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G20 protesters clash with police, set cars on fire



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Iran guaranteed \$12b foreign investment in 2016

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The head of Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran (OIETAI) said during 2016, Iran issued banking guarantees for near \$12 billion worth of foreign investments in the country which has been unprecedented.

Mohammad Khazaie made the remarks in the Iran Petrochemical Value Chain Summit (investment and development) in Vienna on Thursday, **Tasnim news agency reported.**

Emphasizing the benefits of investing in Iran's petrochemical industry, the official noted that the sanctions “snapback” is off the table now as it has been completely resolved.

“We are ready to cooperate with foreign companies in various fields,

including purchasing equipment and technology transfer, offering public-private partnership (PPP) projects and investment,” Khazaie said.

According to the official, along with Austria, Iran has been negotiating with other countries, including Denmark, Italy, Britain, Germany, China, South Korea and Japan, to open credit lines and finance projects.

In its World Investment Report 2017, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) put Iran among successful countries in terms of signing investment agreements in 2016.

Attracting \$3.372 billion worth of foreign investment in 2016, the country has registered a 63 percent rise in this regard.

Iran wraps up naval drill in Caspian Sea

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Navy wrapped up a massive naval war game in the Caspian Sea on Thursday with parades in the presence of ranking military commanders and officials, **Tasnim reported.**

The exercise began on July 2 and concluded in a naval parade involving various watercraft and naval units.

Navy Commander Habibollah Sayyari and Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani were among the figures who watched the naval forces on parade on Thursday.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, Larijani said the navy's presence in the Caspian Sea is critically significant.

“Sustainable authority in the Caspian Sea is highly important and we should feel called upon to help the strategic naval arm of the army,” he said.

He also noted that the parliament is mulling a budget boost for the navy.

Iran deploys its newest, most capable warship, Damavand, in the Caspian Sea, which formally entered service in March 2015.

Saudi Arabia is weakening itself and strengthening Iran

President Donald Trump likely sees Mohamed bin Salman, who in June was named the new Saudi crown prince, as a Middle Eastern leader made in his own image. The young crown prince's unrelenting hostility towards Iran and take-no-prisoners censure of Qatar is consistent with Trump's emerging, aggressive posture towards Iran.

But by placing his thumb on the scale of intramural Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) squabbles and reinforcing the narrative that Iran is the primary source of instability in the Middle East, Trump could hand Tehran a strategic bonanza, much like former President George W. Bush did by taking down Iraq, a country that for good or bad had acted as a check on Iranian power since the Iranian revolution.

The Saudis will miscalculate if they take much solace from Trump's support for their

regional policies. Regardless of what the United States does, sharply increasing the vitriol towards Iran while at the same time laying siege to fellow GCC member Qatar will likely weaken the Saudi position and what is left of an already compromised Arab political order. Intended to take Iran down a notch, these actions instead will likely strengthen Tehran's hand. In fact, Iranian policymakers would be forgiven for believing that Saudi Arabia had fallen prey to the judo move by which one's opponents are unwittingly maneuvered to use their own strength to harm themselves.

How does Saudi Arabia undermine its own position by escalating the conflict with Iran and working to bring Qatar forcefully into compliance? Much of Saudi Arabia's political strength in the region comes from the kingdom's strong position within the Arab world. But the Arab

order has become particularly fragile due to the corrosiveness of the civil wars in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Although Iran clearly represents a threat to Saudi interests, it is the weakness in Saudi Arabia's own Arab ranks, caused by the effects of the Arab Spring and the civil wars, that poses the biggest challenge to Riyadh and the biggest opportunity for Tehran. Ratcheting up hostility towards Iran is likely to prolong these wars, running the risk of further weakening the Arab world, thereby compromising Saudi Arabia's position relative to Iran. The longer the proxy battles between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the region's civil wars continue, the greater the risk that the civil wars could spread to other Arab countries like Jordan and Lebanon, the more splintered the Arab world will likely become, and the more Iran gains in the regional power game. **→2**

Iraqi Kurdistan envoy hails Iran's major role in fight against Daesh

he representative of the Iraqi Kurdistan region praised Iran's role in the Arab country's recent victories over the Daesh (ISIS or ISIL) terrorist group and said if it had not been for the Islamic Republic's assistance, Iraq would have fallen to the hands of the terrorists.

Speaking at a forum titled “Iraq after Daesh” held in Tehran on Wednesday, Nazem Dabbagh pointed to the recent recapture of the northern city of Mosul from Daesh terrorists and said the terrorist group has been forced out of Mosul but it has not yet.

“Daesh is not just a military issue but has become

a phenomenon and ideology,” the Iraqi diplomat said.

He further pointed to Tehran's support for Baghdad in the fight against the terror group, saying that if it had not been for Iran's assistance, Iraq would have fallen to the hands of Daesh.

Daesh militants made swift advances in northern and western Iraq over the summer of 2014, after capturing swaths of northern Syria.

However, a combination of concentrated attacks by the Iraqi military and the volunteer forces, who rushed to take arms after top Shiite leader Grand Ayatollah Seyed Ali al-Sistani issued a fatwa calling for the fight against the

militants, blunted the edge of Daesh offensive and forced the terrorist group to withdraw from much of the areas it had occupied.

Iraqi military forces on July 29 captured the Mosul mosque at the heart of the northern city, which Daesh had declared its de facto capital.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the liberation of the site of the symbolic al-Nuri Mosque in Old Mosul as “the declaration of the end of the statelet of Daesh.”

Daesh stronghold in Syria's Raqqa is also close to falling.

(Source: Tasnim)



ARTICLE

By Yuram Abdullah Weiler
Analyst and journalist

Protest Paradox: On the futility of liberal “resistance” in the age of Trump

“If the State authority is open to democratic influence, the demonstration will hardly be necessary; if it is not, it is unlikely to be influenced by an empty show of force containing no real threat.”

—John Berger (1926–2017)

From the Boston Tea Party to the civil rights movement and mass rallies against the war on Vietnam in the 1960s, the United States has a long history of public protest, some of which has taken the form of civil disobedience and involved violence. Opposing the citizens' expression of dissent is a government, allegedly “of the people by the people and for the people,” which has frequently employed force to suppress the selfsame right it is supposedly sworn to uphold.

Given the widespread opposition to the Trump regime coalescing in the United States, governments, particularly in those states with Republican leadership, are taking countermeasures in the form of attempting to pass legislation criminalizing protest. While some of the proposed legislation has already been rejected, much of the insidious intent of disrupting dissent has now been codified in police training manuals nationwide and, of course, in Trump's own rhetoric.

Among the concepts codified in the debate over dissent are the “paid protestor” and “violent protests” but even more chilling are the legal attempts at blurring the distinction between riots and protests. Yet these attempts, disturbing as they may be, predate Trump's ascendancy to power. For example, the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA), which coined the term “eco-terrorist,” was passed by the U.S. Congress in 2006. Under AETA, individuals were convicted of “animal enterprise terrorism” and incarcerated for up to six years for merely being administrators of an animal rights website. **→13**



Three gored in first bull run of Spain's San Fermin festival

Two Americans and a Spaniard were gored Friday during the first running of the bulls of this year's San Fermin festival, medical officials in the northern Spanish city of Pamplona said, according to The Independent.

A 46-year-old Spanish man was undergoing surgery for serious injuries to his head and leg after he was gored and then tossed by a bull.

Egypt: Ten soldiers killed in Sinai suicide attack

At least ten Egyptian soldiers including a colonel were killed in a suicide bomb attack on an army checkpoint in northern Sinai, security sources said.

Another 40 fighters were killed in a subsequent gun battle with soldiers at the checkpoint, an army spokesperson said on Friday.

The attack started when a suicide car bomber rammed his vehicle into the checkpoint at a military compound in the southern Rafah village of el-Barth, followed by heavy gunfire from dozens of masked fighters on foot, officials said.

The dead included a high ranking Special Forces officer, Colonel Ahmed el-Mansi, and at least 20 others were wounded in the attack.

Sirens of ambulances were heard from a distance as they rushed to the site of the attack. The officials spoke to AP news agency on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Speaking to Al Jazeera from Bologna, Spain, Timothy Kaldas, a non-resident fellow at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, said there was a high likelihood that the attack would be claimed by Wilayat Sinai, a group affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as ISIS) group.

The group frequently targets military and police personnel, he said, adding that Friday's attack was “unfortunately a very predictable type of attack and something we've seen regularly.”

Over the past months, ISIL has focused its attacks on Egypt's Christian minority and carried out at least four deadly attacks that killed dozens, prompting army chief-turned-President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi to declare a state of emergency in the country.

The Sinai branch of ISIL appears to be the most resilient outside Syria and Iraq, where the so-called caliphate is witnessing its demise.

The group's offshoot in Libya has been uprooted in months-long battles in the central city of Sirte while its branch in Yemen has failed to seize territories or compete with its al-Qaeda rivals.

(Source: agencies)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Cleric condemns Saudi massacre of civilians in Yemen

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Tehran's interim Friday prayer leader has blasted the Riyadh government for its continued massacre of civilians in Yemen.

"The people of Yemen are under the harshest economic and military pressures while their living conditions are deteriorating as Saudi Arabia is destroying Yemen," Kazzem Seddiqi told worshippers, Mehr reported.

He asked international human rights bodies and the states claiming to be advocates of human rights to stop the Saudi crimes in Yemen.



Majlis to address Hajj case

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Iranian parliament (Majlis) will address the issue of Hajj pilgrimage during the coming days, Fars reported on Friday.

Ali Qazi Askar, head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, announced on Wednesday that the Islamic Republic fully supports sending people to the spiritual trip of Hajj, noting the Supreme National Security Council has approved of sending pilgrims to Hajj this year.

He said consular measures have been taken and in a few days the Iranian pilgrims' visas will be issued.



'S. Arabia will finally sacrifice those backing it against Qatar'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The special foreign policy advisor to the Iranian Parliament speaker has predicted that the four countries of the UAE, Bahrain, Yemen and Egypt which are standing alongside Saudi Arabia against Qatar will finally be sacrificed by Riyadh itself.

"Four countries that today are on the side of Saudi Arabia and against Qatar will also be sacrificed by the Saudis," Hossein Amir-Abdollahian tweeted on Friday.

Amir-Abollahian, the former Foreign Ministry point man for Arab affairs, also said the Arabs no longer "confide" the Saudi kingdom politically.



Any move against Iran vessels will cost aggressors dearly: commander

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Any act of aggression against Iran's watercraft in international water will face very strong response, the IRGC Naval Force chief warned, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported on Thursday.

However, Ali Fadavi said, "No one in the world dares to look askance at our ships".

He added scores of IRGC vessels patrol the country's southern waters round the clock.



Future cabinet to be nonpartisan: minister

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's minister of ICT said on Thursday that the future cabinet will be nonpartisan, Rasa news agency reported.

"This cabinet will belong to all Iranians," Mahmoud Vaezi said, adding the government would use the previous cabinet's experience to act more powerfully.

In the meantime, the pro-reform Hope parliamentary faction said it has formed a committee of five to discuss the next cabinet with Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri.



Iran, Armenia ink MOU to expand academic cooperation

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Senior Iranian and Armenian officials in a meeting in Yerevan have signed a memorandum of understanding to broaden academic relations between the two countries.

The MOU was signed between Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister Mohammad Farhadi and his Armenian counterpart Levon Mkrtchyan on Friday, Fars reported.

The five-year MOU will facilitate cooperation in fields of science parks and knowledge-based enterprises, implementation of joint projects, holding scientific forums, granting mutual scholarships as well as exchanging academicians.

Parliament approves spending \$1.5b to boost rural economy

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's parliament (Majlis) has given its assent to allocate \$1.5 billion to villagers in a bid to boost rural economy.

"Majlis has agreed to appropriate \$1.5 billion to the country's villages from the National Development Fund," Hamid Banaee, a member of the parliamentary development committee, said on Friday.

"Majlis has had a special look on villages and youth employment though much is yet to be done to fix the issue," he added.

Portions of the budget will go to renovating dilapidated houses and transportation infrastructures, according to the lawmaker.

Rural development has been long considered a blind spot in Iran's economic perspective with consecutive governments failing to address the challenge responsibly.

A quarter of the 80-million country lives in rural areas, according to a national consensus in October 2016, showing a drop of nearly one million over a five-year period.

Under the country's six five-year development plan (2017-2022), revenues from value-added tax levied on tobacco,



An abandoned village in central Iran (File photo)

Rural development has been long considered a blind spot in Iran's economic perspective with consecutive governments failing to address the challenge responsibly.

gasoline and jet fuel will be proportionally allocated to rural development.

Lack of basic facilities, high employment and environmental challenges

Iran nabs 21 Daesh operatives in Mashhad

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — An Iranian Judiciary official confirmed on Thursday that security forces have arrested 21 Daesh (ISIS) members in the northwestern city of Mashhad, foiling their plans to carry out several terror attacks in Iran.

The terrorists "intended to carry out different operations, including suicide attacks," said Hassan Heidari, the deputy prosecutor general of Mashhad.

"Some of the detained Daesh members are Iranians and some of them are Afghan nationals who have entered the country using fake documents," he explained.

A number of the arrested terrorists had conducted terrorist operations outside the country, the local official said.

He added that the country's intelligence forces had launched the security operation in the northeastern city as a "deterrent measure" in the aftermath of the recent Daesh terror attacks in Tehran.

Iran vowed quick revenge after Daesh suicide bombers and gunmen stormed the country's



parliament and the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini on June 7, killing 18 and injuring at least 56.

Days after the brutal attacks, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps fired six missiles into eastern Syria, targeting Daesh strongholds in retaliation for the attacks.

According to a statement released by the IRGC, at least 65 Daesh terrorists, including several high-ranking intelligence commanders, were killed in the missile attack.

Tehran-Moscow ties have made good progress: Medvedev



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said that relations between Tehran and Moscow have increased significantly in various areas, ISNA reported Friday.

"Iran and Russia have many commonalities for bilateral cooperation and their relations have been growing in various spheres during the recent years," Medvedev said in a message to a cultural-social conference.

The two-day meeting opened in the Russian city of Ufa, Bashkortostan, on Thursday.

The prime minister also said that the conference can help expansion of ties between the two countries.

Ali Younesi, a special aide to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, attended the conference at the head of a delegation.

The Iranian and Russian officials discussed cooperation in areas of culture and tourism and also fight against terrorism and extremism.

Iranian Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei who addressed the conference said President Rouhani has plans to increase relations with Moscow more robustly in his second term of presidency.

He also expressed hope that relations between the two countries in the area of tourism would be expanded.

Ambassador Sanaei also said that the two countries have succeeded to expand relations in recent years.

Iran condemns terrorist blast in Egypt's Sinai



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Friday condemned a terrorist blast in Egypt's northeastern Sinai Peninsula which left 10 people killed, expressing sympathy with the families of the victims.

"The fleeing of terrorists after their defeats in Iraq and Syria is a serious threat to the world and any kind of leniency or instrumental use of them will cause new wave of blind terrorism in various parts of the world," Qassemi warned.

A suicide bomb attack on an army checkpoint in Sinai on Friday left 10 Egyptian soldiers dead and at least 20 ones wounded.

among others have resulted in immense displacement and slum-dwelling in metropolitan cities.

Experts have warned that if the current population displacement persists, Iran has to brace itself for a security loophole in border areas in the near future.

According to a 2016 report, out of a total 3,555 villages in eastern province of Southern Khorasan, 1,703 ones have been left abandoned.

The third largest one in Iran, the province shares a 460-kilometer border with Afghanistan.

Shrinking rural population has been reported in central Iran, as well.

Markazi province, home to Arak nuclear reactor, has an analogous condition.

Upwards of 429 villages, out of 1,639, are now empty, a provincial official said.

The Rouhani administration has taken measures to staunch rural migration. Since 2013, the biggest gas pipeline network stretching has happened with 9,000 villages now having access to natural gas.

The cabinet also introduced a new healthcare system, providing all low-income families, including villagers, full health insurance.

Heidari said as part of the operation to arrest Daesh members in Mashhad, intelligence forces had put a group of terrorists under surveillance.

They found out that some of the terrorists had entered Iran with fake IDs after receiving military training from Daesh and pledging allegiance to top leaders of the group, he explained.

The local official also underscored the Judiciary's resolve to take serious measures against Daesh elements in the country.

Since the June 7 terrorist attacks, Iran has arrested dozens of terrorists who intended to launch acts of terror inside the country.

On Jun 25, provincial prosecutor Nemat Sadeqi said security forces had arrested over 50 elements linked to terrorist groups in the western province of Kermanshah.

Days earlier, Nader Qazipour, a parliamentarian from Urmia, said 40 Daesh terrorists have been arrested in the country's northwestern province of West Azarbaijan in continuation of the Islamic Republic's measures to fight terrorism.

The attack started when a suicide car bomber rammed his vehicle into the checkpoint at a military compound in the southern Rafah village of el-Barth, followed by heavy gunfire from dozens of masked fighters on foot, Al-jazeera reported.

Colonel Ahmed el-Mansi, a high ranking special forces officer, was among the dead.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

According to Tamer el-Rifai, the Egyptian Army's official spokesperson, the army foiled attacks targeting a number of other checkpoints in southern Rafah and that during the battle 40 militants were killed.

Saudi Arabia is weakening itself and strengthening Iran

1 → What is incubating in Syria right now within the Sunni opposition to President Bashar al-Assad is a metaphor for how divisions between Arab countries pose a greater threat to Saudi Arabia than the challenge from Iran. In contrast to the disciplined, tightly consolidated, Iran-led coalition supporting the Syrian government, the Sunni opposition is highly fragmented. Hundreds of different opposition groups, ranging from jihadist militant groups like the al Qaeda's Syria affiliate, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly the Nusra Front), to non-jihadist Salafist groups like Jaish al-Islam and Ahrar al-sham, and even some of the stronger factions of the secular Free Syrian Army, are busy shaping areas of Syria still outside government control, like Idlib province. Given the propping up of the Syrian government by Iran, Russia, and its militias, it is unlikely that these opposition groups will pose an existential threat to Assad anytime soon. But with their Syrian base threatened by Russia and Iran tipping the scale towards the Syrian government, and the

recent de-escalation efforts by Iran, Russia, and Turkey, these groups, particularly Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, could ultimately turn their sights to the Arab world, further weakening the Arab political fabric, and potentially posing security and political challenges to Saudi Arabia. In other words, battle-tested groups in Syria could spill over to other parts of the Arab world, further eroding the Saudi position on Iran.

