head of European football's governing body told The Times in an emailed statement.

"In my view, it is not good when foot-

ballers play for one club when the league starts and another club when the transfer window closes. There is a lot of uncertainty for a long time.

"Therefore I would say that the window might be too long and I would support it being shorter"

Several Premier League managers have dismissed fears that a change would leave them vulnerable to losing players to other European leagues, whose transfer windows would close later.

The Football League, which governs the lower tiers of English football, could follow in the top tier's footsteps, according to chief executive Shaun Harvey.

"The one thing our member clubs have said is they do want stability in terms of the players that are available to them from the start of the season," Harvey said.

"Shutting the transfer window before the season starts has always found favour with our clubs. It would make sense for the dates to be aligned with the Premier League and any unintended consequences need to be thought through.

(Source: New York Times)



IOC prepares for 2024-28 Games vote with result foretold

When the International Olympic Committee's 100-plus members sit down next week in Lima to vote on the hosts of the 2024 and the 2028 Olympics, it will be a rare case of the result long known.

Paris and Los Angeles were the two last cities left in the race for the 2024 Summer Games, with four others — Hamburg, Rome, Budapest and Boston - having pulled out amid concerns over cost and size.

With the Games having lost their sheen and cities now viewing them as a financial burden rather than a glorious opportunity, the IOC changed the bidding process and decided to award two consecutive editions at the same election.

The IOC session in Peru will therefore lack the usual dramatic moment when the name of a city is pulled out of an envelope as Paris will be awarded the Games in seven year's time and the Californian metropolis getting the nod for 2028.

No heads of state will fly into the Peruvian capital for

frantic, last-minute lobbying as the IOC members will merely be ratifying a "tri-partite" agreement between the two cities and the IOC on Sept. 13.

IOC President Thomas Bach said the process in the past was "creating too many losers" and the decision for the double awarding would now be "a win-win-win" for all three parties involved.

Los Angeles had to concede the 2024 Games to the French capital but will still leave Lima with an Olympic Games of its own in the bag.

Paris, which like LA has hosted the Games twice before, will no doubt be the bigger winners, having got what they set out to get.

French President Emmanuel Macron's presence at an IOC meeting in July made clear the country's strong commitment to land their first Summer Olympics since 1924 after three previous failed attempts.

The vote is hardly the big celebration the IOC would have wanted as ongoing criminal investigations into al-



leged corruption linked to last year's Rio Games serve as a timely reminder that all is not well within the Olympic movement.

IOC member and Games head Carlos Nuzman had his house searched on Tuesday as authorities probe claims of vote-buying dating back to before the surprise 2009 decision to award Rio the Games.

Doping at the Sochi 2014 Winter Games in Russia, graft in Rio and the suspension of other senior IOC members, including Namibian Frankie Fredericks and Ireland's Patrick Hickey, over corruption allegations in the past 12 months, have further tarnished the organisation's image.

The IOC is desperate to end this rocky bidding process with two solid and arguably more transparent partners in place for the next 11 years, a decision which they hope will restore some credibility to the world's biggest multi-sports event.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran fail to beat Syria in World Cup qualifier

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Team Melli drew 2-2 with Syria national football team here at the Azadi Stadium on Tuesday.

The already-qualified Iranian football team had not conceded a single goal before this match but Syria ended their run of clean sheets.

Tamer Mohamad scored in the 13th minute before Iran equalized through Sardar Azmoun, who chested in a rebound on the stroke of half-time.

The Rubin Kazan striker, who was named Man of the Match, put the hosts ahead in the 64th minute.

Omar Al-Soma's 93rd minute goal kept Syria's World Cup qualification dream alive.

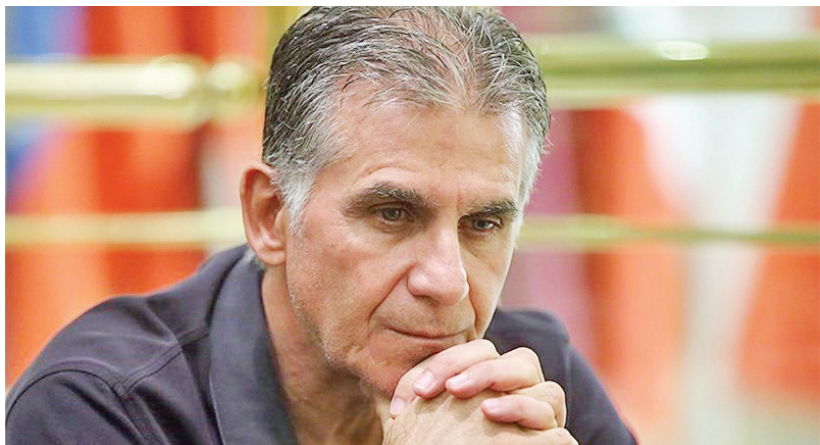
"God willing we will continue the journey... the qualifications have started again," said Al-Soma. "The players were heroes on the pitch from the first minute until the last minute."