Saudi Arabia has potentially amplified this risk of blowback from Syria by dangerously using divisions within the Arab community as a flashpoint in relations with Qatar. Saudi Arabia considers the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization, while Qatar has kept avenues open to this nearly century-old political organization with deep roots in several Arab countries. While one could debate the motives behind Qatar's actions, conflating the Brotherhood with the threats from jihadist groups like the Islamic State and al Qaeda recklessly delegitimizes the middle ground within the Sunni ideological spectrum,

something that could blow back in Riyadh's face. By pushing the Brotherhood out of the debate, Saudi Arabia (along with the United Arab Emirates) creates an opening for more extremist organizations, possibly those with deep Syrian roots like al Qaeda's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which could pose a significant threat to the Saudis and the broader Arab world.

Moreover, the Middle East today is a dangerously pressurized regional system, with few safety valves for conflict mitigation. Qatar (with Oman and Kuwait) could be seen as providing this pressure relief function. By building bridges with the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran, it creates pathways for dialogue and conflict resolution both inside and outside the Arab world. While the Saudis bristle at the ambiguity of Qatar's position, it serves a purpose of blurring some of the lines of conflict, potentially creating diplomatic pathways towards eventual normalization of relations between Riyadh and Tehran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UNESCO votes to declare al-Khalil's Old City 'a heritage site'

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared the Old City of al-Khalil (Hebron) a protected heritage site in a secret ballot despite Israeli attempts to thwart the vote.

On Friday, the UN's cultural arm voted 12 to three -- with six abstentions -- to give heritage status to al-Khalil in the occupied West Bank, which is home to more than 200,000 Palestinians and a few hundred Israeli settlers.

On Thursday, a Palestinian official said Tel Aviv was seeking to thwart Palestinian efforts to include the Old City of al-Khalil (Hebron) on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger.

Al-Khalil is home to more than 200,000 Palestinians and a few hundred Israeli settlers, who live in a heavily fortified enclave near the site known to Muslims as the Ibrahim Mosque and to Jews as the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

Deputy Mayor of al-Khalil Yousef al Jabari made the remarks to a group of journalists visiting the Old City of al-Khalil on Thursday, one day prior to UNESCO's vote on the matter.

The Old City of al-Khalil is also home to the Ibrahim Mosque, one of the key holy sites in the Muslim world.

Jabari described Ibrahim Mosque as a "pure Muslim" site and said, "We will do everything we can [for] this place to remain a mosque, and a mosque for Muslim worshippers only."

If the Palestinian Authority (PA) succeeds in its bid on Friday, the Old City of al-Khalil would become the third site registered under "Palestine" since the UNESCO recognized it as a member state in 2011.

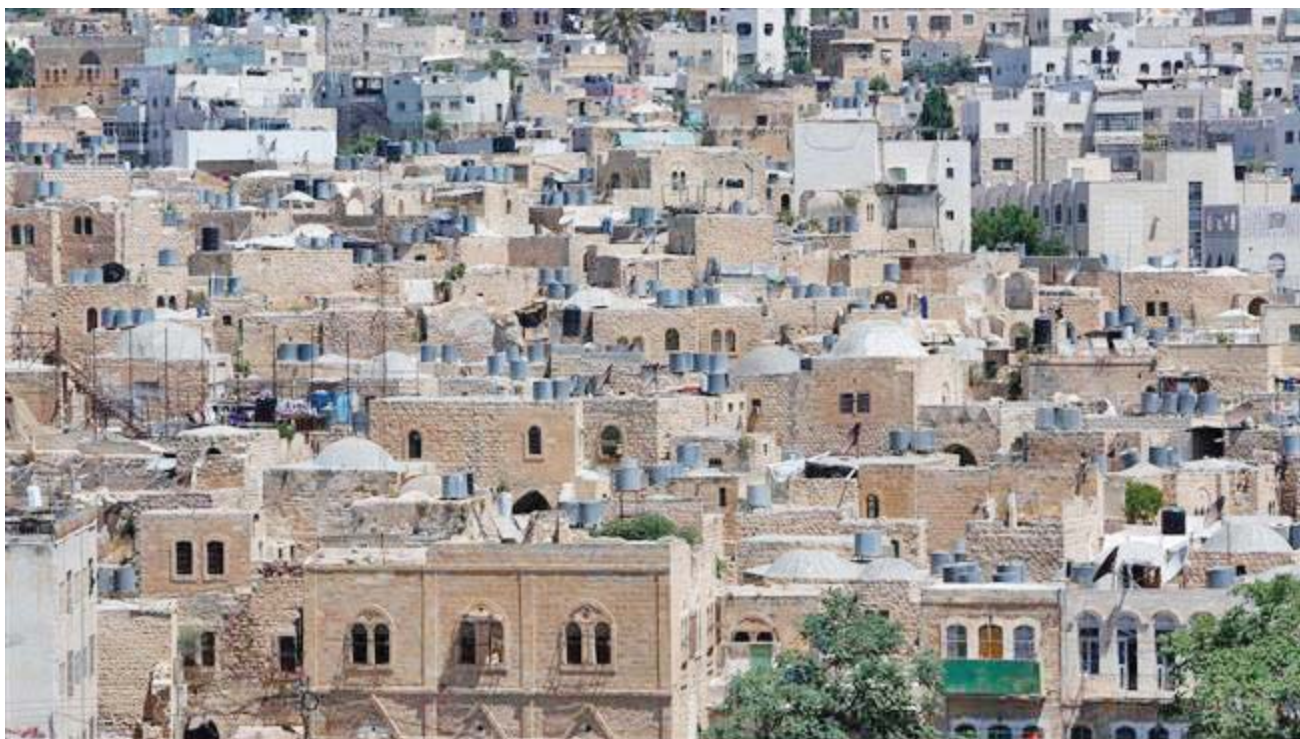
Jabari argued that he did not recognize Jewish ties to the Old City.

"The real religious Jews do not come and pray in the cave (Ibrahim Mosque). It is only settlers who come to pray. It is not the religious Jews. If Jews think they have a connection or ties to [Ibrahim Mosque], why do only settlers go to this site?" he asked.

According to Palestine's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the old city of al-Khalil urgently needed protection from "assaults that harm the exceptional international value of the place."

On June 30, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley wrote to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova, claiming that Ibrahim Mosque "is in no immediate threat. Such a designation risks undermining the seriousness such an assessment by UNESCO should have."

She further expressed hope that other countries would join the U.S. in opposing



the measure.

Palestine's Foreign Ministry hit back at Haley, accusing her of being "racist and anti-Palestinian" and serving as an ambassador for Israel, rather than the U.S. at the UN.

It also condemned "the crude intervention of the U.S. ambassador in the work of UNESCO and the attempt to influence the independence of the UN organization."

■ Israel an 'occupying power'

Elsewhere, on Tuesday, the UNESCO passed a resolution, denouncing Israel's "illegal" practices in East al-Quds (Jerusalem) and describing the regime as an "occupying power."

The resolution slammed "the failure of the Israeli occupying authorities to cease the persistent excavations, tunneling, works, projects and other illegal practices in East Jerusalem [al-Quds], particularly in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law."

It further called Israel "the occupying power" and reaffirmed UN resolutions that rejected the regime's claims to East al-Quds.

Hamas spokesman Abdulatif al-Qanoun welcomed the vote, saying that UNESCO's resolution demolishes the false Israeli narrative and asserts the Palestinian right in al-Quds and al-Aqsa Mosque.

PA spokesman Yousef al-Mahmoud also hailed the resolution and called on the international community to "enforce these decisions on the ground in order to lift injustice, oppression and domination prac-

ticed by the occupying power against our steadfast people in the city of Jerusalem and against its Islamic and Christian holy places."

Israel occupied the West Bank and East al-Quds (Jerusalem) during the Six-Day War in 1967. It later annexed East al-Quds in a move not recognized by the international community.

Israeli UN Ambassador Danny Danon condemned UNESCO's resolution and said, "Nothing is more disgraceful than UNESCO declaring" Israel the occupier of the Western Wall and al-Quds' Old City.

Last year, UNESCO adopted a similar resolution, titled Occupied Palestine and sponsored by several Arab states.

The previous resolution "strongly condemns the escalating Israeli aggression and illegal measures against... the freedom of worship and Muslims' access to their holy site al-Aqsa Mosque/al-Haram al-Sharif"

Enraged by such anti-Israel measure, Tel Aviv has cut ties with UNESCO and reduced its UN budget, putting the 2017 payments at \$3.7 instead of the original \$11 million.

■ Israeli settler runs over, kills Palestinian man in occupied West Bank

Elsewhere, a Palestinian man has reportedly lost his life after an Israeli settler ran him over in the south-central part of the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian security sources said the 37-year-old victim, identified as Omar Ahmad Issa, was struck in the town of

al-Khader, located 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) west of Beit Lahm (Bethlehem), at around 4 a.m. local time (0100 GMT) on Friday, while riding his motorcycle near a checkpoint leading to the occupied East al-Quds.

Israeli police spokeswoman Luba Samri described the incident as a "road accident" between a private vehicle and a Palestinian motorbike in a statement, noting that Issa was critically injured in the crash and later pronounced dead at the hospital.

There have been scores of "hit and run" incidents targeting Palestinians in different parts of the occupied West Bank, with most of them largely going uninvestigated by Israeli authorities. Some of such events have even resulted in fatalities.

On May 3, an Israeli settler deliberately ran over an eight-year-old Palestinian child, identified as Laith Yousif Shatat, as the child was standing outside his school in the eastern part of Yatta city, located approximately 8 kilometers south of al-Khalil.

Murad Samir al-Razam, 4, was run over in the center of al-Khalil, situated 30 kilometers south of al-Quds, on April 30. The Israeli driver fled the scene after the incident.

The Palestinian child was taken to the Governmental Hospital in al-Khalil to receive medical treatment.

About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

(Source: agencies)

Dutch cabinet: Turkey's deputy PM not welcome to visit country

The Dutch cabinet said on Friday Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Tugrul Turkes was not welcome to visit the Netherlands for a ceremony among Turkish expatriates to commemorate the anniversary of last year's failed military coup in Turkey.

Relations between the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies deteriorated sharply in March when the Dutch, on the eve of their national election, barred Turkish ministers from speaking at rallies of ethnic Turks in the Netherlands, citing security concerns.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who wanted to encourage Turks living in Europe to back his plans in a referendum for increased powers, accused the Netherlands of acting like a "banana republic" and his foreign minister described the country as the "capital of fascism".

"In view of the current condition of the bilateral relationship ... the cabinet finds a visit by the Turkish deputy prime minister or any other member of the Turkish gov-



ernment undesirable," the Dutch cabinet said in a statement.

"This decision is logical in view of the events in March," it added.

Turkey has said it plans commemoration events in several European cities that

have a large ethnic Turkish diaspora and the foreign ministry in Ankara criticized the Dutch stance.

"The statement... is telling in terms of this country's understanding of democracy", Turkish foreign ministry spokesman

Huseyin Muftuoglu said.

Military officers attempted to overthrow Erdogan and his government last July in a coup attempt that quickly collapsed.

Erdogan accused European governments of being slow and insufficiently vigorous in their condemnation of the coup, in which more than 240 people were killed.

Since then, Turkey has jailed more than 50,000 people pending trial and suspended or dismissed some 150,000, including soldiers, teachers and civil servants, over alleged links with the exiled Muslim cleric Ankara blames for the failed coup.

The large-scale purges have added to the strains in Turkey's relations with Western countries, which have stepped up their criticism of Ankara's record on democracy and human rights.

Turkey says the crackdown is necessary because of the gravity of the security threats facing it.

(Source: Reuters)

Nearly 10 million children need urgent help in Yemen: UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that nearly 10 million children in Yemen are in immediate need of humanitarian assistance as the House of Saud regime-led war against the crisis-hit country continues.

UNICEF's Yemen office released a statement on its official Facebook page on Thursday, saying that most children in Yemen do not have access to basic medical care, adequate nutrition, fresh drinking water, suitable sanitation and education.

Also on Thursday, UN humanitarian coordinator in Yemen Jamie McGoldrick warned of growing risk of famine in the country, saying aid groups struggle to find funds as they have pulled resources from the campaign against malnutrition to battle the cholera outbreak in the impoverished nation.

"We are trying to do our best, but it is very much beyond what we can cope with," McGoldrick said at a news conference in the capital city of Sana'a.

Cholera has swept Yemen with alarming velocity in what the United Nations has described as "the worst cholera outbreak in the world."

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters on Wednesday that the cholera outbreak that started in April has spread to all the 21 governorates in Yemen.

Dujarric said there have been 270,000 suspected cases of cholera and over 1,600 deaths from the disease in Yemen since late April.

Children under the age of 15 made up 41 percent of those cases and people older than 60 accounted for 33 percent of the deaths, Dujarric pointed out.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners received 400 tons of medical supplies, including 30 ambulances and kits and equipment, to treat 10,000 people in Aden and Hodeida, the UN spokesman said.

Cholera is an acute diarrheal infection that is spread through contaminated food or water. It can be effectively treated with the immediate replacement of lost

fluids and salts, but without treatment it can be fatal.

The Saudi regime-led war on the world's poorest Arab country, which started in March 2015, has taken a heavy toll on Yemen's health facilities and caused severe medicine shortages there.

Latest UN figures show that the conflict in Yemen has left 18.8 million of the country's 28 million population in need of humanitarian aid and almost seven million on the brink of famine.

The House of Saud regime has led a brutal military campaign against Yemen since two years ago in a bid to reinstall the Riyadh-friendly former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and to eliminate the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement. The Saudi regime military campaign has, however, failed to achieve its goals.

The protracted war has already killed over 12,000 Yemenis, with the United States and Britain assisting the Saudi regime in the aggression.

(Source: Press TV)

Trump and Putin hold first face-to-face talks

Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin held their first face-to-face talks, on the sidelines of the G20 summit in the German city of Hamburg, BBC reported.

"It's an honour to be with you," Trump told Putin, who responded: "I'm delighted to meet you personally."

The U.S. and Russian leaders say they want to repair ties damaged by crises including Russia's alleged meddling in the U.S. election.



Climate change and trade were set to dominate the two-day G20 meeting.

"Putin and I have been discussing various things, and I think it's going very well," Trump told reporters while sitting alongside Putin at the start of the talks, which were open to the media.

"We've had some very, very good talks. We're going to have a talk now and obviously that will continue. We look forward to a lot of very positive things happening for Russia, for the United States and for everybody concerned."

Putin, via a translator, said that while they had spoken by phone, a phone conversation was never as good as meeting face to face.

Both men ignored shouted questions from reporters as the meeting went into private session.

Earlier, a brief video clip posted on the German government's Facebook pageshowed the two men meeting for the first time and shaking hands, with Mr Trump patting Mr Putin's arm as they smiled in the company of other leaders.

Mongolia votes in first-ever presidential runoff

Mongolians voted on Friday in the country's first-ever presidential runoff after the first round of elections failed to produce a clear winner following campaigns tainted by corruption allegations.

The presidential race went into a runoff after none of the three candidates won a majority in last month's election in the resource-rich country.

A populist former martial arts star, Khaltmaa Battulga of the opposition Democratic Party won the most votes, but fell short of the required majority.

Voters regard Battulga as a resource nationalist who is suspicious of southern neighbor China.

He faces the candidate of the ruling Mongolian People's Party (MPP), Miyeegombo Enkhbold, who came second.

Enkhbold has stood behind the current government, pledging to stay the course for economic recovery following a \$5.5bn rescue package from the International Monetary Fund and partners in May.

Battulga has captured the attention of voters who feel Mongolia has got a bad deal on investments, promising greater government control of strategic mines, such as Rio Tinto's, Oyu Tolgoi copper mine.

Enkhbold, for his part, has promised to deliver money owed from a universal child welfare fund.

Results are expected sometime on Saturday.

The race has been clouded by allegations of corruption and voter fraud by all sides, with many voters dismayed by their choice of candidates and the government's inability to bring them prosperity.

But the country's 1.9 million voters also have a third option, according to the so-called "White Ballot" campaign, to leave their votes blank.

"Our goal is to have every voter know they have an option to vote for none of the above," Mogi Badral Bantoi, spokesman for the campaign, said.

For many voters, handing in blank ballots is a last-ditch effort to deny either candidate a majority, so forcing a re-run of the poll from scratch, with selection of fresh candidates.

(Source: agencies)

Russian opposition leader Navalny released from jail

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been released from prison after more than three and a half weeks in jail.

"Today at 9:00 am (0600 GMT) Alexei Navalny was taken from the cell block to the Moscow central district police department and they have now let him out of there," his spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said in a message posted on Twitter on Friday.

"Alexei has arrived (on the premises of) Anti-Corruption Fund (the organization he created to denounce the corruption of elites)," she said.

The 41-year-old lawyer and political activist had been sentenced to 30 days behind bars for organizing unauthorized protests in which thousands of his supporters held nationwide anti-government demonstrations. He is currently regarded as the opposition leader in Russia.

Navalny, who is married with two children, has been arrested numerous times before by Russian authorities over various charges including embezzlement and fraud.

He has gained the support of his followers, who are mostly young people, via social media, blogging about alleged corruption at some of big state-owned corporations.

Navalny made headlines in late March after he was briefly arrested along with some 1,000 people for protests which came following his allegations about corruption in the government.

He again made the headlines in April when an attacker doused his face with a green antiseptic liquid.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran negotiates using Antwerp port for its petchem exports

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran is in talks with Belgium on using the European country's Antwerp port for exporting petrochemical products, IRNA reported.

Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Managing Director Marziyeh Shahdaie met with Frank Geerkens, the port ambassador at Antwerp Port authority in Belgium, to discuss the subject. Cooperation on HSE and firefighting areas were also discussed in the meeting.



Iran-Vietnam Joint Economic Committee meeting due in mid-July

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The ninth round of Iran-Vietnam Joint Economic Committee meeting is due to be held in Tehran on July 15 and 16, the official website of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) reported.

In this regard TPO officials and representatives of concerned organizations and institutes held a meeting this week to discuss preparations for the upcoming committee meeting.

BOJ draws line in the sand, hitting currencies, oil and bonds

The Bank of Japan stepped up plans for its bond-buying on Friday as Japanese government bond (JGB) yields crept higher, causing the yen and oil to drop.

On Friday, the BOJ said it would buy an unlimited number of 10-year JGBs at a yield of 0.110 percent, and it increased the size of its regular buying of five- to 10-year JGBs by 50 billion yen (\$439.96 million) to 500 billion yen, Reuters reported.

The BOJ has set a target of keeping the 10-year JGB yield at zero, buying bonds through its quantitative easing program to enforce its policy.

But this week, the 30-year and 40-year JGBs touched their highest yields since February of 2016, while the 10-year touched a five-month high of 0.105 percent, Reuters reported.

A BOJ official said the banks increased activity in the market was due to the long-term bonds' yield rises, Reuters reported.

That came amid a selloff in global bond markets amid expectations that some major central banks, including the U.S. Federal Reserve, the Bank of England and the European Central Bank, were turning more hawkish, and were likely to begin removing some accommodative measures.

Bond yields move inversely to prices.

The BOJ's announced bond purchase plans bashed the yen, with the dollar fetching as much as 113.83 yen, compared with as low as 113.07 yen earlier in the session. *(Source: CNBC)*

Chinese bank giants lose \$15b in a week on share rout

Investors couldn't sell Chinese banking giants fast enough this week.

Industrial & Commercial Bank of China Ltd., Agricultural Bank of China Ltd. and Bank of China Ltd. posted their worst weeks since at least June 2016, while China Construction Bank Corp. fell for a fifth consecutive week. The lenders were among the biggest decliners on a gauge of Chinese shares traded in Hong Kong, losing a combined \$15 billion in value.

The losses are a turnaround for the Big Four lenders, which rallied along with the Hong Kong market earlier this year as concerns over bad debt gave way to optimism over improving economic growth and corporate profits. While analysts say little has changed for the Chinese banks, they are also especially vulnerable to a correction after going ex-dividend recently.

"Their fundamentals haven't gotten worse; they're still improving," said Castor Pang, head of research at Core-Pacific Yamaichi HK. "But in the short term, the focus isn't on Chinese banks."

In contrast, Ping An Insurance Group Co. is among the top performers this week, while PICC Property & Casualty Co. had its best week since November 2016. Funds may have rotated into these shares because insurers will benefit from rising global bond yields, said Peter So, co-head of research at CCB International Securities in Hong Kong. European and U.S. banks also gained this week amid expectations for monetary tightening in both regions.

ICBC bore the brunt of the selling, sinking 7.4 percent for the week. The stock has fallen to its lowest level versus the benchmark Hang Seng Index since January 2008, while its Hong Kong shares are now the cheapest in a year compared to its A shares. Agricultural Bank is down 6.2 percent, while Bank of China has lost 5.7 percent.

Investors should see the selloff as a good time to add banks' Hong Kong-listed shares, So said.

"Corporate earnings are improving and the economy is stable," he said. "At these levels, these shares not expensive, but attractive."

Exchange filings in April showed that China's big banks mostly lowered their bad-loan ratios and steadied their interest margins in the first quarter, thanks to the country's economic rebound. ICBC reported its biggest profit increase in two years for the period.

Since then, ICBC's asset quality had improved, while its net interest margin had showed signs of widening, Chairman Yi Huiman and President Gu Shu said at the bank's annual shareholder meeting last month. *(Source: Bloomberg)*

South Pars phases 13, 22, 24 to start early production by Mar. 2018

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Early production will be started in phases 13, 22 and 24 of Iran's South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018), Mohammad Meshkinfam, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the field, told ISNA.

He said the contracts for development of the mentioned phases have been already signed.

Meshkinfam also referred to the second phase of developing the gas field and said, "We are in the stage of planning which will be complete by the yearend. Then we will start basic planning and selecting the contractor."

South Pars, which Iran shared



with Qatar in the Persian Gulf, 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.

The field is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

Power generation capacity to reach 80,000 MW in Iran by next summer

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's nominal electricity generation capacity will reach 80,000 megawatts (MW) by summer 2018, according to Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Houshang Falahatian.

The official put the country's current nominal electricity generation capacity at 77,000 MW, Tasnim news agency

reported.

For generation of 1,000 MW of electricity, 40 trillion rials (about \$1.058 billion) is required, Falahatian said, adding, "We need to generate 7,000 MW of electricity each year which requires a fund of 280 trillion rials (about \$7.407 billion)."

Iran increased its electricity genera-

tion capacity by 2.199 gigawatts (GW), boosting it to 76.302 GW, in the past Iranian calendar year 1395 which ended on March 20, according to a report by the Iran Power Grid Management Company released in late March.

Natural gas power plants accounted for 75.5 percent of the increased generation capacity, equaling 1.66 GW, IRNA

reported.

Combined cycled power plants, hydroelectric power plants, distributed generation power plants, and renewable energy power plants also accounted for 14.6 percent, 3.4 percent, 5.7 percent, and 0.9 percent of the total rise in the country's electricity generation capacity, respectively, the report added.

Ukraine needs to privatize state companies: IMF

It is time for Kiev to show political will and privatize state-owned companies, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) mission chief to the country said on Friday, though land reform needs more discussion and it could wait until the next review.

Kiev has been trying to push contested legislation through parliament, including raising the pen-

sion age and lifting a ban on land sales, as part of a \$17.5 billion bailout agreed with the IMF in 2015.

The IMF's Ron van Rooden said after adopting the new privatization law, it was time to act.

"They have not sold any companies in the past three years so it's time to show political will and bring some state-owned enterprises to sale," he

said, speaking at a conference in London.

On the land reform, he added the fund would be willing to let that go to the next review.

"We think a bit more time and discussion is needed to come up with (a solution) on how to proceed."

(source: New York Times)

U.S. seeks funds tied to North Korea from 8 big banks

U.S. authorities have tried to seize millions of dollars associated with several companies that deal with North Korea, including the country's military, from eight large international banks, according to court filings made public on Thursday.

The effort was revealed two days after North Korea tested a long-range missile capable of reaching Alaska, ratcheting up tensions with the United States and adding to worries about North Korea leader Kim Jong Un's nuclear weapons plans.

Thursday's filings show that Chief Judge Beryl Howell of the federal court in Washington, D.C. on May 22 granted U.S. prosecutors' applications for "damning" seizure warrants against Bank of America Corp, Bank of New York Mellon Corp, Citigroup Inc, Deutsche Bank AG, HSBC Holdings Plc, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Standard Chartered Plc and Wells Fargo & Co.

Prosecutors believe the banks have processed more than \$700 million of "prohibited" transactions on behalf of entities tied to North Korea since 2009, including the period after Donald Trump

was elected U.S. president, the filings show.

Some of the transactions were processed for Dandong Zhicheng Metallic Material Co and four affiliated "front" companies that prosecutors said tried to evade sanctions through transactions that would benefit North Korean entities, "including the North Korea military and North Korea weapons programs," according to the filings.

A person answering the telephone at Dandong Zhicheng Metallic Material Co in northeastern China said the company was not aware of the case, and declined to comment.

The company is based in Dandong, a city on the border with North Korea, where the majority of trade between the two countries takes place.

On its Alibaba page, the company says annual revenue exceeds \$100 million, and it has 12 years of experience in dealing with anthracite, briquettes and graphite.

In a 2013 online profile for an industry conference in China, Dandong Zhicheng

said it imported 1.8 million tonnes of North Korean anthracite coal, worth about \$250 million.

Although it did not give a timeframe, that figure makes the company one of the largest suppliers of North Korean coal to major steel producers such as China Minmetals and Hesteel Group.

On February 18, China banned the import of North Korean coal for the rest of the year, and in April ordered trading firms, including Dandong Zhicheng, to return their North Korean coal cargoes, sources said at the time.

Dandong Zhicheng and the alleged front companies were not the named defendants in the court papers made public.

The filings did not say any of the banks knowingly violated sanctions against North Korea.

Asked about the issue, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang reiterated that any infringements of U.N. resolutions on North Korea would be dealt with according to Chinese law, and that China opposed "long-armed juris-

diction".

In her decision, Howell authorized warrants requiring the eight banks to accept incoming transactions but not allow outgoing transactions involving the five companies for 14 days, and thereafter to seize what they collected.

Howell, an appointee of President Barack Obama, overruled a federal magistrate judge's May 2 refusal to authorize the warrants, saying prosecutors had probable cause to obtain them.

She cited a government affidavit describing in "80 pages of detail" how the five companies conduct transactions "designed to conceal the true origin and destination" of funds being wired, "consistent with generalized patterns of North Korean money laundering" identified by multiple sources, including two North Korean defectors.

Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, JPMorgan and Wells Fargo declined to comment. The other banks had no immediate comment or did not immediately respond to requests for comment. *(Source: Reuters)*

EU watchdog quizzes ECB's Draghi over ties with G30 bankers

The European Union's ethics watchdog is quizzing the President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, over his and the ECB's involvement in an exclusive forum with bankers and fund managers.

In a letter to Draghi that was published on Friday, European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly said the meetings of the Group of Thirty, where central bankers, economists and financiers talk behind closed doors, are "not transparent" and questioned the ECB president's membership of the club.

"Where ECB members attend meetings organized by the Group of 30, they must abide by Treaty transparency requirements," O'Reilly said in the letter. "However, Group of 30 meetings are not transparent."

O'Reilly, who watches for ethics lapses at European institutions and can make non-binding recommendations, asked the ECB whether it would consider publishing agendas and summaries of those meetings.

Draghi has until September to reply to the letter in writing.

The new inquiry was triggered by a complaint by activist group Corporate Europe Observatory, which says proximity between ECB officials and the G30 is incompatible with Frankfurt's role as the euro zone's top banking watchdog, taken up in 2014.

The G30 includes the chairmen of several commercial banks, such as JPMorgan's Jacob A. Frenkel and UBS's Axel Weber. Both firms have units in the euro zone that are directly supervised by the ECB.



A similar complaint was rejected by the Ombudsman of the time in 2012.

But O'Reilly decided the ECB's new supervisory duties warranted a fresh enquiry.

A spokesman for the ECB said: "We are cooperating with the Ombudsman, as we did with the previous inquiry."

"The group in question here is very diverse ... (and) we see it as a relevant forum to engage with, always remembering that we have a range of rules and instruments in place to avoid apparent or potential conflicts of interest," he added.

In the letter, Ombudsman O'Reilly asked why Draghi's membership in the G30 was in the public interest and whether it could really be considered personal given that he was replaced by his deputy, Vitor Constancio, in one occasion.

Bank of Russia calls June inflation jump a 'big shock'

The jump in inflation to 4.4 percent annually in June was a "negative surprise," a senior central bank official said, adding that the rate might not come down much in July.

"The shock in June was big," Igor Dmitriev, head of the monetary policy department at the Bank of Russia, said at the lower house

of parliament Thursday. "We had expected a rise in annual inflation because of vegetables and fruit," he added. "It just happened a bit faster than we expected."

Dmitriev said inflation had fallen faster than expected in recent months and the central bank is still calculating the impact

of the June figure will have on its trajectory for reaching its target of 4 percent at the end of the year. He said the rate could stay at June's elevated level this month or slip to 4.3 percent as local potato production kicks in, reducing price pressures.

Still, Dmitriev said he doesn't expect the

inflation rate to be much below 4 percent a year from now.

The June increase came after inflation held at 4.1 percent in April and May. Economists in a Bloomberg survey expected the June figure to come in at 4.2 percent. *(Source: Bloomberg)*

Oil prices fall 2% on signs market still oversupplied

Oil prices fell more than 2 percent on Friday after data showed U.S. production rose last week just as OPEC exports hit a 2017 high, casting doubt on efforts by producers to curb oversupply.

Global benchmark Brent futures were down \$1.07, or 2.2 percent, at \$47.04 a barrel at 0929 GMT, after falling to as low as \$46.75, its weakest level in more than a week.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures traded at \$44.40 a barrel, down \$1.12 or 2.5 percent. Their session low of \$44.20 was also the lowest in over a week.

"We're seeing some head scratching today. Following a sharp rally, which was mostly driven by short-covering, the failure of Brent to break back above \$50 earlier in the week has once again given sellers appetite for sending it lower," said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

Weekly U.S. government data showed on Thursday that U.S. oil production rose one percent to 9.34 million barrels per day (bpd), correcting a drop in the previous week that was down to one-off maintenance and hurricane shutdowns.

The rise in U.S. output coincides with exports from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries climbing for a second consecutive month in June to the highest this year.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country is cooperating with OPEC in a deal to stem oil production, said on Friday he wanted to continue cooperating with other countries to reduce price volatility.

The market largely ignored news from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) that U.S. crude inventories fell by 6.3 million barrels in the week to



June 30 to 502.9 million barrels, the lowest since January.

If OPEC was unable to balance the market, change would likely be forced on it by oil prices, said Morgan Stanley.

The U.S. bank said a WTI price of \$46 to \$50 per

barrel would likely prevent U.S. production rising in the mid- to long-term, but "prices will need to be in the low \$40s" for U.S. output to fall significantly.

Morgan Stanley said it expected WTI to remain below \$50 until mid-2018.

(Source: Reuters)

France announces end of gasoline cars by 2040



France plans to stop the sale of gasoline- and diesel-fueled cars by 2040, its new Energy Minister Nicolas Hulot said on Thursday, just a couple of weeks after the energy ministry announced plans to stop granting oil exploration licenses.

"The target is a tough one. But France wants to become the No. 1 green economy," Bloomberg quoted Hulot—an environmental activist—as saying at a news conference today to present France's 'Climate Plan'.

The energy ministry would offer tax incentives for people who replace diesel cars that are more than 20 years old, or gasoline-powered cars manufactured before 2001, according to Hulot.

Other pillars of France's new climate plan include ending oil and gas exploration, and phasing out coal-fired plants by 2022.

Two weeks ago, the energy ministry said it had prepared a draft law that would terminate the granting oil and gas exploration licenses at home and in overseas territories.

The unveiled Climate Plan includes

phasing out hydrocarbon production in French territories by 2040, by not allocating new exploration permits, and not renewing the existing operating concessions. This fall, the government will introduce a bill that would ban new exploration permits and exploration of shale gas and all unconventional oil and gas, according to the plan.

France's plan to stop selling cars running on gas or diesel by 2040 comes just a day after Swedish car manufacturer Volvo said its 2019 models would either be powered by fully electric or hybrid engines, steering the company to a total abandonment of the internal combustion engine in the coming years.

In another European country, Norway, for example, "six out of seven most popular car brands are now EVs", Norway's Minister of Climate and Environment, Vidar Helgesen tweeted, praising the incentives for greener cars. According to an article the minister shared, 28 percent of car sales in Norway are EVs, and the share rises to 42 percent if hybrids are included.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Japan to raise crude storage capacity Okinawa



The Japanese government is preparing to raise the crude storage capacity that it lends to state-owned Saudi Aramco by 1.9 million barrels (300,000 kilolitres) this summer, the trade ministry said on Friday.

Japan and Saudi Arabia last October agreed to raise the storage capacity in Okinawa, an island southwest of Japan, from 1 million kl to 1.3 million kl (8.2 million barrels) by the summer of 2017, an official from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said, without commenting on a detailed timetable for the launch of the new tanks.

Currently the work is under way to have the additional storage ready at a storage facility in Uruma City in Okinawa prefecture, the official added.

Saudi Aramco has stored crude in Okinawa since February 2011 at no cost, and has used the facility to supply oil to China, Japan and South Korea and others.

Japan has a similar deal with Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC), under which ADNOC can store up to 6.29 mil-

lion barrels (1 million kilolitres) at Kiire oil terminal in Kagoshima, in southern Japan, at no cost. ADNOC does not use the storage for commercial purposes, the trade ministry official said.

Japan treats the crude oil stored by Aramco and ADNOC as quasi-government oil reserves, counting half of the barrels as national crude reserves. In return for providing free storage space to them, Japan gets a priority claim on the stockpiles in case of an emergency.

Aramco and ADNOC need to fill at least half of the storage space at all times.

Japan has extended the storage deals with Aramco and ADNOC to the end of December 2019.

Aramco and ADNOC stored a total 1.67 million kl (10.5 million barrels) at the end of April, trade ministry data showed, which is equal to about 83.5 percent of space that Japan lends to them, according to Reuters calculations.

1 kilolitre = 6.29 barrels

(Source: Reuters)

Qatar flexing LNG muscle puts new U.S., Australia plants at risk

As if billions of dollars of liquefied natural gas project cost overruns and the prospect of a glut well into the next decade weren't enough, proposed export sites now face increased competition from the world's biggest producer.

Qatar's announcement that it would double production from the giant North Field comes as more than two-thirds of new projects due in the next decade from Texas to Australia are yet to take investment decisions. The sheikdom, which started some of the largest plants at the end of the last decade, has one of the lowest break-even prices, according to Sanford C. Bernstein & Co.

Extending existing export facilities will likely be more successful than starting from scratch at new sites, according to Bernstein analyst Oswald Clint. Bernstein in May said more than two-thirds of LNG projects chasing to fill an expected supply gap in the mid-2020s are unlikely to be built. With a geographical location midway between major markets in Asia and Europe and access to cheap gas, expanded plants in the Middle East are the most competitive, according to the International Gas Union, a Vevey, Switzerland-based industry lobby group.

"The incremental LNG from Qatar is likely to be relatively low cost, so certainly able to undercut supplies from potential new greenfield projects," said Martin Lambert, managing director of Brightlands Energy Ltd., a UK consultant. "It will probably also undercut incremental supplies from the U.S. or Australia."

Qatar selling some of the cheapest gas in the world may



jeopardize future U.S. LNG export terminals that companies are proposing to build in the next decade, said Victoria Zaretskaya, a Washington-based analyst for the Energy Information Administration.

The Persian Gulf nation announced plans to boost annual LNG production to 100 million metric tons within seven years from 77 million tons now, potentially retaining its position of the biggest supplier even as Australia expands exports following \$200 billion of investments.

Qatar's location makes it "well positioned geographically to be competitive and earn attractive returns" supplying both Asia and Europe, seen as the global sink for the fuel, according to Claudio Steuer, director of SyEnergy, a UK-based energy consultant.

The high cash costs of production there means U.S. LNG

only becomes competitive into the Far East at oil prices around \$60 to \$70 per barrel, Steuer said. Crude oil is trading below \$50.

"This will limit the magnitude of the expected surge of U.S. LNG supplies," he said. "Under the current low oil prices, we are unlikely to see new U.S. LNG" investment decisions.

Still, U.S. LNG terminal developers including Freeport LNG LLC and Tellurian Inc. are for now undeterred, as Qatar is yet to sell its additional volumes while President Donald Trump and U.S. exporters are promoting their fuel to buyers in Asia.

There may be opportunity for U.S. projects that already have existing infrastructure and would be cheaper than others to develop, such as an expansion of Cheniere Energy Inc's Sabine Pass plant, Bernstein said in a report in May. Further afield, projects that have lower costs of shipping to Asia, such as those in Papua New Guinea and Mozambique, can also compete.

The industry is already struggling to sanction new projects, which, together with emerging demand may see the market tighten by the middle of the next decade.