Syria will now play Group B's third-placed team Australia in play-offs, with the winner going into an intercontinental clash against the fourth-placed side from the CONCACAF federation.

South Korea also played out a goalless draw against Uzbekistan in Tashkent and advanced to the World Cup as the Group A's second team.



Our players made mistakes against Syria: Carlos Queiroz



The Iranian national football team's coach Carlos Queiroz said that his players made so many mistakes in the match against Syria in the 2018 World Cup qualifier.

"We didn't play good against Syria and our players made so many mistakes. There is still so much more work we have to do before the 2018 World Cup," Queiroz said in the post-match news conference.

"We conceded a goal but we

could have scored three goals. Our players hurried up and it was one of the reasons we didn't play good," the Portuguese added.

"Syria is a good team and I congratulate them since they have reached play-offs. We wanted to finish the campaign with a home win but failed to do that. I want to thank all the fans for their support during the qualification campaign," Queiroz concluded.

(Source: Tasnim)

Aiman Al Hakeem praises Syrian players for draw against Iran



Syria national football team coach Aiman Al Hakeem has praised his players after draw against Iran in the 2018 World Cup qualifier.

On Tuesday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, Syria drew 2-2 with Iran in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and will now play Group B's third-placed team Australia in play-offs, with the winner going into an intercontinental clash against the fourth-placed side from the CONCACAF federation.

"First of all, I would like to congratulate

all the Syrian people over advancing to the play-offs," Al Hakeem said in the post-match news conference.

"We made a great job since we cannot play in our home. Our players were determined to get result in the match against Iran and we are so happy since we did it," he added.

"From now on, we prepare well for two matches against Australia. We want to continue our journey toward Russia," Al Hakeem concluded.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran win three medals at Cadet Greco World

S P O R T S Three Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers claimed medals at the Cadet World Championships in Athens, Greece, on Tuesday.

Mohsen Fathollah Madhani from Iran claimed gold medal after defeating Indian Sonu Sonu 14-3 at the 58kg weight category.

Bronze medal went to Sergey Aleksandrovitch Chigirev from Russia and Japan's Kosei Takeshita.

In the 63kg category, Iran's Mostafa Kayed Khordeh lost to Dmytro Miroshnyk from Ukraine 3-1 and claimed the silver medal.

Russian Artem Erokhin and Otar Abuladze from

Georgia seized the bronze medal.

Seyed Mojtaba Hosseini beat Kantemir Shibzukhov from Russia 6-2 in the 100kg category and won the bronze medal.

Cohlton Schultz from the U.S. won the gold medal after beating Balint Vatz of Hungary in the final.

The Cadet World Championship is a yearly event where the best Greco-Roman, Freestyle and Women wrestlers in the world aged 16 and 17 years old compete.

The championships bring more than 100 wrestlers from Iran, the U.S., Russia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia and other countries together.



Iran to play Togo in friendly match

S P O R T S Iran national football team will face African nation Togo in a friendly match in late September.

The match has been scheduled for Sept. 29 in Russia.

Team Meli will also play Russia six days later in St. Petersburg.

Iran football team, which hold 24th place in the most recently published FIFA World Rankings list, have already passed the qualifying round for the 2018 FIFA

World Cup.

Head of Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) Mehdi Taj has confirmed the two friendly matches.

"Team Melli will play Togo and Russia in Russia. We've chosen Togo since we will likely face an African team in the 2018 World Cup group stage," Taj said.

"We are going to arrange eight warm-up matches ahead of the World Cup. Iran will probably play Sweden in a friendly match," he added.



"Such appreciation will be a great motivation for young people that intend to join sport."



The world's strongest Paralympian – powerlifting champion Siamand Rahman – was unable to attend the event due to his preparation for this month's World Para Powerlifting Championships in Mexico City.

The celebration was also tinged with sadness, as cyclist Bahman Golbarnejad received a special recognition. The 48-year-old was killed in an accident while racing at Rio 2016, and his family attended the ceremony.