"There's been a real dearth of new investment decisions being taken on," said Emma Richards, senior oil and gas analyst at BMI Research in London. "The problem there has been companies don't really have the money to spend, and are having difficulty getting financing in place. Qatar is probably quite uniquely placed to take on projects where other operators would struggle."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Mexico expects 4 more oil auctions by end of 2018

Mexico expects to launch four more oil and gas auctions before the current president's term concludes in November 2018, Energy Minister Pedro Joaquin Coldwell said at a conference on Thursday.

The government had previously said three more tenders were planned, but Coldwell said a fourth would be a mix of fields including some deep water areas.

The tender could also include shallow water fields as well as gas-rich shale areas, he said.

A constitutional energy overhaul in 2013 paved the way for the auctions by ending the decades-long monopoly enjoyed by national oil company Petroleos Mexicanos, better known as Pemex.

A champion of the energy opening, President Enrique Pena Nieto was elected in 2012 to a six-year term and is by law prohibited from seeking reelection.

The front-runner to succeed Pena Nieto in Mexico's 2018 election is Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a vocal opponent of the oil opening who could put a halt to future auctions.

Coldwell said bid terms for the next deep water oil auction should be published by the end of this month, with contracts awarded by early January.

An onshore oil auction covering 24 blocks will take place next week, following a shallow water tender last month.

(Source: Reuters)

Eni pumps first oil from 45,000 bpd field offshore Ghana

Italian oil and gas major Eni SpA started pumping first oil from the 45,000-bpd Sankofa oil field on Thursday, Italy's Embassy in Ghana said on Twitter.

The first-oil ceremony was attended by Ghana's President Nana Akufo Addo and Eni's chief executive officer Claudio Descalzi.

Sankofa is one of the fields of the \$7.9 billion Integrated Oil&Gas Development Project, in the Offshore Cape Three Points (OCTP) block off Ghana's western coast, for which Eni said in May that it would start production ahead of schedule.

The OCTP consists of the Sankofa Main, Sankofa East, and Gye-Nyame fields, which have around 770 million barrels of oil equivalent (mboe) in place, of which 500 million barrels of oil and 270 mboe of non-associated gas, or about 40 billion cubic meters. The project also includes the development of gas fields whose production is earmarked entirely for Ghana's domestic market.

Eni is operator of the OCTP block with a 44.44-percent stake, while Vitol owns 35.56 percent, and Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) – the remaining 20 percent.

Eni has been operating in Ghana since 2009 and with the startup of OCTP project the Italian group becomes one of Ghana's main energy operators.

Last year, Eni was awarded a new exploration license for the Cape Three Points Block 4, adjacent to the OCTP Block. If successful, synergies with OCTP will allow for a fast-tracked start-up. The drilling of the first exploration well is expected in 2018, in continuity with the drilling of Block OCTP wells, according to the Italian company.

At the first oil ceremony, Eni's CEO Descalzi said that the group had decided to sell the gas locally and make Ghana an energy hub.

Ghana's oil production is expected to average 200,000 bpd this year, despite a two-month shutdown at one of the small African nation's major production facilities.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Richest Scandinavians are now less addicted to crude

There was a time, not so long ago, when Swedes were the help and oil revenue poured into the nation's wealth fund. Today, the neighbors are returning home and the flow of cash has been reversed to plug budget holes.

That's what the oil crash wrought.

The black gold rush that helped transform Norway into the Nordic land of milk and honey is effectively over. But the good news is that, having survived its worst crude downturn in a generation, the Scandinavian economy is now far less dependent on selling commodities.

Norwegians must get used to the idea of «modest growth» rates because the «extraordinary driver» that was oil is gone, said Kjersti Haugland, chief economist at DNB ASA, Norway's largest bank. Or, as Svenska Handelsbanken AB's Marius Gonsholt Hov, put it: «Norway is now more similar to other countries.»

Reducing Norway's oil dependency has been on the agenda of successive Norwegian governments and is being reaffirmed by Prime Minister Erna Solberg as she fights for a second mandate in parliamentary elections due on September 11.

Those efforts are now coming to fruition -- Norway's oil sector accounted for less than 12 percent of gross domestic product last year, with the weakening clearly accelerated by the 2014-2016 oil crash that saw the local industry cut 50,000 jobs.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Brazil says oil production at Libra to be delayed

Oil production from the first rig to operate in Brazil's Libra area will not start in July as previously planned due to problems installing equipment, Ibsen Flores Lima, president of state-controlled Pré-Sal Petróleo SA, said on Thursday on the sidelines of a conference.

Libra is one of the largest oil reserves in Brazil, with recoverable volumes estimated by oil regulator ANP at between 8 and 12 billion barrels.

Brazil's oil company Petróleo Brasileiro SA is the operator in a consortium that includes Royal Dutch Shell Plc., Total SA and the Chinese companies CNPC e CNOOC.

(Source: Reuters)

Children escaping ISIL in Mosul suffer waking nightmares

Experts say living under Islamic State [ISIL] has caused a severe form of psychological trauma in children that can cause lifelong damage.

Years of living under Islamic State has left the children of Mosul with such dangerous levels of psychological damage they are unable to show emotion or play and are haunted by waking nightmares.

Experts report that the children are so affected by witnessing extreme violence that they have symptoms of "toxic stress" — a severe form of psychological trauma that can cause lifelong damage.



The research, by Save the Children, was based on discussions with 65 children who had escaped to the Hammam al-Alil camp for displaced persons, south of the battered city.

All of the children interviewed by the charity's workers displayed signs of toxic stress, 90% had suffered the loss of a loved one, and the majority had nightmares. Almost all were slow to understand instructions and displayed

"robotic" behavior, unable to play or show emotion.

Hundreds of civilians fled Mosul last month, as the fight against ISIL reached a tipping point. More than 860,000 people have escaped to the liberated eastern part of Mosul since the war to recapture the city from ISIL militants began last October, but an estimated 100,000 remain in the old city, where fighters have been using them as human shields.

The children at Hamman al-Alil camp, aged between 10 and 15, shared stories of the horrors they had witnessed: family members killed in front of them, seeing dead bodies, and blood in the streets. Others spoke of seeing relatives shot by snipers or blown up by landmines, and of their homes being bombed.

■ Threat of ISIL punishment

Many spoke of the constant threat of ISIL punishment, with death or imprisonment facing those who flouted the militants' rules.

One 13-year-old boy, Jad, told researchers: "If we were caught in the street at the time of prayer, we might get lashed. Also, they used to perform beheading or whipping in the street every now and then ... they used to hang the dead bodies on iron sticks in the streets for days."

Children also spoke of their fear of an unidentified "thing" or "monster" — a mental image of traumatic experiences that were so vivid they were haunted by them day and night.

Dr Marcia Brophy, Save the Children's senior mental health adviser for the Middle East, said: "What was striking was how introverted and withdrawn children have become. They rarely even smiled. It was as though they had lost the ability to be children.

"When we asked them what they liked about themselves, children often said things like 'I'm quiet', 'I stay in a safe place' or 'I obey orders'. Their time under ISIL, and making a life-or-death escape, has taken a truly terrible toll. These children are not going to heal in weeks, or even months. They'll need support for years to come."

One teenage girl said: "Since I came to the camp, I don't feel safe, because I don't believe we are here. And I don't think we are far from ISIL."

When the children were asked to play a game where they could put anything they did not want into a "magic bag", they most often chose "ISIL" and "sadness" as well as war and weapons of war. When asked to take any item out of the bag to make them feel better, they often had difficulty answering, but chose "loved ones" or "happiness", the research found.

The children's problems are compounded by the psychological impact of their experiences on their parents. Inside the camp, domestic violence is common, with 85% of the children reporting being beaten, or seeing others beaten, as a major source of anger and sadness.

■ A lifelong impact

Toxic stress is the most dangerous form of stress response, where the mind is constantly in fight or flight mode. Left untreated, it can damage the brain's architecture and have a lifelong impact on mental and physical health, leading to heart disease, depression, anxiety, diabetes and substance abuse.

The charity is calling on international donors to increase support for mental health and psychosocial care and for the Iraqi government to increase investment in training child psychologist and counsellors. Save the Children said psychological support for children and their parents is chronically underfunded, with programs for 2017 so far just 2% funded.

The total UN humanitarian response plan for this year has less than half the funding it needs.

"Children escaping Mosul have gone through horror piled upon horror," said Ana Locsin, Save the Children's Iraq country director. "They have been starved and abused inside the city. Explosive weapons have been dropped in narrow streets by all sides with little regard to their impact. But the impact on children is clear: even if they make it out alive, they are left scarred and broken. And right now, that's what Mosul's future looks like.

"To help children recover and rebuild, psychological support must be considered a priority. The world must do more to repair the damage."

(Source: The Guardian)

More than 860,000 people have escaped to the liberated eastern part of Mosul since the war to recapture the city from ISIL militants began last October, but an estimated 100,000 remain in the old city, where fighters have been using them as human shields.

The main story lines as Trump returns to Europe

By Ishaan Tharoor

President Trump left behind a humid and soggy Washington on Wednesday for his second official visit to Europe. He landed in Poland on Wednesday night for a brief tour ahead of the main item on his agenda: the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg. There, Trump is expected to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin face-to-face for the first time.

From most accounts, Trump's time at a NATO meeting in Brussels and the Group of Seven summit in Sicily in May did not go well. It was marked by awkward public exchanges with his European counterparts and barbed comments in private. The following week, apparently angered by French President Emmanuel Macron's gloating comments about a white-knuckle handshake with the U.S. president, Trump decided to thumb his nose at Europe and pull the United States out of the Paris climate accord.

The stakes are even higher — and the potential for gaffes perhaps greater — on Trump's return visit.

■ The shadow of the North Korean crisis

The big, global conundrum on everyone's mind lies further to the east. North Korea's Independence Day gift to Americans — a first-ever test of an intercontinental ballistic missile — was perhaps its most provocative move yet. It prompted sharp repudiation from U.S. officials and an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday.

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the option of using military force against North Korea was on the table. She urged China, whose president will be at Hamburg, to exert more pressure on Pyongyang. She also said the United States was preparing a resolution to expand sanctions against North Korea. Haley's Chinese and Russian counterparts at the Security Council instead cautioned against escalation and pushed for further dialogue. Expect concerns over the North Korean threat to surface at the summit.

■ The Trump-Putin meeting

On Friday, the biggest focus for many Americans will be the tete-a-tete between Trump and Putin, a meeting that has been hotly anticipated since Trump's victory in November. In the intervening months, Trump's eagerness to mend fences with the Kremlin has run up against a firewall of controversy at home over Russian efforts to hack the U.S. election and suspected collusion between members of Trump's camp and Russian officials.

"For the foreseeable future, the most important item by far on the U.S.-Russia relations agenda will be avoiding direct collision, which might lead to war," said Dmitri Trenin, director of the



"For the foreseeable future, the most important item by far on the U.S.-Russia relations agenda will be avoiding direct collision, which might lead to war," said Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Carnegie Moscow Center, to my colleague David Filipov.

According to reports, aides have repeatedly briefed Trump — who seems conspicuously averse to preparation — ahead of the meeting. The ongoing disputes over Syria and Ukraine, among other thorny issues, are expected to be discussed. But national security adviser H.R. McMaster said last week that Trump has "no specific agenda" for the meeting, and there's a fear that Trump, a novice in a world of realpolitik where Putin is a master, may get sucked into problematic discussions.

"You could end up having the entire conversation on [Putin's] topics and his terms," said Jon Finer, a former Obama administration official, to my colleague David Nakamura.

"There's a fair amount of nervousness in the White House and at the State Department about this meeting and how they manage it because they see a lot of potential risks," said Steven Pifer, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, to the New York Times. "There is this gray cloud for the president of the investigations about collusion, so any kind of a deal is going to get the micro-scrutiny of, 'Is this a giveaway to the Russians?'"

When it comes to Russia, Trump

has few good options to grant or win concessions from Putin. As some experts suggest, no deal may be the best deal for now.

A curious visit to Poland

Before facing the G-20 in Hamburg, Trump enjoyed a happier moment in Poland. The country's right-wing nationalist government is ideologically friendly to his brand of populism, and Warsaw has been at odds with much of the European establishment on a host of issues, including its hostility to migrants and asylum seekers.

Trump's remarks, McMaster said, are expected to "lay out a vision, not only for America's future relationship with Europe, but the future of our transatlantic alliance."

■ The showdown at the G-20

The Warsaw speech could set the stage for what happens in Hamburg. Already, battle lines are being drawn over Trump's rejection of the international consensus on climate change, his seeming apathy toward the U.S.-authored liberal order and his hostility to globalization.

The E.U. and Japan are expected to announce plans for a new free trade agreement; U.S. officials, meanwhile, are expected to push their counterparts at the G-20 to crack down on China's steel

export practices. "The divergent trade approaches have set up the G-20 as a potential crossroads for the international economic order," note my colleagues Damian Paletta and Ana Swanson.

"Anyone who thinks the world's problems can be solved with isolationism and protectionism is simply delusional," warned German Chancellor Angela Merkel last week in Berlin, in a broadside clearly aimed at Trump. The divisions may only be exacerbated at the summit.

"The contrast between the visits to Poland and Germany could spark the reemergence of the 'old Europe' versus 'new Europe' narrative that soured transatlantic relations over a decade ago," wrote Derek Chollet, a former Obama administration official, referring to how the administration of President George W. Bush fell out with leading nations in Western Europe over the 2003 invasion of Iraq. "After a rousing stop in Warsaw, it is easy to see the Trump team pushing this line, explaining away its problems with Europe as not part of some broader problem, but an issue specifically with France and Germany."

That would make matters even more interesting ahead of another trip next week, when Trump will fly to Paris.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Erdogan at the G-20, Turkey against the world

By Maximilian Popp

On the eve of the G-20, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan showed no signs that he is interested in reconciliation with Germany. But he has driven away many of his other former allies as well.

"Your support for more freedom, better protections for human rights and less state interference is for you, Prime Minister, not a concession to Europe. Rather, it stems from your political convictions. (...) You can depend on Germany's support."

Those words were uttered by then-German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder on Oct. 3, 2004, at the presentation of the Quadriga prize "European of the Year" to Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Schröder went on to say that Erdogan was a "great reform politician" and praised him as a convinced democrat.

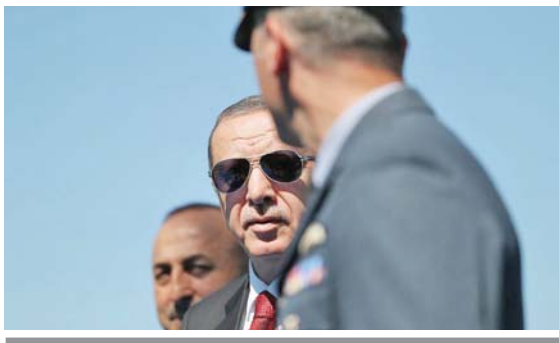
Today, 13 years later, Erdogan is president of Turkey. And Schröder's words sound like satire.

Schröder wasn't alone at the time in having high hopes for Erdogan. But now, the Turkish leader has transformed himself into an autocrat. Indeed, in recent years only one thing has been certain about the political situation in Turkey -- that the human rights situation in the country would continue to get worse. And in the process, the German-Turkish relationship has also suffered mightily.

Indeed, Erdogan, who arrived in Hamburg on Thursday evening, is coming to the G-20 less as an honorary guest and more as a problem visitor. In contrast to the past, the German government has prohibited the Turkish president from holding a speech for his compatriots in Germany while in Hamburg. In an interview with the German weekly Die Zeit, Erdogan blasted the decision, saying that Germany was committing "political suicide."

■ A lot to talk about

Officials in Germany are likewise concerned that the summit could be accompanied by clashes between Erdogan supporters and Erdogan detractors. Kurdish groups have also announced they will hold demonstrations. "Erdogan gets rid of critics and is waging war against the Kurdish population. That is what we want to



In contrast to the past, the German government has prohibited the Turkish president from holding a speech for his compatriots in Germany while in Hamburg. In an interview with the German weekly Die Zeit, Erdogan blasted the decision, saying that Germany was committing "political suicide."

protest against," says Yavuz Fersoglu of the Democratic Social Center of Kurds in Germany (NAV-DEM).

Erdogan was set to meet with German Chancellor Angela Merkel before the beginning of the summit - and they have a lot to talk about. Several German citizens are currently locked away in Turkish prisons, including journalists Mesale Tolu and Deniz Yücel. The Turkish president, meanwhile, has accused the German government of supporting terrorism because Berlin has refused to extradite soldiers who allegedly took part in last July's coup attempt and who have applied for asylum in Germany. In addition, Germany is in the process of withdrawing its surveillance aircraft from the Turkish military base in Incirlik because

Ankara had repeatedly refused to allow German parliamentarians to visit German troops stationed there.

How many of these issues will actually be addressed during the meeting between Merkel and Erdogan is unclear. German government spokesman Steffen Seibert has said that the G-20 "is not a summit over bilateral German-Turkish relations." The German government will do its best not to antagonize Erdogan, though Merkel did say in an interview this week that she would address the ongoing imprisonment of Yücel and other German citizens. The chancellor might find the Turkish president's authoritarian path objectionable, but she believes she still needs him to help keep Syrian refugees at bay.

■ Turkey against the world

For Erdogan, the meeting in Hamburg is an opportunity to show that he is a member in the club of the powerful -- even if he has largely isolated his country due to his erratic foreign policy. Indeed, Turkey has failed in its attempt to assume a position of primacy in the Middle East. In Syria, the country sought unsuccessfully to topple the country's leader Bashar Assad and Saudi Arabian media are accusing Erdogan of supporting terrorists. Egypt has even called for a boycott of Turkey.

Erdogan is also at odds with the United States over the Kurdish question. Washington sees the YPG, the Syrian arm of the banned Kurdish Workers' Party PKK, as its most important ally in Syria in the fight against Islamic State [ISIL]. Turkey, by contrast, considers the YPG to be a terrorist organization. Many in Europe, meanwhile, haven't forgotten his accusations lobbed at Merkel this spring that she was using "Nazi methods" in refusing to allow Turkish government ministers to campaign ahead of the constitutional referendum -- particularly because he said this week in an interview with France 24 that he didn't regret making those comments.

Domestically, Erdogan's authoritarian chest-thumping has done him no harm and his supporters admire his self-confident tone when speaking to foreign leaders. On the long term, though, Turkey can't afford to go it alone against the rest of the world.

(Source: Spiegel)

ISIS, foot-soldiers of U.S. to overthrow Assad

By James M. Dorsey

In U.S. policy, there appears to be a "good" ISIS and a "bad" ISIS. In Syria, for instance, ISIS is seen by the U.S. at minimum as useful foot soldiers in the drive to topple Assad. That's the "good" ISIS. It's an extremely dangerous and fraught game to play, however, as blowback is inevitable.

Ben Schreiner writes on U.S. politics and foreign policy. He is the author of "A People's Dictionary to the 'Exceptional Nation.'" His work has appeared in al-Akhbar English (Lebanon), Asia Times Online (Thailand), Common Dreams, CounterPunch, Dissident Voice, Global Research, MRzine, NYTimes eXaminer, The Phoenix (Ireland), Press TV (Iran), Socialist Viewpoint, War Crimes Times, Z Magazine, and others. His media appearances include RT and Press TV. He holds a degree in politics from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon.

In an interview, Mr. Schreiner answers to questions about US policies in the middle east, and its fake war on terror. The following is the full text of the interview:

American authorities accuse Iran of the destabilization of the region; do you approve the idea?

It's necessary to understand that American authorities adhere to a rather peculiar definition of stability. The term as used by Washington has nothing to do with what one might normally think when one thinks of stability in the context of foreign relations. In the official U.S. parlance, "stability" has nothing to do with peace and security. Quite the opposite. The term is instead used to connote whether Washington is able to impose its will and project power in any particular nation or region. So, for example, after the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq, American leaders were fond of speaking about how they were "stabilizing" the country. The presence of over 100,000 occupying U.S. forces was championed as a harbinger of stability. Iraqis, no doubt, had a differing view of the American military presence in their country. But in any regard, we see in this instance how for American officials even a sectarian civil war can be held to be an example of "stability."

Conversely, "destabilizing" in the official U.S. lexicon is held to be any threat to the unrestrained power projection of Washington. In this sense, any nation with an independent foreign policy that remains steadfast when confronted by U.S. threats of aggression is held to be a destabilizing power. Iran obviously fits this bill. That, at least, is how it is seen in the corridors of power in Washington. Hence the denunciations of Iran for destabilizing the region.

Why the US finds itself entitled to intervene in internal affairs of other countries?

The United States is the world's most powerful imperialist nation. It has a military budget greater than the next seven largest military budgets combined. Over half of all public expenditures by the U.S. government are allocated to the military. In the fiscal year 2015 alone, the U.S. spent just shy of \$600 billion on defense. It's really quite staggering. The behemoth created by such a vast expenditure on militarism, what

President Dwight Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex, necessitates constant foreign interventions. As former President George W. Bush was reported to have once said privately, "All of the economic growth of the United States has been encouraged by wars."

But the U.S. is also a representative democracy, and thus its leaders must at least pay lip service to public opinion. And so, to justify the grossly disproportionate expenditures on defense, U.S. leaders construct the myth of so-called American Exceptionalism. They peddle the notion that the U.S. is a uniquely benign power needed around the world to protect order. Enemies are then created—whether they be rogue states, bad actors, etc.—which must be defeated by, as a U.S. Navy recruiting line states, "the global force for good." This belief in America's divine right to rule the world, a belief fostered in both education and popular culture, creates a general sense among Americans that they as a nation are not only entitled to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries, but obligated to do so.

This is not an indication of any widespread support for imperialism per se, but rather indicative of the level of acceptance of the American Exceptionalism myth and all that it entails. As for U.S. elites, the myth of America as a benign power policing the world is obviously a rather convenient and useful cover for a deadly reliance on a system of globalized militarism.

Ayatollah Khamenei said recently "the U.S. is against an 'unrestrained ISIS', however, if anyone truly seeks to eradicate ISIS, they will have to fight against it." What's your take on that?

I think that is essentially correct. The U.S., of course, has a sordid history of seeking to use Islamic groups to further its own geopolitical aims. We saw this most famously back in 1979, when the CIA first began, with the cooperation of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, to arm Islam-



what the CIA deems blowback. But for Washington, such blowback is an acceptable price to pay. As President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, noted when asked to reflect back on his role in arming the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan: "What was more important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?"

Such sentiments continue to this day, as evidenced by Washington's rather schizophrenic war against ISIS. In U.S. policy, there appears to be a "good" ISIS and a "bad" ISIS. In Syria, for instance, ISIS is seen by the U.S. at minimum as useful foot soldiers in the drive to topple Assad. That's the "good" ISIS. It's an extremely dangerous and fraught game to play, however, as blowback is inevitable. But it's not all that hard to imagine a U.S. planner thirty years hence reflecting back on the present by offering a defense similar to Brzezinski's. The planner would likely ask, what is more important to the history of the world? ISIS or regime change in Syria?



ic fighters in Afghanistan opposed to the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. These fighters then went on to form the core of the Taliban and eventually al-Qaeda. Such an episode proves the ultimate folly of such policies, as such proxies are prone to turn on their patrons. It's

Some stirred-up Muslims or a crippling blow to the resistance axis of Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah?

What does dancing with Saudi tribal leaders on one hand, and condemning Iran for human rights violations suggest about the reality

(Source: Khamenei.ir)

The fifth round of Astana: A couple of words of the proposals and of the preliminary results

By Sophie Mangal

The fifth round of the two-day talks on the settlement of the situation in Syria began in Astana on July 4. Actually, the main topic of the talks is pointing out the true borders of the de-escalation zones. The areas should be defined in the form of a map and be included in the outcome document.

First, it is necessary to reach an agreement on a detailed map with the areas mapped on it. Then the delegates will discuss the implementation of the commitments on establishing control over the zones. The main questions here are what will be under the control (people, order, weapons, ceasefire agreement, humanitarian and other issues) and who will control the areas of de-escalation. It is also necessary to negotiate the actions and measures that must be imposed in respect of the non-compliant party of the memorandum.

Another topic of the fifth round of talks in Astana will be the discussion on the establishment of the Syrian National Reconciliation Committee. It is also planned to work out the plan on conducting a mine clearance operation of cultural sites in Syria and other architectural monuments and sights that are under the protection of UNESCO and are on the World Heritage List.

On the eve, on July 3, a number of meetings took place at the expert level. They continue at head-of-delegation

level in different formats today. The participants of the international talks in Astana concentrate on the preliminary consultations on the first day of the work.

A meeting on the de-escalation areas of the joint working group of the ceasefire guarantors in Syria (that are Russia, Turkey and Iran) was the first on the agenda. Besides, a bilateral meeting between the representatives of Russia and Syria has been already held this morning. Then the meeting of the delegations of Damascus and Iran began. The Head of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic Bashar Jaafari and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Jaber Ansari sat down at the negotiating table. The media were allowed to participate in the protocol part of the meeting and then the talks continued behind closed doors.

There are some other consultations and bilateral meetings scheduled for today. A plenary session is planned on July 5, tentatively after lunch at local time.

Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura also arrived. The U.S. representative at the meeting is Stuart Jones, the acting U.S. assistant secretary of state for the Near East affair bureau. It is also reported that nine representatives of the Syrian opposition arrived in Astana.

According to Kazakh Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov, the Astana process is currently the only negotiating platform that provides equal opportunities for all the parties interested in negotiation process with guarantor



countries. Abdrakhmanov expressed hope that at the end of this meeting in Astana the final document related to the implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in Syria would be adopted.

To be recalled is that the previous four rounds of meetings on the Syrian settlement were held in Astana on January 23-24, February 15-16, March 14-15 and May 3-4. The agreement on the joint operational group that should monitor the ceasefire regime in Syria signed by the guarantor countries (Russia, Turkey and Iran) and the memorandum on establishing areas of de-escalation in Syria aimed at ending violence, preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Syria have become the key outcome of the meetings. The country needs a political settlement of the conflict.

(Source: Inside Syria)

Double standards in United States' human right practices

By Robert Fantina, Journalist and peace and human rights activist

When discussing human rights, it's helpful to define exactly what is meant. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948. Forty-eight countries, including the United States, ratified this declaration. It details fundamental human rights that are to be universally protected.

The document consists of thirty (30) articles, and is worth reading. For our purposes today, I will summarize just a few of the more common rights listed, and will address these and others during my presentation today.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone is entitled to:

- Freedom and dignity
- Life, liberty and security of person.
- The following are prohibited:
 - Slavery in all forms.
 - Arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
 - Arbitrarily deprived of his nationality
 - Arbitrarily deprived of his property.

The United States presents itself as a beacon of liberty and a proponent of human rights around the world, ready and willing to stand up for and defend the downtrodden. Florida Senator Marco Rubio recently said that the world looks to the U.S. as an example of democracy. This myth is not believed outside of the United States' borders, and decreasingly within. There is simply too much evidence to the contrary.



The Universal Declaration on Human Rights mentions the prohibition of 'torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments' and states that everyone is entitled to life. In 2014, the U.S. government rightly condemned beheadings carried out by Daesh (aka ISIL, ISIS). In August of 2014, at least 22 people were executed in Saudi Arabia, and at least eight of them were beheaded. The following month, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited Saudi Arabia on an official visit; the U.S., of course, has full diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. The topic of beheadings was not known to have been mentioned during Mr. Kerry's visit. Apparently, beheading is acceptable, depending on who is doing it.

Another point is that 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government'.

Currently in the U.S., the nation's capital is roiling, as several investigations are ongoing regarding possible Russian interference in the U.S. election of 2016. Arizona Senator John McCain said that such possible interference threatens the very essence of U.S. democracy. Former Senator and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said it's almost unthinkable, when discussing reports about Russian interference in U.S. elections.

In typical U.S. style, interference in foreign elections are only acceptable when the U.S. does it. In 2006, when commenting on the election in the Gaza Strip that brought Hamas to power, Mrs. Clinton said this: "I do not think we should have pushed for an election in the Palestinian territories. I think that was a big mistake — and if we were going to push for an election, then we should have made sure that we did something to determine who was going to win." So while Mrs. Clinton is now filled with great umbrage that Russia, perhaps, attempted to interfere in the U.S. election, she was certainly not above doing the same thing during her reign of terror as Secretary of State.

In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq. This was, ostensibly, to rid that country of so-called weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein, then the leader of Iraq, had welcomed Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) into Iraq to search peacefully for such weapons. Mr. Blix and his team were gaining unprecedented access to any area of the country they requested, and were finding nothing. Finally, before they had exhausted their search, U.S. President George Bush told Mr. Blix to remove his team from Iraq; his invasion as coming. Shortly thereafter, he began bombing Iraq. This resulted in the destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure, the killing of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children, and the displacement of millions more. The human rights of these innocent victims were not considered by the mighty United States. The fact that the Iraqi people have suffered, and continue to suffer, far more since the U.S. invasion than they did under the previous government, is not considered, as the U.S. looks for its next target.

In October of 2007, four years after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and while that war was still raging, Turkey was having difficulties with Kurdish rebels on its border with Iraq. There were signs that the Turkish government was considering an attack against them in Iraq. U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack made this statement at that time: "If they have a problem, they need to work together to resolve it and I am not sure that unilateral incursions are the way to go, the way to resolve the issue." He further stated: "We have counseled both in public and private for many, many months the idea that it is important to work cooperatively to resolve this issue."

But this same advice apparently didn't apply to the U.S. Iraq was doing what the U.S. and the United Nations wanted, by allowing the IAEA inspectors to search for weapons. That was the 'working cooperatively' that the State Department wanted Turkey to do, but apparently it wasn't necessary for the U.S. to do it.

(End of Part One)

The rising price of freedom

By Dennis Shen

"I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can," said Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, "only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity."

But the brutality, futility and stupidity are with us still. Daily come reports that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are heating up even as our troops are moving into Syria. We are today

striving against an unmitigated evil every bit as ghastly and deadly as that we contended against in World War II. Like the Nazis of that earlier time, the extremists of today are committed to death and destruction. They are a killing machine at war with civilization itself, determined to destroy it.

We can only wonder how this sickness of the human soul came into existence, but that is a study for scholars of future eras who will, no doubt, identify dark forces at work beneath the surface of societies that call young men to sacrifice their lives for abstract goals that only they can perceive.

The challenge before us is one of simple self-preservation, defending the very concept of civilization itself in which ordinary people can go about their daily affairs in peace and security, a world in which our culture is cherished and passed along to future generations.

■ Post-traumatic stress

This battle, unlike that of World War II, is being fought by a small minority of Americans who have answered the call to defend our freedoms and heritage. Their sacrifices are daily brought home to us in news reports of battlefield casualties and film footage of military caskets being offloaded in Delaware. They are brought home to us in statistics of veterans suffering from missing limbs, traumatic head injuries and post-traumatic stress. ➔13

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African Union endorses major new initiatives to end AIDS

African heads of state have endorsed two major new initiatives to help end AIDS by 2030. The community health workers initiative aims to recruit, train and deploy 2 million community health workers across Africa by 2020. The western and central Africa catch-up plan aims to rapidly accelerate access to HIV treatment in the region and close the gap in access between African regions. The initiatives were endorsed at the AIDS Watch Africa Heads of State and Government Meeting, held on 3 July during the 29th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

■ Western and central Africa catch-up plan

Under the leadership of countries and regional economic communities, and in collaboration with UNAIDS, the World Health Organization, Doctors Without Borders and other partners, the catch-up plan in western and central Africa, which started implementation in late 2016, seeks to dramatically accelerate the scale-up of HIV testing, prevention and treatment programmes, with the goal of putting the region on the Fast-Track to meet the 90–90–90 targets by December 2020.

While the world witnesses significant progress in responding to HIV, with 57% of all people living with HIV knowing their HIV status, 46% of all people living with HIV accessing treatment and 38% of all people living with HIV virally suppressed in 2015, the western and central Africa region lags behind, achieving only 36%, 28% and 12%, respectively, in 2015. The gap is considerable: 4.7 million people living with HIV are not receiving treatment, and 330 000 adults and children died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2015.

“We cannot accept a two-speed approach to ending AIDS in Africa,” said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. “To put western and central Africa on track to end AIDS, we must address stigma, discrimination and other challenges to an effective response, allocate funding to support the most effective strategies and implement delivery strategies that reach the communities most in need.”

The catch-up plan will aim to increase the number of people on treatment from 1.8 million to 2.9 million by mid-2018, giving an additional 1.2 million people, including 120 000 children, access to urgently needed treatment.

The first call for a catch-up plan for the region was made at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Ending AIDS in June 2016. Since then, at least 10 countries (Benin, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the



Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone) have developed country operational plans deriving from the western and central Africa catch-up plan with a focus on ensuring the needed policy and structural changes.

■ Two million community health workers

The community health worker initiative aims to accelerate progress towards achieving the 90–90–90 targets by 2020—whereby 90% of all people living with HIV know their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status are accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment have suppressed viral loads—and to lay the foundation for sustainable health systems. Championed by the President of Guinea and African Union Chair, Alpha Condé, the initiative seeks to confront the acute health workforce shortages across Africa and improve access to health services for the most marginalized populations, including people living in rural areas.

“Recruiting 2 million community health workers is a critical step towards achievement of the Africa-wide socioeconomic transformation envisioned in the African Union's Agenda 63”, said Mr Condé. “Few tools have the ability of community health workers to drive progress across the entire breadth of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

Substantial evidence, from both Africa and elsewhere, demonstrates that well-trained, properly supervised

community health workers provide an excellent quality of care and improve the efficiency and impact of health spending. Community health workers have helped devise some of the most effective service delivery strategies for HIV testing and treatment, and studies have also linked community-delivered services with increased rates of immunization, exclusive breastfeeding and malaria control coverage.

“Sustainable community health work is a matter of survival and development in Ethiopia, said Prime Minister of Ethiopia Hailemariam Desalegn. “My community health workers have made better health happen. Achieving universal health coverage is not possible without building community health systems.” UNAIDS estimates that there are more than 1 million community health workers in Africa today, but most focus on a single health problem and are under-trained, unpaid or under-paid, and not well integrated in health systems. The new initiative endorsed by AIDS Watch Africa seeks to retrain existing community health workers, where feasible, and to recruit new health workers to reach the 2 million target.

“Few investments generate such a remarkable social and economic return as community health workers,” said Jeffrey Sachs, Director, Earth Institute, Columbia University. “Community health worker programmes are essentially self-sustaining, in that they avert illness, keep workers healthy and productive

and contribute to economic growth and opportunity”

While community health workers may hold the key in many settings to achieving the 90–90–90 targets, the benefits of this new initiative extend well beyond the AIDS response. The initiative will expedite gains across the health targets of Sustainable Development Goal 3, create new jobs that will strengthen local and national economies and offer new opportunities to young people. The new initiative is aligned with the World Health Organization's Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health.

■ Start free stay free AIDS free

At the AIDS Watch Africa meeting, the participants also called on member states and development partners to support the African Union campaign to eliminate new HIV infections among children and keep mothers alive as part of the Start Free Stay Free AIDS Free collaborative framework.

“Complacency gives birth to regression of the gains made in reducing HIV prevalence, said, Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda. “We in Uganda have rekindled the campaign to end AIDS; the science exists, as well as the medication. We can win this battle.”

AIDS Watch Africa is a statutory entity of the African Union with the specific mandate to lead advocacy, accountability and resource mobilization efforts to advance a robust African response to end AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria by 2030. (Source: UNIC)

This STD is becoming ‘smarter’ and harder to treat

By Nicole Chavez

Gonorrhea is becoming harder and in some cases impossible to treat with antibiotics, the World Health Organization said.

“The bacteria that cause gonorrhea are particularly smart. Every time we use a new class of antibiotics to treat the infection, the bacteria evolve to resist them,” said Teodora Wi, a human reproduction specialist at the WHO, in a news release.

Three superbugs -- bacteria that cannot be killed by the best available drug -- were detected in Japan, France and Spain, according to the WHO.

“We need to be more vigilant now,” Wi told reporters in a phone briefing.

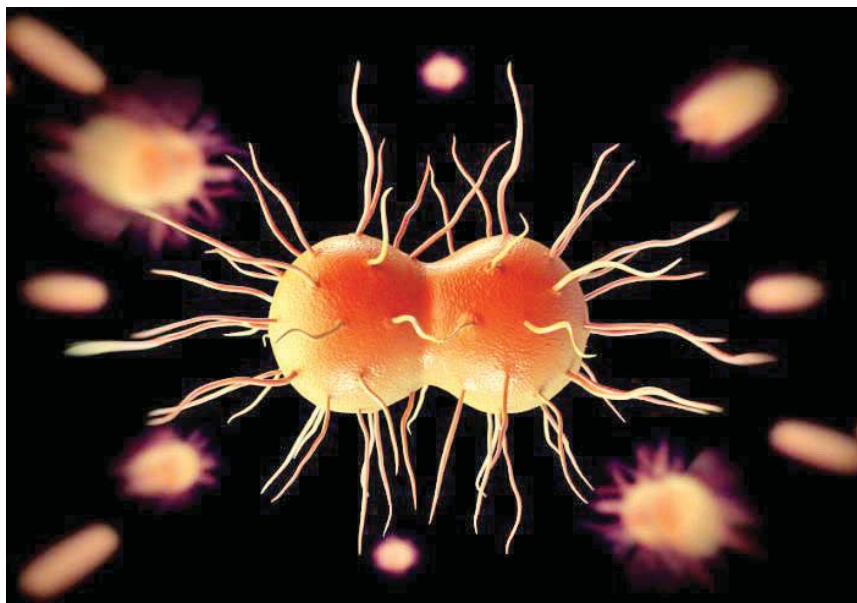
Each year, about 78 million people worldwide are infected with gonorrhea, the WHO said. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are 820,000 new gonorrhea infections each year.