As well as honoring athletes, the event also marked the progress of Para sport in the country. Two former Presidents of Iran's Sport Federation for the Disabled – Hossein Sarkheil and Mansour Borjian – were awarded Certificates of Appreciation signed by International Paralympic Committee President Sir Philip Craven.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Sanchez hits out at critics after latest Chile defeat

Arsenal forward Alexis Sanchez has issued a long message on Instagram saying he is 'tired' of the criticism he receives when on international duty with Chile.

Chile have enjoyed great success in recent years but qualification for next summer's World Cup is in doubt after back-to-back defeats over the last week.

Chile sit sixth in South American qualifying for the tournament in Russia with two rounds left and only the top four qualifying automatically.

Sanchez was criticised in some quarters after the Paraguay loss, which came on the same day as a potential transfer from Arsenal to Manchester City fell through.

The forward has now posted a photo on Instagram of himself walking off the Wembley pitch with a Chile flag around his shoulders after the FA Cup final win over Chelsea.

Alongside the photo, he wrote (translated from Spanish): "And the moment comes when you get tired."

"You get tired of them criticising you with reason or without reason, you get tired of them wanting to see you defeated, you get tired of saying to yourself I'll pick myself up one more time after crying after a defeat, and you get tired of saying to the world and to the people who are against you that everything's OK."

(Source: Skysports)

AFC opens investigation into reported regulation breaches

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) have begun investigations following reports of breaches of regulations at the FIFA World Cup 2018 Asian Final Round Qualifying matches played on September 5, 2017. The AFC is currently waiting to receive all relevant reports before proceeding with the next steps.

The AFC will also co-operate with the world governing body, FIFA, to provide the necessary reports on matters which fall within the jurisdiction of FIFA.

In June, the AFC wrote to its Member Associations reiterating that all stakeholders involved in Asian football must respect the principle of political neutrality.

The letter sent by the AFC stressed that the principle is a cornerstone of both the AFC and of the international sporting movement, and is reflected in Article 3.2 of the AFC Statutes which states: "the AFC is neutral in all matters of politics and religion".

It added that Member Associations are also bound by Article 14.4 which says: "Member Associations shall manage their affairs independently and without undue influence from third parties".

The letter continued: "The AFC calls on all stakeholders to respect these fundamental principles moving forward. In this regard, the AFC reiterates Article 6 of the Statutes which states: "every person and organization directly or indirectly bound by these statutes must observe these statutes and any regulations, directives, and decisions of the AFC."

(Source: AFC)

Venus Williams becomes oldest semi-finalist in US Open history

Seven-time tennis Grand Slam champion Venus Williams became the oldest semifinalist in US Open history at age 37 with a 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(2) thriller win over Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic.

Coming up next for the US ninth seed will be the clash against her 83rd-ranked compatriot Sloane Stephens, who edged past Latvian 16th seed Anastasija Sevastova 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(4), reports Xinhua news agency.

Williams, who improved to 2-4 all-time against the Czech 13th seed, will return to the world top five for the first time since January 2011. All six of the matches between Williams and Kvitova have gone to a third set.

"I'm so fortunate to have won that match. It came down to the wire," Williams said after the quarter-final match on Tuesday. "I try to tell myself to enjoy the competition, enjoy the battle and I think I was able to do that."

Williams gave up the first break of serve trailing at 3-1 with three double faults, but was able to reel off five straight games as Kvitova racked up too many errors.

A loose Williams game early in the second offered Kvitova the lifeline she needed and she clawed back to take the second set.

Two brilliant cross-court backhands gave Kvitova an early break in the third but Williams recovered from 3-1 down, leveling it when the Czech double-faulted.

It came down to a tiebreak and a brilliant return at 1-1 was enough to give Williams the momentum. Roared on by the New York crowd, the 2000 and 2001 champion powered to 6-1 and never looked back.

Stephens' comeback from injury will keep going all the way to the semifinals.

"When I started my comeback at Wimbledon, I could have never even dreamed of something like this happening, having these results," Stephens said after the match.

She's No.83 now with 13 wins in her last 15 matches, becoming just the seventh player outside the top 50 to reach the US Open women's semifinals. Her only previous Grand Slam semi was at the Australian Open four years ago.

In men's side, Spanish 12th seed Pablo Carreno Busta, who has not dropped a set, cruised into his first Grand Slam semifinal by defeating Argentine 29th seed Diego Schwartzman 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

(Source: AP)

The achievements of Iran's Paralympic athletes have been honored at a special event in the city of Mashhad.

145 medalists from Paralympic Games dating back to Seoul 1988 were recognized at a Praise Ceremony on 3 September organized by Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) and attended by a number of government officials.

Zahra Nemati - who won women's recurve gold in archery at Rio 2016 - was at the event which was broadcast live on Iran's most popular television channel. She hopes the recognition will inspire future generations to take up Para sport.