Data from 77 countries collected by WHO shows there is a widespread resistance to older, cheaper antibiotics and in some countries, the infection has become “untreatable by all known antibiotics,” the international health organization said in the news release.

Earlier this year, gonorrhea was named among 11 types of bacteria that health experts believe pose the greatest threats to human health because they are in urgent need of new antibiotics.

Marc Sprenger, WHO's director of antimicrobial resistance, said there's an urgent need for drugs and tests to prevent, diagnose and treat gonorrhea.

More specifically, Sprenger said, the



health community needs new antibiotics, a long term vaccine to prevent the infection and tests that will predict with accuracy if an antibiotic will work on a particular infection.

Gonorrhea has developed resistance to nearly every class of antibiotics used to treat it such as penicillin, tetracycline and fluoroquinolones, the CDC said.

“It's important to understand that ever since antibiotics appeared on the scene, Neisseria gonorrhoeae has been fairly quick in developing resistance to all the classes of antibiotics that have

been thrown at it,” Manica Balasegaram, director of the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership, told reporters.

From 2009-2014 the WHO says that several countries discovered a widespread resistance to drugs used to treat gonorrhea like ciprofloxacin, azithromycin and even last resort treatments such as extended-spectrum cephalosporins (ESCs), the health organization said.

In 2016, the organization began advising doctors to switch to a two-drug combination: ceftriaxone and

azithromycin after more than 50 countries reported that ESCs were no longer effective in some cases.

■ Why drugs stop working?

The sexually transmitted infection is becoming resistant to the usual recommended treatments around the world and creating new antibiotics is “not very attractive for commercial pharmaceutical companies,” the WHO said.

Gonorrhea symptoms include a burning sensation when urinating and unusual discharge from the genital part. Left untreated, the infection can cause serious health problems including long-term abdominal pain and pelvic inflammatory disease, which could lead to ectopic pregnancy and infertility.

But most people who are infected do not have any symptoms and in some cases, doctors mistakenly diagnose gonorrhea, health officials said.

Using antibiotics improperly is contributing to the development of antibiotic resistance in gonorrhea as well as other bacterial diseases, health officials said.

In the US, the CDC recommends a two-drug regimen -- ceftriaxone and azithromycin -- for treating gonorrhea.

Last year, a cluster of infections in Hawaii did not succumb as easily to the antibiotics as infections have in the past.

“Since 2005, we have seen four isolated cases that showed resistance to both drugs. But the Hawaii cases are the first cluster we have seen with reduced susceptibility to both drugs,” said Paul Fulton Jr., a spokesman for the CDC.

(Source: CNN)

How to know if you actually got a good workout

By Alexandra Duron

Go hard or go home. Train insane or remain the same. If Pinterest was your personal trainer, every workout would be crazy-tough and include extreme sweat and soreness. But that thinking is flawed.

Even though challenges are great for you—and could lead to a sweat-soaked shirt and achy muscles—exercise shouldn't leave you drained.

“Working out shouldn't be breaking us down,” says Jessica Matthews, assistant professor of exercise science at San Diego Miramar College. “It should be building us up.” Plus, neither sweat nor soreness is a good way to measure how effective your workout is. Instead, here are six science-backed ways to know you're putting in the right kind of effort.

■ 1. Your heart rate says so.

This one's probably the most objective way to measure how good your cardio workout is. “A good workout—by most definitions—involves a heart rate of three-fourths the maximal heart rate, sustained for 20 minutes [or longer],” says Daniel Vigil, M.D., who specializes in sports medicine at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

So how do you calculate that? Experts once used a simple formula: 220 minus your age equals your max heart rate. However this formula tends to overestimate your max heart rate, and these days, trainers often rely on another equation:

Max HR = 208 - (age x 0.7)

For example, if you're 23 years old, your max heart rate would be about 191 bpm (beats per minute), according to the formula above. Now, calculate three-quarters of that to find your target: about 143 bpm. To keep track of your stats and your progress, consider using a heart rate monitor (it's totally worth it, trust us).

One more note about heart rate: If you wake up the next morning and your resting heart rate is still slightly above normal, you're not fully recovered from your last workout. Your resting heart rate can be a great indicator of overtraining.

Heart rate is a great measurement for cardiovascular fitness, but the same doesn't necessarily apply to strength training. If you're lifting heavy weights, taking adequate breaks between sets is vital to building strength.

■ 2. You feel stronger immediately.

Here's where a little thing called rate of perceived exertion (RPE for short) comes in. Unlike measuring heart rate, RPE is subjective—it's basically how hard you think you're working. And there are two different RPE scales you can follow: Some pros use a zero to 10 scale, while others use the Borg Scale—one that goes from six to 20. On either scale, the higher the number you rate your workout, the harder you feel you're working.

If you're being honest with yourself and think you've been working at an eight or a nine, or at about a 17 on the Borg scale, you're likely crushing it. That hard work and toughness of the workout is translating to you feeling stronger and better—not beaten down. “You're at a point where you could max out, but you're not quite there yet,” says Rebecca Kennedy, a NYC-based fitness expert and founder of A.C.C.E.S.S. Because remember: Maxing out and collapsing on the floor isn't the goal of a good workout.

In fact, it's a great idea to throw in an easy workout (or maybe a full day of rest!) after a tough workout. Recovery days—which can be mentally tough for those who love the gym—are just as important as the days you lift more weight, run faster, or jump higher.

■ 3. You recover from intense intervals quickly.

Most people probably pay attention to the intense portions of interval training—and with good reason: Lots of studies show that working hard for varying intervals can burn a ton of calories. But how quickly your heart recovers during the low-intensity periods of your workout is pretty telling in terms of how effective your training is. “A heart that is healthy will recover at a quicker rate than one that is not healthy or not accustomed to regular exercise,” Kennedy says. If you notice your heart rate dropping down in one minute or less during your rest periods, you're on the right track.

■ 4. You felt challenged in new ways.

This one's tricky: While you want to feel like you're working hard during your workout, you never want to get to “the end of the rope,” Kennedy says. Your goal is to work at a level that feels challenging—it should be a struggle to crank out your last reps, Matthews says.

Another good barometer: the talk test. If it's difficult to get out a sentence or carry on a convo with your workout pal, you're working at a challenging level. If you're gasping for air and can't utter a word, it's time to pull back the intensity.

■ 5. You get better zzzs.

One of the coolest benefits of a good workout? It generally makes you feel less sleepy. But that's not all: Research suggests that sleep quality improves after even a single workout session, so you may score better shut-eye after hitting the gym. If you're noticing the exact opposite effect (e.g. you kill it at CrossFit on the regular and still find yourself tossing and turning), that might be a sign you're overtraining, Matthews says. “Exercise should help you get more restful sleep at night, but if you're going to an extreme, you might be sleeping less,” she says.

■ 6. You're more focused the rest of the day.

This may come as no surprise, but experts agree sweat sessions should give you a mental boost, not just a physical one—and that's another sign of a great workout. “You want to feel better walking out than walking in,” Kennedy says. That means happier (yay, endorphins!) and more confident. Your productivity, focus, and clarity should also improve afterward, Matthews says. The best part? Unlike waiting to see the scale tip in your favor or your clothes fit better, it doesn't take long to reap the mental benefits of a good workout. In fact, psychology experts say you'll experience a mood boost as soon as five minutes post exercise. Talk about instant gratification.

(Source: greatist.com)

There's an urgent need for drugs and tests to prevent, diagnose and treat gonorrhea.

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

1 Hackers have breached US nuclear facilities and manufacturers.

The New York Times obtained a so-called urgent joint report by Homeland Security and the FBI that found hackers have been penetrating companies that run nuclear power plants and other energy facilities, as well as manufacturing plants in the U.S. and other countries.

2 Sony G8441 spotted in benchmark listing with Snapdragon 835 SoC, Android 8.0. Other revealed specs include 720p display, 8MP/8MP camera combo, and Android O. RAM is 4GB, while internal memory is 32GB.

3 Google has announced that its voice-activated smart speaker Home will soon be available in France. The device will go on sale in starting August 3 and it will cost €149.

4 Apple will make only OLED iPhones from 2018. Rumor has it that Apple will release three iPhones in 2018 and all of them will have OLED displays. This means that Apple will transition its entire phone lineup from LCD to OLED next year.

5 Nokia Android with dual-lens Zeiss camera is coming this year. HMD Global and ZEISS signed a partnership to bring the Zeiss brand back to Nokia smartphones. Later a tweet dedicated to the announcement hinted that a dual-camera Nokia smartphone is the first product to come from the partnership.

6 Symantec to acquire Fireglass, an Israeli cybersecurity startup that thwarts malware and phishing attacks. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. Fireglass had raised a \$20 million round of funding last November from such notable investors as Norwest and Lightspeed.

7 Microsoft confirms layoffs, up to 3,000 jobs reportedly affected. A significant majority of the cuts will be outside the U.S. CNBC reported that the company would cut up to 3,000 jobs, a figure that Microsoft refused to confirm. Overall, Microsoft has 71,000 employees in the U.S., and a total of 121,000 employees.

8 Google introduces new option for Maps users to add accessibility details. Google has just announced that they're introducing a new way to add accessibility details about places to Google Maps and Search, which will come in handy to those who are stuck in a wheelchair or need an elevator to reach certain areas.

9 Samsung official says that there is no Galaxy S8 mini on the way. A tweet recently disseminated from China puts the kibosh on the mini variant of the Galaxy S8.

10 Microsoft completely redesigns Bing for Android, adds many search improvements. According to Microsoft, the new design of the app will allow users to search better with a simplified experience and refreshed color. Also, users will now get rich and clear results with enhanced restaurant reviews, songs, and more.

Camera maker RED is building a phone with a 'holographic' screen

RED is one of the biggest names in professional film cameras, but now the company is branching out... into smartphones. Specifically, a \$1,195 modular smartphone coming out next year, with virtually no known specs. Umm, okay then.



Pretty much the only important spec we know about the RED Hydrogen, as the phone is called, is that there's a 5.7-inch "professional holographic display." That sounds a lot like the stereoscopic display on the old HTC Evo 3D (or Nintendo 3DS, for a more recent example), though it will presumably have better quality.

The only other specs in RED's press release are a USB-C port, a microSD slot, and some metal contacts for modules akin to the Moto Z series. That doesn't exactly tell us much.

It also sounds like the resolution is compromised while in 3D mode. That's generally the case with these stereoscopic displays, but it would've been nice if RED could have at least mentioned the native resolution in the first place.

The phone is clearly a niche device aimed at RED users, what with the ability to serve as a camera monitor and play back RED file formats, as well as handling ambiguous "VR, AR, and MR" content. Still, that at least implies it will have flagship specs, given the performance requirement of high-end 4K footage and decent VR experiences.

(Source: Androidpolice)

Press Association wins Google grant to run news service written by computers

Robots will help a national news agency to create up to 30,000 local news stories a month, with the help of human journalists and funded by a Google grant.

The Press Association has won a €706,000 (£621,000) grant to run a news service with computers writing localised news stories.

The national news agency, which supplies copy to news outlets in the UK and Ireland, has teamed up with data-driven news start-up Urbs Media for the project, which aims to create "a stream of compelling local stories for hundreds of media outlets".

It won one of the largest grants to date from Google's Digital News Initiative (DNI), which is aimed at supporting innovation in European digital journalism. PA and Urbs Media will set up Radar - Reporters And Data And Robots - to produce thousands of stories each month.

PA's editor-in-chief, Peter Clifton, said journalists will still be involved in spotting and creating stories and will use artificial intelligence to increase the amount of content. He said: "Skilled human journalists will still be vital in the process, but Radar allows us to harness artificial intelligence to scale up to a volume of local stories that would be impossible to provide manually. It is a fantastic step forward for PA."

The scheme aims to meet an "increasing demand for consistent, fact-based insights into local communities" for regional media outlets as well as independent publishers and hyperlocal sites and bloggers, said PA.

Journalists will find stories in national open databases from sources including government departments, local councils and NHS trusts, and make "detailed story templates" for topics such as crime, health and employment. Multiple versions of the story will be created with Natural Language Software and will "scale up the mass localisation of news content".

Clifton said it was "a hugely exciting development for PA" that would be "a genuine game-changer for media outlets across the UK and Ireland".

PA and Urbs Media are making a



workflow plan to generate the large volume of stories for clients. The grant will also be used to make database tools to collect and combine datasets and "editorial intelligence" will guide the automation process.

Radar will auto-generate graphics, video and pictures to add to stories. Money will also be used to boost PA's distribution platforms to help its local customers find and use the content.

PA has already shared some of its plans with its regional customers. It is recruiting a team of five journalists to spot stories, create templates for them and edit the data-driven content.

Clifton said: "At a time when many media outlets are experiencing

commercial pressures, Radar will provide the news ecosystem with a cost-effective way to provide incisive local stories, enabling audiences to hold democratic bodies to account."

The scheme is likely to begin early next year, as PA celebrates its 150th anniversary.

Tim Dawson, president of the National Union of Journalists, said the union was not Luddite or against technological innovation, but added: "Under-investment in journalism and journalists is a massive problem in the media across the UK. If money's floating about, that's really what it should be spent on."

He said the fire at Grenfell Tower had highlighted the need for "robust journalism". Dawson added: "I've no

doubt that it is possible for computers and algorithms to mine data out of stories."

He said it could give reporters more time to develop the stories, but added: "The real problem in the media is too little bona fide reporting. I don't believe that computer whizzbangery is going to replace that. What I'm worried about in my capacity as president of the NUJ is something that ends up with third-rate stories which look as if they are something exciting, but are computer-generated so they [news organisations] can get rid of even more reporters."

Dawson said readers are still attracted by well written and compelling stories and well crafted photographs.

(Source: Guardian)

TomTom and Cisco partner to create 'next generation' traffic monitoring tech

Network tech titan Cisco is working with TomTom to research and develop what the two are calling an "ultra-fast lane level traffic technology" that supports autonomous driving.

Cisco already operates in the connected transport realm, offering a range of sensors, controllers, and routers that connect systems to improve things like traffic flow. With TomTom on board, the duo plan to carry out research to leverage Cisco's roadside data and create the "next generation of traffic information technology," according to a statement issued by the companies. This initiative will be underpinned by Cisco's Internet of Things (IoT) platform.

Founded in 1991, TomTom is perhaps best known in the public sphere for its GPS-powered devices, including dedicated satellite navigation units for cars and watches. But the company also offers a number of other services, such as telematics to help businesses manage their fleet of vehicles, as well as a range of automotive services that includes maps for self-driving cars, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), traffic information, and on-street parking data.

Put simply, both companies have significant expertise harnessing traffic data, and now they're putting their



heads together and pooling resources.

"With this project, we are connecting road infrastructure, vehicles, drivers, and road authorities, enabling them to exchange information in near real time," explained Edwin Paalvast, president EMEAR (Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Russia) at Cisco. "That is what the Internet of Things is about. With TomTom's expertise, its gigantic pool of traffic data and innovative

traffic technology, TomTom is a strong company to work with in this field."

In terms of the kinds of things the two companies will be working on, one example cited is Distributed Acoustic Sensing (DAS) technology, which involves burying a fibre optic cable adjacent to a busy road to detect vibrations and provide real-time monitoring of vehicle movements, making it possible to establish trends and patterns. Combining such data with TomTom's pool of GPS-based floating car data means it can be displayed and analysed through a TomTom interface designed specifically for traffic management centers.

Ultimately, TomTom and Cisco are working to increase the precision of real-time traffic services and make them more affordable to cities or companies that find value in such data. It's worth noting that this ties in with the burgeoning autonomous car industry, too. Self-driving cars require ridiculously accurate on-board sensors so they can "see" the world around them — which is why Intel shelled out \$15.3 billion for computer vision firm Mobileye — and vehicles without humans at the wheel need accurate, real-time data of the environment around them.

(Source: Venturebeat)

Android Nougat captures 10% adoption after 10 months



Android Nougat has finally entered double digits, five months after it broke the 1 percent barrier. Per Google's Platform Versions page, the latest and greatest version of the company's mobile operating system took more than 10 months to hit 11.5 percent adoption. That's abysmally slow, even if the percentage equates to numbers in the hundreds of millions.

Google started rolling out Android 7.0 Nougat to Nexus devices in August. Still, the latest major version of Android typically takes longer than a year to become the most-used release, and unfortunately, Nougat isn't going to break that trend.

(Source: GeekyGadgets)

Federal agents listened to over 3M phone calls

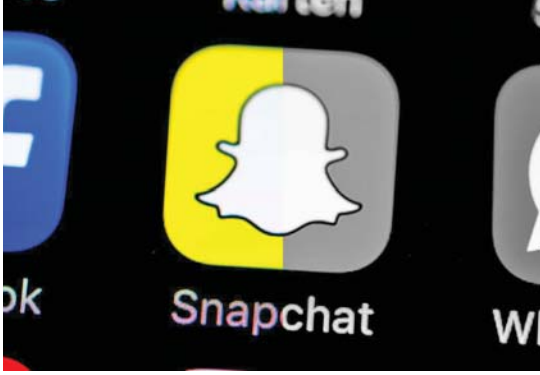


Using a single wiretap order as part of single drug investigation, US federal agents somehow managed to spy on millions — millions — of cell phone conversations.

The order was given as part of a narcotics investigation in the Middle District of Pennsylvania, the details being buried in the US Courts' 2016 Wiretap Report. The endeavor cost \$335,000 and was carried out over the course of two months. In total, the federal agents intercepted 3,292,385 cell phone calls or messages. The report doesn't say how many suspects were involved.

(Source: thenextweb)

Doctors using Snapchat to send patient scans to each other



Doctors are using Snapchat to send patient scans to each other, a panel of health and tech experts has found, concluding the "digital revolution has largely bypassed the NHS".

Clinicians use camera apps to record particular details of patient information in a convenient format, the panel said in a report, describing it as "clearly an insecure, risky, and non-auditable way of operating, and cannot continue".

It also notes that the NHS still holds the "dubious" title of the world's largest purchaser of fax machines.

(Source: Telegraph)

Mars surface may be too toxic for microbial life: new study

The hope for Martian life took another blow on Thursday. As Ian Sample at The Guardian reports, a new study suggests that in the presence of ultraviolet light, perchlorates, a class of chemical compounds widespread on Mars' surface, turn deadly for bacteria.

The presence of perchlorates isn't new. Viking 1 and 2 spacecraft detected perchlorates when they landed on the Martian surface in 1976, Jeffrey Kluger reports for Time. Since then, other spacecraft have confirmed the presence of the compounds. The 2009 Phoenix lander found that perchlorates make up between 0.4 and 0.6 percent of the soil sample it collected.

While perchlorates, which are composed of chlorine and oxygen, are toxic to humans, microbes typically love the stuff. And researchers have been optimistic that their presence could support bacterial life on Mars. As Kluger reports, some bacteria on Earth use naturally occurring perchlorate as an energy source. The compound also lowers the melting point of water, which could improve the chance of liquid water existing on the Red Planet.

■ **Ultraviolet perchlorate**
But the latest study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, suggests that in the presence of ultraviolet light perchlorate is not so microbe-friendly. Mars has



a thin atmosphere, which often leaves its surface bathed in UV rays. And when heated, chlorine-based molecules like perchlorates cause heavy damage to living cells, reports Sarah Fecht at Popular Science.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh wanted to see just how much damage those perchlorates would cause to any Martian bacteria. So they exposed test tubes of a common bacteria, *Bacillus subtilis*, to conditions similar to ones they

Mars has a thin atmosphere, which often leaves its surface bathed in UV rays. And when heated, chlorine-based molecules like perchlorates cause heavy damage to living cells, reports Sarah Fecht at Popular Science.

might encounter on Mars. They started with low temperatures and low oxygen in the presence of perchlorate. Bacteria under these conditions survived for up to an hour, Fecht reports. But when the researchers added UV light to the mix, the test tube was completely sterilized within 30 seconds. The researcher also found that two other common Martian soil components, iron oxide and hydrogen peroxide, reacted with irradiated perchlorate to make the soil hostile to bacteria.

■ **Surviving on the surface**
"We knew before that any life would have an incredibly hard time to survive on the surface, and this study experimentally confirms that," Dirk Schulze-Makuch, an astrobiologist at Washington State University not involved in the study, tells Fecht.

That doesn't completely rule out the possibility that bacteria may exist on Mars. "I can't speak for life in the past," co-author Jennifer Wadsworth tells Sample. "As far as present life, it doesn't rule it out but probably means we should look for life underground where it's shielded from the harsh radiation environment on the surface." here still remains some hope for surface microbes.

As Kluger reports, the researchers found that the colder temperatures offer some small protection for the bacteria. (Source: smithsonian.com)

Half of world's olive oil threatened by deadly bacteria in Spain, experts say

Spanish officials have confirmed the arrival of *Xylella fastidiosa*, a pathogen deadly to olive trees, on the country's mainland. About half the world's olive oil comes from Spain's estimated 340 million olive trees, and experts fear the bacteria could devastate the harvest. Up to a million olive trees in Italy were killed by the infection last year, leading Italian officials to chainsaw trees to the ground in an effort to stop the sickness.

The pathogen was found among almond trees in the eastern region of Valencia, according to Elena Cebrian, head of the agriculture department there. Of a sample of 17 almond trees, 12 were infected with the bacteria. The trees did not appear sick, but their almond production had decreased.

Olive trees in the immediate area have not tested positive for the bacteria so far, but all trees and plants within a 300-foot radius of the infected almond trees are being killed, per containment measures enforced by the European Union. Officials are also treating the area against insects that may carry the pathogen. The country also has banned plant imports from Spain's Balearic Islands as another precaution. Last year, *Xylella* subtypes were found on cherry trees in Mallorca, which is on the largest of these islands. Currently there is no cure for the

disease caused by the bacteria.

■ **Ebola of olive trees**
Xylella fastidiosa, which the Spanish newspaper El Mundo has called the "Ebola of olive trees," is feared by olive growers. The European Union considers it, "one of the most dangerous plant bacteria worldwide," with a huge potential to decimate crops and hurt agriculture. The pathogen was first reported in Europe in 2013, when it was found in the olive groves of Puglia, in Italy. France reported an outbreak in Corsica in 2015 and later on the mainland among myrtle-leaf milkwort.

A scathing report released in June by the European Commission blames Italian authorities for allowing the Italy outbreak to proceed unchecked. Researchers believe *X. fastidiosa* reached Italy from its native ecology in the Americas.

A recent thorough overview in Nature documents the challenges that followed. After the bacteria were identified as the cause of the "olive quick decline syndrome" striking Puglia trees, local environmentalists were furious about ancient olive trees being cut down to stop its spread, leading one prosecutor to launch a criminal investigation asserting that the researchers had themselves caused the infection.



The European Commission has expressed serious concerns about the havoc *X. fastidiosa* could wreak on the entire olive industry. Those fears are now accompanied by the threat of another subtype, *X. fastidiosa fastidiosa*, native to southern Central America. This species causes Pierce's disease, known to kill grapevines in California and was recently spotted in Mallorca. (Source: Newsweek)

CERN physicists find a particle with a double dose of charm

Researchers reported on Thursday that in debris flying out from the collisions of protons at the CERN particle physics laboratory outside Geneva, they had spotted a particle that has long been predicted but not detected until now.

The new particle, awkwardly known as Xi-cc++, could provide new insight into how tiny, whimsically named particles known as quarks, the building blocks of protons and neutrons, interact with each other.

Protons and neutrons, which account for the bulk of ordinary matter, are made of two types of quarks: up and down. A proton consists of two up quarks and one down quark, while a neutron contains one up quark and two down quarks. These triplets of quarks are known as baryons.

■ **Heavier quarks**
There are also heavier quarks with even quirkier names — strange, charm,

top, bottom — and baryons containing permutations of heavier quarks also exist.

The discovery fits with the Standard Model, the prevailing understanding of how the smallest bits of the universe behave, and does not seem to point to new physics. The "existence of these particles has been predicted by the Standard Model," said Patrick Spradlin, a physicist at the University of Glasgow who led the research. "Their properties have also been predicted."

Dr. Spradlin presented the findings on Thursday at a European Physical Society conference in Venice, and a paper describing them has been submitted to the journal Physical Review Letters.

Up and down quarks have almost the same mass, so in protons and neutrons, the three quarks swirl around each other in an almost uniform pattern. In the new particle, the up quark circulates around



the two heavy charm quarks at the center. "You get something far more like an atom," Dr. Spradlin said.

■ **Structure of new particles**
Quark interactions are complex and difficult to calculate, and the structure of the new particles will enable physicists to

check the assumptions and approximations they use in their calculations. "It's a new regime in quark-quark dynamics," said Jonathan L. Rosner, a retired theoretical physicist at the University of Chicago.

The mass of the Xi-cc++ is about 3.8 times that of a proton. The particle is not stable. Dr. Spradlin said the scientists had not yet figured out its lifetime precisely, but it falls apart somewhere between 50 millionths of a billionth of a second and 1,000 millionths of a billionth of a second.

What is less clear is how the new particle fits in with findings from 2002, when physicists working at Fermilab outside Chicago made the first claim of a doubly charmed baryon, one consisting of two charm quarks plus a down quark (instead of the up quark seen in the CERN experiment).

(Source: The NYT)

BMI Wins "Commitment to Quality" Award

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) received "Commitment to Quality" Award in the 3rd Intl. Quality Conference, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

As held in IRIB Intl. Conferences Hall, Bank Melli Iran was awarded with the "Commitment to Quality" prize by the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran (ISIIRI) for presenting the best possible services to customers in the past years.

It should be noted that this daylong Conference was held with the aim of studying and clarifying quality indexes in development and promotion of level of goods, empowering production and service activities



of the country for competition and gaining customers' satisfaction.

The specialized gathering was lectured by 10 domestic and foreign scientific figures and expert officials, the report added.

Studying quality indexes in 21st century, identifying important factors for boosting quality of productions, basic strategies for entering into the global markets and promoting service-based organizations have been cited as the most important procedures and main topics in this prestigious conference, Public Relations Dept. of the bank ended.

Bank Shahr Named among Top 100 Brands

The name of Bank Shahr was listed among top 100 brands, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For this purpose, Chief Executive of Bank Shahr Dr. Hossein Mohammad-Pourzarandi was awarded with a

Plaque of Honor at a Festival held for honoring top 100 brands.

It should be noted that this prestigious festival was held in the presence of representatives of leading organizations.

Given the above issue, the chief ex-

ecutive of the bank was appreciated as a result of his unsparing efforts in promoting status of the bank in the nationwide coupled with creating a national brand, Public Relations and Intl. Affairs Dept. of the bank ended.



New fabric from Atacama promises to keep you cool and dry

Breathability and moisture-wicking properties are two important characteristics that every outdoor athlete looks for in their workout apparel. If a garment is breathable, it allows heat to escape the body, keeping runners and cyclists cooler as a result. And if a garment also has the ability to wick away perspiration, it will keep them drier as well. Unfortunately, while a lot of sportswear promises to deliver in these two areas, their products often underperform when put to use in the field. But a new technical fabric from a company called Atacama is looking to change all that by delivering a potential breakthrough product that could revolutionize the way we work out.

Named for the Atacama Desert in northern Chile — the driest place on the planet — the company says that it has created the "world's first 'biometric' moisture-channeling system." What that means is that researchers have found a way to not just wick moisture from the body, but to actually collect it and channel it away through tiny three-dimensional channels. This not only allows sweat to dissipate rapidly, but it has the added benefit of also keeping the article of clothing almost completely dry, even during intense aerobic activities.

The secret behind Atacama's fabrics lies in microfluidics, which is the study of how liquids move when constrained on a microscopic level. In this case, the moisture is collected from the body, pulled into the fabric, and then channeled into tiny pathways that push it away.

One of the biggest challenges that the Atacama team faced when developing its new fabrics was figuring out how to create three-dimensional channels in thin, lightweight textiles.

(Source: Digital Trends)

Chemotherapy may spread cancer and trigger more aggressive tumors

Chemotherapy could allow cancer to spread, and trigger more aggressive tumors, a new study suggests.

Researchers in the U.S. studied the impact of drugs on patients with breast cancer and found medication increases the chance of cancer cells migrating to other parts of the body, where they are almost always lethal.

Around 55,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in Britain every year and 11,000 will die from their illness.

Many are given chemotherapy before surgery, but the new research suggests that, although it shrinks tumors in the short term, it could trigger the spread of cancer cells around the body.

It is thought the toxic medication switches on a repair mechanism in the body which ultimately allows tumors to grow back stronger. It also increases the number of 'doorways' on blood vessels which allow cancer to spread throughout the body.

He also discovered that in mice, breast cancer chemotherapy increased the number of cancer cells circulating the body and in the lungs.

Dr. Karagiannis said women could be monitored during chemotherapy to check if cancer was starting to circulate and doorways were emerging.

"One approach would be to obtain a small amount of tumor tissue after a few doses of preoperative chemotherapy," he said.

"If we observe that the markers scores are increased we would recommend discontinuing chemo and having surgery first, followed by post-operative chemo. We are currently planning more extensive trials to address the issue.

(Source: The Telegraph)

Brain-infecting 'rat lungworm' spreads in Florida: new study

A parasitic worm that can infect people's brains has been found throughout Florida, according to a new study.

The researchers found the parasite, called rat lungworm, living in rats and snails in five Florida counties in both the central and northern parts of the state. Rat lungworm was previously found in southern Florida, and the new study is one of the first to show the extent of the parasite's spread across the state.

The researchers warned that the parasite, which is typically found in the tropics and only recently appeared in the continental United States, will likely continue to expand its range in this country. They said that the parasite's apparent ability to thrive in areas outside its historical range is "alarming," and as average temperatures rise with climate change, the parasite will likely spread into more temperate areas.

The parasite carries out its life cycle in rats, snails and slugs, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). People can become infected if they eat raw or undercooked snails or slugs, or if they eat contaminated produce.

In people, rat lungworm, or *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, can infect the brain and cause meningitis, according to the CDC. Infected people may experience headaches, neck stiffness, nausea, vomiting, and abnormal sensations in their arms and legs. Most people fully recover without treatment, but in rare cases, the infection can cause neurological problems or death, the CDC said.

The "parasite is here in Florida and is something that needs to be taken seriously," Heather Stockdale said.

(Source: Live Science)

Smoking most preventable cause of death in Iran: deputy health minister

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Smoking is amongst the most common preventable causes of death in Iran, the deputy health minister said, Nasimonline reported on Wednesday.

“Every year some 55,000 to 65,000 individuals die of smoking in Iran while it is the most preventable cause of death in the country,” Ali-Akbar Sayyari explained.

Sayyari said in case Majlis (Iranian parliament) approves a bill to increase sales tax the income can be spent on treatment of diseases caused by smoking. “Increasing the sales tax on cigarette is one of the effective strategies implemented worldwide to reduce smoking rate,” he explained.

It has been scientifically proved that smokers who begin smoking by the age 18 are losing 20 years of life expectancy on average, the health official regretted.

He went on to say that Iranians spend some 100 trillion rials (nearly \$2.5 billion) on smoking per annum while twice the amount is spent on treating smoking-related diseases.

The deputy health minister said media has the potential to shape lifestyle and turn people away from undesirable behaviors such as smoking.

“Athletes and actors should join hands to fight smoking, some are already cooperating but the rest should join the campaign as well,” he stated.

Microsoft announces thousands of job cuts as it refocuses on the cloud

Microsoft revealed that it plans to cut thousands of jobs as part of a reorganization process that will see the software giant focus its efforts on the cloud. The layoffs are expected to primarily impact Microsoft's sales force, and CNBC reports that around 10 percent of the company's total sales staff will be let go (up to 3,000 jobs). The Verge understands the cuts are in the thousands, but Microsoft is refusing to confirm the exact number. Rumors had suggested these cuts would take place, and it's traditional for Microsoft to reorganize its businesses at this time of the year, just ahead of its new financial year.

“Microsoft is implementing changes to better serve our customers and partners,” says a Microsoft spokesperson in a statement to CNBC. “Today, we are taking steps to notify some employees that their jobs are under consideration or that their positions will be eliminated. Like all companies, we evaluate our business on a regular basis. This can result in increased investment in some places and, from time-to-time, re-deployment in others.”

Microsoft's new focus on the cloud comes as the company sees growth potential as it fights against rivals like Amazon and Google. Microsoft's cloud and server businesses have been fueling revenue recently, with server products and cloud services revenue up 15 percent and Azure revenue itself growing by 93 percent in the recent quarter. Microsoft's last major reorganization took place a year ago after former Chief Operating Officer Kevin Turner left the company.

(Source: The Verge)

LEARN ENGLISH

Global View - Nationalities

A: Hey! How was your first day of class? I'm in level two and I'm loving my class this **semester**! It's great being in a class of international students!

B: Mine was ok, except that no one in my class speaks English. I guess it will force me to **converse** in Chinese more in class so at least I should improve a lot this semester.

A: That's both fortunate and unfortunate. It's the **United Nations** in my class! We have people from all over the world! There are three Germans, a Pole, a Scottish, two French, an American, a Brazilian, a Chilean, a New Zealander, though he prefers to call himself a **Kiwi**. Who else do we have? Oh, we also have a Moroccan, a Togolese, a Pakistani, and two Indonesians!

B: That's quite the **array** of nationalities. Everyone in my class is from Asia, except me. There are a few South Koreans, several Japanese, Malaysian, Thai, Singaporean, Filipino, Kazakhstani, and one Russian.

A: Well, I think you're pretty lucky actually. You'll have the **opportunity** to learn so much about Asian culture.

B: I guess so, but I think it's going to be hard to **relate** to my classmates, especially with the **language barrier**. I think I might change classes.

A: Don't! **Stay the course**! Your spoken Chinese will be **eternally** grateful. I bet you it will even **surpass** mine with all that practice.

B: I highly doubt it. Your fiancé is Chinese.

A: Well, there is that, yes.

■ Key vocabulary

semester: one of the two periods of time that a year at high schools and universities is divided into, especially in the U.S.

converse: to have a conversation with someone

United Nations: an international political organization

Kiwi: someone from New Zealand

array: a large group or quantity of people or things

opportunity: chance

relate to someone: to feel that you understand someone's problem, situation etc.

language barrier: trouble communicating because speak different languages

stay the course: remain or persevere to the end; to finish something in spite of difficulties

surpass: to be even better or greater than someone or something else

■ Supplementary vocabulary

Dutch: relating to the people of Netherlands

Finn: a person from Finland

Dane: a person from Denmark

naturalize: process by which a person becomes a citizen of another country

ethnic: relating to groups of people that have common racial, tribal or religious traits

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Iran holds university entrance exams

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Iranian university entrance exams, also known as Konkur, were held on Thursday and Friday nationwide and in some other countries as well.

Students in Iran sit for the multiple choice Konkur exams every year in June or July to gain admission to higher education by seeking place in one of the public universities.

Students in the three main groups of mathematical sciences, experimental sciences, and human sciences and two other groups of arts and foreign languages vie to get the best result possible as their future is mostly determined by how they perform at the exam.

This year some 930,208 individuals including 548,434 females and 381,774 males took part in the exams. The figures indicate a major decline in the number of participants since 2008.

While some 1.4 million took part in Konkur exams in 2008 the number has



drastically decreased by some half a million by the current year. Additionally fe-

male participants outnumber the male with 58.96 percent.

Britain will not renegotiate the Paris climate change deal for Donald Trump, Theresa May says

Theresa May has ruled out renegotiating the Paris climate accord ahead of a meeting with Donald Trump at the G20.

The US president has said he will pull the U.S. out of the deal but first wants to see if he can change its terms to be more favorable to the United States.

Britain did not include climate change as one of its four main objectives ahead of the summit but after arriving in Hamburg for the meeting Ms. May told reporters that the Paris agreement was non-negotiable.

“I was clear to President Trump how disappointed the UK was that the United States had decided to pull out of the Paris Agreement and also clear that I hope they will be able to find a way to come back into the Paris Agreement,” she told the BBC.

She added: “We are not renegotiating the Paris Agreement. That stays.”

The statement from the Prime Minister means she joins Angela Merkel and other European leaders in saying she will not change the treaty.