"Holding such ceremonies will be a good motivation for those with disability that do not start playing sports yet," she said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

South Korean ambassador to organize Iranian marquetry exhibit

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A collection of Iranian marquetry works will be showcased in an exhibition, which is scheduled to open at South Korean Ambassador Kim Seung-ho's residence in Tehran on September 14.



The collection has been created by some Iranian artists. In addition, works by a Korean artist who specializes in Iranian marquetry will be put on display at the two-day exhibit that is open to the public, the Embassy of South Korea announced in a press release on Wednesday. The exhibition will be blended in with Korean traditional music performances in the courtyard of the residence.

The embassy described the exhibition "As another step in developing cultural relations between South Korea and Iran."

"Holding such artistic events at the ambassador's residence illustrates the intent of Korea for getting acquainted with Iranian art and its continuous support for Iranian artists."

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian illustrators to lecture at Bratislava symposium

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Three Iranian illustrators will deliver speeches at the International Symposium of Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) in Slovakia. Ali Buzari, Hoda Haddadi and Hossein Sheikhezai will give lectures on various subjects during the two-day symposium, which will open on Saturday on the theme "Art Versus Commerce".

Buzari is also a jury member of the BIB, which will open on Friday and will run through October 29.



Armenian group to give concert at Tehran center

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A group of students from the Ghazaros Saryan Art School in Yerevan, Armenia will be giving a concert at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center on Sunday.

The group will be conducted by Iranian-Armenian musician Razmik Ohanian during the performance, which aims to expand the cultural relationship between two countries, the center announced on Wednesday.

Pieces by German composer Ludwig van Beethoven, Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Armenian musicians Komitas and Aram Khachaturian are scheduled to be performed at the concert.

“Star Wars: Episode IX” loses writer/director Trevororrow over movie vision

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — The “Star Wars” movie franchise has parted ways with another director, Walt Disney Co announced on Tuesday, saying that director and writer Colin Trevororrow would no longer be involved in the studio's scheduled 2019 film “Star Wars: Episode IX.”

Disney and Lucasfilm Ltd in a statement blamed differing visions for the project but did not name a replacement.

“Lucasfilm and Colin Trevororrow have mutually chosen to part ways on ‘Star Wars: Episode IX,’” the statement said.

“Colin has been a wonderful collaborator throughout the development process, but we have all come to the conclusion that our visions for the project differ. We wish Colin the best and will be sharing more information about the film soon.”

Trevorrow was due to write and direct the movie.

It was the second “Star Wars” project to lose a director this year. Disney in June said that film makers Phil Lord and Christopher Miller had left the upcoming Han Solo “Star Wars” spin-off movie project due to creative differences. They were replaced by Hollywood veteran Ron Howard, the Oscar-winning director of “A Beautiful Mind.”

Tehran sculpture biennial opens after six years

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The seventh edition of the Tehran Contemporary Sculpture Biennial opened at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA) on Tuesday after a six-year hiatus.

“Art biennials are the beating hearts of the artists’ community in each society,” the secretary of the biennial, Kurosh Golnari, said during an opening ceremony, which was attended by TMCA director Ali-Mohammad Zare’ and groups artists and art aficionados.

He expressed his hope that the event could reach its zenith in six years.

About 80 works are being displayed at the biennial, which will run until October 14.

This year for the first time, the Visual Arts Office entrusted the organizing of the biennial to the Iranian Sculptors Society in the line with the government’s major policy to lessen its involvement in cultural events.

“This same decision was also made about biennials for photography and miniature painting,” Visual Arts Office director Majid Mollanoruzi said.

The office is keen to work on such events but only as a supporter, he added.

The sixth edition of the biennial was also organized with a one-year hiatus in 2011.



A cameraman covers the Seventh Tehran Contemporary Sculpture Biennial at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art on September 5, 2017.(Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

Iranian, South Korean animation studios sign MOU



Gonbad Kaboud co-director Behnud Nekui (R) and an H Culture official hold documents after signing an MOU at the 2017 Korea-Iran Cultural Technology Forum in Coex, Seoul on August 30, 2017. (Gonbad Kaboud/Hossein Ghaffari)

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Iranian animation studio Gonbad Kaboud, mostly renowned for the acclaimed movies “Stripy” and “The Fox and the Rooster”, and H Culture, a South Korean studio for creating animation and digital media.

The MOU was inked on the sidelines of the 2017 Korea-Iran Cultural Technology Forum in Coex, Seoul on August 30, Gonbad Kaboud announced in a press release on Wednesday.

Based on the MOU, the studios will collaborate on joint projects. In addition,

H Culture will distribute some animated productions from Gonbad Kaboud in the world.

H Culture will also help Gonbad Kaboud to introduce its production on the Cartoon Network Asia, a cable and satellite television channel that primarily broadcasts animated programs.

Animator brothers Babak and Behnud Nekui are the managers of Gonbad Kaboud, which was established in early 2008.

“Stripy”, an animation co-directed by Nekui brothers, obtained qualifications to register in the animated short film category at the 88th Academy Awards.

“Appendix” wins award at Montreal festival



A scene from Iranian director Hossein Namazi's debut feature film “Appendix”

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian director/writer Hossein Namazi's debut feature film “Appendix” won the Best Screenplay Award at the 41st Montreal World Film Festival (MWWF) in Canada on Tuesday.

The film is about a young woman named Zari, who needs to undergo an appendectomy, but her insurance ID has expired. Zari and her husband, Reza, borrow her friend's insurance ID, but problems arise after Zari undergoes the surgery with the false insurance ID.

“And Suddenly the Dawn” by Silvio Caiozzi from Chile crowned best film at the festival and Maciej Sobieszczanski from Poland received the best director award for his film “Reconciliation”.

Irena Kovacevic was named best actress for her role in “The Basics of Killing”, a joint production of Slovenia and Serbia by Jan Cvitkovic.

Karel Roden won the best actor award for his role in “A Prominent Patient”, a Czech-Slovak production by Julius Sevcik.

Judge delays sentencing of accused mobster tied to Boston art heist

HARTFORD, Conn. (Reuters) — A federal judge on Tuesday delayed sentencing an accused octogenarian mobster who authorities believe may hold clues needed to solve the largest art heist in U.S. history after he claimed to not recall pleading guilty to illegally selling guns.

U.S. District Judge Robert Chatigny in Hartford, Connecticut called off sentencing Robert Gentile, 81, after a defense lawyer said he could not remember pleading guilty in April to illegally selling a loaded firearm to a convicted killer.

“This morning he was in a fog,” said defense lawyer Ryan McGuigan.

The plea came in a case that stemmed from what McGuigan has called a Federal Bureau of Investigation sting operation aimed at pressuring Gentile into providing details on paintings stolen from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in March 1990.

Chatigny's decision to delay sentencing came over the objection of Assistant U.S. Attorney John Durham, who countered it was “much more likely he doesn't want to confront sentencing.”

Durham said that on an Aug. 10



United States Attorney Carmen Ortiz speaks during a press conference at the FBI's Boston Field Office held to appeal to the public for help in returning artwork stolen in 1990 from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S. on March 18, 2013. (Reuters/Jessica Rinaldi/File Photo)

monitored jailhouse phone call with his wife, Gentile was “completely oriented” and understood he was going to be sentenced.

Chatigny said he understood “the

government's position that Mr. Gentile is feigning difficulties.” But Chatigny said he was required to delay sentencing given what McGuigan said. He ordered further briefing on Gentile's competency.

“Thriller” was made because Michael Jackson wanted to be a monster

VENICE (Reuters) — Music video “Thriller” was not the product of a brilliant idea but was made because pop star Michael Jackson wanted to be a monster, director John Landis said at the Venice film festival on Monday.

Landis was in Venice to present the 3D version of the video, which was made 35 years after the original. It was screened as a special event in the out-of-competition section.

“(Thriller) was nobody's good idea, it was no brilliant business plan,” John Landis told journalists.

“It was a vanity video because Michael wanted to be a monster. And everything that came, evolved from that,

was spectacularly successful and I was totally surprised.”

Landis said Jackson first approached him about making the video because he liked his work on “An American Werewolf in London” and the two, along with make-up artist Rick Baker, met to look at photographs from old monster movies.

“Turns out he hasn't seen many horror films, they were too scary. I found him great,” Landis said, laughing. “He wanted zombies, but the big thing for Mike was turning into a monster.”

Asked about his first meeting with Jackson, the child star turned King of Pop who set the world dancing but

died in 2009 at the age of 50, Landis said he was “joyful” and “childlike” and quickly became a close family friend.

“Michael was very determined that everything had to be the best, the greatest,” he said. “He had a spectacular work ethic, but he was an old pro, the guy has been performing since he was 8 years old.”

While making “Thriller” Jackson was happy to “show up and do whatever I wanted,” Landis said. It was different when they met again to produce “Black or White” in 1991.

“On ‘Black or White’ I was working for Michael. It was different. We were still fine, but ... he was much more guarded,” Landis said.