Mr. Trump is meeting Russian president Vladimir Putin for the first time today. Like Mr. Trump, Mr. Putin has publicly doubted that climate change is caused by



human activity.

The U.S. president himself has said in the past that he believes climate change is a conspiracy by the Chinese propagated to hobble American manufacturing industry. Ms. May will meet with Mr. Trump tomorrow for bilateral talks.

Downing Street had previously said that the UK was committed to the treaty as it was signed but would only say that the British Government “don't see any need for renegotiation” rather than explicitly rule it out, as Ms.

May has now done.

The Prime Minister was yesterday criticized by Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn for not including climate change in her four objectives for the gathering of world leaders.

He called for Ms. May to “put pressure on Donald Trump to change course on his catastrophic decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement”.

NGOs, including Oxfam, had also warned that climate change should be at the top of the agenda, warning that it was “real and it's happening right now”.

At the start of June, the U.S. President confirmed he would pull the U.S. from the Paris Agreement.

Apparently misunderstanding the name of the treaty, he argued that he was “elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris”.

“We are getting out, but we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair. And if we can, that's great,” he said.

The leaders of France, Germany and Italy immediately issued a joint statement saying the Paris accord was “irreversible” and could not be renegotiated, but the UK had shied away from taking this explicit position.

(Source: Independent)

France to ban sales of petrol and diesel cars by 2040

France will end sales of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040 as part of an ambitious plan to meet its targets under the Paris climate accord, Emmanuel Macron's government has announced.

The announcement comes a day after Volvo said it would only make fully electric or hybrid cars from 2019 onwards, a decision hailed as the beginning of the end for the internal combustion engine's dominance of motor transport after more than a century.

Nicolas Hulot, the country's new ecology minister, said: “We are announcing an end to the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2040.” Hulot added that the move was a “veritable revolution”.

He said it would be a “tough” objective for carmakers but France's industry was well equipped to make the switch. “Our [car] makers have enough ideas in the drawer to nurture and bring about this promise ... which is also a public health issue.”

Norway, which has the highest penetration of electric cars in the world, has

set a target of only allowing sales of 100% electric or plug-in hybrid cars by 2025.

Other countries have floated the idea of banning cars powered by an internal combustion engine to meet air quality and climate change goals, but have not yet passed concrete targets.

The Netherlands has mooted a 2025 ban for diesel and petrol cars, and some federal states in Germany are keen on a 2030 phase-out.

India, where scores of cities are blighted by dangerous air pollution, is mulling the idea of no longer selling petrol or diesel cars by 2030, and said it wants to introduce electric cars in “a very big way”.

The UK has an aspiration of all new cars being electric or ultra-low emission by 2040, but has been criticized by campaigners and politicians for being slow to act on air pollution.

Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, said: “I welcome the strong leadership the French government has shown by making the decision to end the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2040.

“This radical step shames the timid and insufficient response of our own government to the health threat posed by poor air quality.”

France's announcement came as Bloomberg New Energy Finance predicted electric cars would come to dominate the automotive market more quickly and dramatically than previously thought.

Electric vehicles will make up 54% of all light-duty vehicle sales by 2040, up from the 35% share Bloomberg was forecasting just last year, according to a new report by the research group.

Bloomberg said such a widespread uptake of electric vehicles would globally reduce oil demand by 8m barrels a day and increase electricity consumption by 5% to charge all the new cars.

But Tony Seba, a Stanford University economist who has published research predicting electric cars will even more rapidly take over from conventional cars, said of France's plan: “Banning sales of diesel and gasoline vehicles by 2040 is a bit like banning sales of horses for road

transportation by 2040: there won't be any to ban.”

French car manufacturers Peugeot, Citroën and Renault ranked first, second and third on a 2016 list of large car manufacturers with the lowest carbon emissions, the European Environment Agency said.

Just 0.6% of new car registrations across the EU last year were for pure electric vehicles, compared with 1.1% of new cars sold in France.

French-Japanese carmaker Renault-Nissan has been an enthusiastic early advocate for the vehicles, taking 14.6% of the EU market share for battery-powered vehicles. The firm has built 425,000 of the more than 2m electric cars sold globally.

France's reliance on nuclear power stations for 80% of its electricity supply means that a shift to electric vehicles rather than oil-powered ones would dramatically cut its remaining carbon emissions.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

Over 40,000 clunker taxis scrapped in 10 months

The number of clunker taxis scrapped and replaced by new models since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2016) has gone up to 40,000 nationwide, Environment chief Masoumeh Ebtekar said on Saturday.

Ebtekar also highlighted that since the beginning of the current administration (August 2013) some 915,000 old cars have been replaced by new ones. Minister Ne'matzadeh also noted that some 15,000 electric motorcycles are manufactured in Iran over the current year and called for incentive programs to encourage people to buy these zero emission products.

ENGLISH PROVERB

A leopard can't change its spots

■ **Explanation**: one will stay true to one's nature, even if one pretends or claims otherwise

■ **For example**: After our breakup, he came crawling back, trying to convince me that he'd changed, but I know that a leopard can't change its spots.

PHRASAL VERB

Crash out

■ **Meaning**: to go to bed, or go to sleep very quickly, because you are very tired

■ **For example**: I crashed out on the sofa this afternoon.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Behind the times

■ **Explanation**: a person who is behind the times has old-fashioned ideas and does not keep up with modern life in general

■ **For example**: Jane doesn't have a mobile phone. She's completely behind the times.

جایگزینی ۴۰ هزار دستگاه تاکسی فرسوده در ۱۰ ماه

معصومه ابتکار رییس سازمان محیط زیست روز شنبه اعلام کرد: از ابتدای سال جاری تا کنون ۴۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده جایگزین شده اند.

ابتکار ادامه داد: در دولت یازدهم تاکنون ۹۱۵ هزار خودروی فرسوده از سیستم حمل و نقل خارج و با خودروهای نو جایگزین شده اند.

محمدرضا نعمت‌زاده وزیر صنعت، معدن و تجارت نیز از تولید ۱۵ هزار دستگاه موتورسیکلت برقی در کشور طی سال جاری خبرداد و خواست تا روند اجرای بسته حمایت از تولید خودروهای برقی و هیبریدی سرعت بگیرد.

G20 protesters clash with police, set cars on fire

Angry protesters have clashed with police in Hamburg where leaders from the world's top economies convened for a summit amid tensions over the United States President Donald Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate deal.

At least 76 police officers and dozens of protesters have been injured in clashes in Hamburg ahead of the G20 summit, officials said.

Police used water cannon, pepper spray and batons to disperse marchers after some attacked them with bottles and other objects on Thursday.

Police said violence that erupted during marches on Thursday continued into Friday, with anti-capitalist protesters setting fire to cars, barricades, rubbish bins and wooden pallets.

Officials said security forces had detained at least 29 protesters, with more than 100 police officers injured as of Friday morning, including three officers who required treatment in hospital.

They said despite the violence, the majority of an estimated 100,000 demonstrators in the city remained peaceful.

However, authorities called for reinforcements even as 15,000 police were on hand from each of Germany's 16 states after realizing the situation on the streets of Hamburg was proving more difficult than expected.

"We have asked nationwide if police forces are available and those requests are being reviewed," Reuters quoted a police spokesman as saying.

Police said demonstrators on Friday blocked several intersections and so-called transfer corridors -- roads designated to help delegations move between meetings.

One of the many police helicopters patrolling the skies was nearly struck by a rocket flare after the pilots of another helicopter sustained eye injuries from a laser directed against them on Thursday, a police statement said.

The new clashes came as leaders from the world's 20 developed and emerging economies prepared to begin a two-day meeting on key global issues, including trade, terrorism and climate change.

■ Welcome to Hell

Earlier, anti-capitalist protesters



greeted Trump and other world leaders with "Welcome to Hell."

In a joint communique, Brazil, Russia, India and China - the so-called BRICS countries - called on the G20 to push for implementation of the Paris climate deal, ratcheting up pressure on Trump to compromise on the treaty.

Thousands of protesters from around Europe were pouring into Germany's second largest city to join big demonstrations during the July 7-8 summit of leaders of the world's 20 biggest economies.

Police expected around 100,000 protesters. Up to 20,000 police officers will be on duty to watch over the main demonstration, dubbed "Welcome to Hell" by the alliance of anti-capitalist groups who organized it.

Trump arrived in Hamburg on Thursday after spending several hours in Warsaw, Poland, where he delivered a speech and held a joint press conference with Poland's president.

Trump's unpopularity in Europe, as well as his apparent disregard for international treaties and human rights have helped mobilize a massive protest movement this year.

Protesters say the G20 is undemocratic and has failed to solve many of the issues threatening world peace, including violent conflicts, worsening inequality and climate change.

Posters denouncing Trump and the

G20 are plastered across the city. On Wednesday, the front page of a popular local newspaper, the Hamburger Morgenpost, referred to Trump as a "horror clown."

In a Pew survey of people in 37 countries around the world published at the end of June, the most popular terms used to describe Trump were "arrogant," "intolerant" and "dangerous."

Its host, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, said she hoped the leaders would be able to find "compromises and answers" on a wide range of issues - although the prospects of finding common ground on climate change and trade were uncertain.

■ Protests to continue

Many other groups are calling for peaceful protests and are pushing the G20 leaders for action to fight climate change and address economic disparities in the world. Some are even calling for the dissolution of the G20 itself so the United Nations becomes the platform for such discussions.

Merkel is also hoping to keep things under control inside the city congress center where the summit is being held. With guests including the U.S. President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the search for compromises is expected to be challenging.

Merkel said leaders would address

regulating financial markets, fighting terrorism and pandemics and combatting climate change, among other issues. She said "free, rule-based and fair trade" will be an important issue.

"You can imagine that there will be discussions that will not be easy," she said. "Globalization can be a win-win situation. It must not always be that there are winners and losers."

In the wake of Trump's recent decision to pull out of the Paris deal fighting climate change, the battle against global warming promises to feature prominently in discussions at the summit.

Merkel has rejected calls from some to push for a strong "G19" statement - without the U.S. - on climate change. That is something that Zhu Guangyao, a Chinese deputy finance minister, told reporters on Thursday that Beijing also did not support.

"The policies produced by the G20 should be by the consensus of all member states," he said. "No one should be excluded."

Still, he added, "China will firmly promote its policies taking more measures against climate change."

■ Putin, Trump shake hands at G20 in first encounter

Meantime, Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump have shaken hands during their first face-to-face encounter at the G-20 summit in Hamburg, the Kremlin said on Friday.

"They shook each other's hand and said that they would soon hold a separate meeting, would soon see each other," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a conference call with reporters.

Putin and Trump are due to hold detailed one-on-one talks on the sidelines of the summit later on Friday.

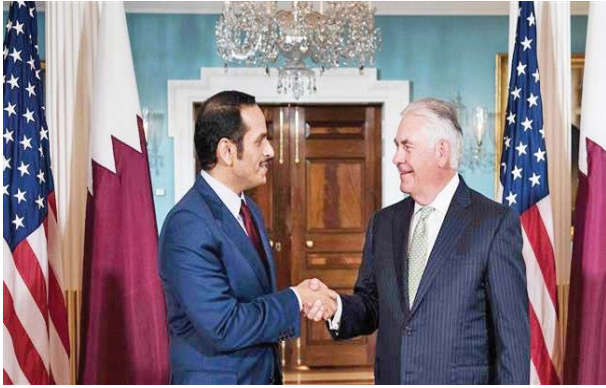
When asked if Putin was looking forward to the talks and whether he had lots of questions for Trump, Peskov said he did.

The Russian leader had been fully briefed about Trump's description on Thursday of Moscow's behavior as destabilizing, Peskov added, and would take that and other remarks by U.S. officials into account.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. warns crisis between Qatar, neighbors could last for months

The United States has warned that the crisis between Qatar and its Arab neighbors may intensify and could potentially drag on for weeks or even months.



The U.S. believes the crisis could "possibly even intensify", Heather Nauert, the spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department, said on Thursday.

"We've become increasingly concerned that that dispute is at an impasse at this point. We believe that this could potentially drag on for weeks. It could drag on for months," Heather Nauert, the spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department, said on Thursday.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson remains in close contact with the countries involved and will be traveling to Kuwait on Monday to discuss efforts to resolve the crisis, she added.

The House of Saud regime, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) severed diplomatic ties and cut all land, sea, and air contacts with Qatar on June 5. The four countries accused Qatar of supporting terrorism and destabilizing the region, allegations denied by Doha.

The countries issued a list of demands for Qatar to meet in return for a normalization of ties. Among them was that Qatar shut down Al Jazeera, a media network that has reportedly been critical especially of Saudi Arabia, close a Turkish military base, limit its ties with Iran, and "compensate" the sanctioning countries.

Qatar has denied the allegations and refused to comply with the demands

The White House on Thursday confirmed that President Donald Trump discussed the crisis with German Chancellor Angela Merkel ahead of the G20 summit that starts on Friday.

The Pentagon said on Friday United States Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has reaffirmed America's "strategic partnership" with Qatar and has called for de-escalation of tensions between the Persian Gulf Arab states.

Mattis, who spoke by phone on Thursday with his Qatari counterpart Khaled bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, also discussed the status of operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

"Secretary Mattis and Minister al-Attiyah affirmed their commitment to continued U.S.-Qatar cooperation and deepening their strategic partnership," a Pentagon readout of the conversation stated.

Qatar, the world's biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas, hosts about 10,000 US troops at its al-Udeid Air Base.

(Source: Press TV)

Russia: North Korean missile was not ICBM, objects to U.S. over such classification

Russia says a projectile recently test-fired by North Korea was not an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), as commonly believed, and has objected to the United States over describing the missile as such in a draft United Nations Security Council resolution.

Russia's permanent mission to the UN objected to the U.S.-drafted resolution condemning the recent North Korean missile launch because it classified the missile as an ICBM, according to internal communication leaked by Reuters.

"Based on our (Ministry of Defense's) assessment we cannot confirm that the missile can be classified as an ICBM," Russia's UN mission said in an email to Security

Council colleagues, Reuters reported, citing diplomats.

"Based on this information, Russia has proposed the U.S., as authors of the initiative, to make certain amendments to it," the email further read.

The office of the Russian permanent mission to the UN later confirmed the e-mail as leaked, saying it could not agree with the text classifying the projectile fired by Pyongyang earlier this week as an ICBM.

It said data provided by Russia's Defense Ministry indicated that it was likely a mid-range ballistic missile.

The mission said it would consider agreeing to the statement regarding North Korea only after the proposed amendments had been made to the U.S. draft.

Security Council statements require the consensus of all 15 members.

The Russian mission, however, condemned the leak of the internal communication and the "misinterpretation" of Russia's stance by Reuters, saying Russia was not "blocking" the resolution, as initially reported by the news outlet.

Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said on Wednesday that she planned to propose new sanctions against North Korea over the missile launch in the coming days.

North Korea has been under UN sanctions since 2006 over its ballistic missile and nuclear programs.

(Source: Press TV)

Protest Paradox: On the futility of liberal "resistance" in the age of Trump

➔ Examples of state violence against protestors and suppression of dissent abound in American history. One of the most egregious examples is during a labor dispute at Ludlow, Colorado in April of 1914. The strike by miners working for the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation was triggered by the murder of one of the United Mine Workers Union organizers, but was in protest of low wages, dangerous working conditions and feudal-like company towns. The Colorado governor called for federal troops to restore order, which resulted in the massacre of 66 men, women and children.

In 1967, Blacks came out in huge numbers in protest of their ongoing oppression and disenfranchisement by the white-dominated U.S. political system. After 83 Blacks had been killed in protests in Newark and Detroit, the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968. However, the system hedged against itself by creating an exception for members of the National Guard or other armed forces engaged in riot control. The legislation also added another loophole for police by defining a "riot" as an action by 3 or more people involving threats of violence.

Still, something feels qualitatively different with the arrival of the Trump regime. Perhaps it is the vicious vulgarity of the current U.S. commander-in-chief, a bombastic billionaire who has no qualms over voicing his disdain for the poor. In any case, the shift can be sensed in the mainstream media, where news commentators, like

Rachel Maddow on MSNBC, present a scathing, sarcastic verbal volley against Trump and his machinations, while admitting that they have no idea how to reverse what now appears to be an unstoppable juggernaut.

Perhaps the queasy feeling in the stomach over Trump comes from the apparent contradiction between the populist rhetoric in his inaugural address and his vigorous crackdown against any hint of criticism. The editors of the Des Moines Register pointed out that Trump assured the citizenry that his ascendancy ushered in the "transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people." Yet when 1,000 in the U.S. State Department signed a letter in protest over Trump's policies, they were given the choice of either to "get with the program" or resign. "This represents a seismic shift in attitude toward respectful, constructive dissent," wrote the editors of the newspaper located in the conservative heartland of America.

This is where English art critic, author and poet John Berger, the interlocutor of the opening epigram, got it right concerning the value of demonstrations. Protest without the threat of force, or at least the potential threat thereof is completely ineffective on a government devoid of any democratic inclination. And the tyrannical tycoon Trump is certainly not open to any sort of democratic influence. As evidence of the veracity of this assertion, consider that on January 20 2017, over 200 people were arrested for merely protesting the ignominious

icon's inauguration and now face up to 75 years in prison if convicted.

In an insightful 1968 essay titled "The Nature of Mass Demonstrations," Berger wrote, "Theoretically demonstrations are meant to reveal the strength of popular opinion or feeling: theoretically they are an appeal to the democratic conscience of the State." But in the absence of any such democratic conscience—and this is clearly the case with the Trump regime—Berger explained that the government "is unlikely to be influenced by an empty show of force containing no real threat."

So far, all the liberal "resistance" movements such as Indivisible, which is the source behind numerous local grass roots groups, suffer from a lack of a credible threat to the U.S. political establishment. In short, these groups are attempting to effect change within a corrupt and broken system, as Indivisible readily concedes on their web site: "Indivisible energizes and informs Americans about government's potential and enlists them to imagine and create the government we need for all to have a safe, healthy, just and prosperous future." Most likely, Berger would deem demonstrations sponsored by liberal "resistance" groups such as Indivisible as "a mere public spectacle."

Liberal "resistance" movements represent a futility in this age of Trump, since, according to professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin Robert Jensen, "Liberals typically decry the worst excesses of capitalism

and empire, but don't critique the system at a more basic level." Jensen, who considers himself a "leftist" or a "radical," wrote that leftists "reject the idea that the United States has the right to dominate the world, refuting the assertion that we are uniquely benevolent in our imperial project." For his part, Trump, with his motto of "Make America Great Again," is evidently in league with those Americans who believe they have a right to dominate the world.

Yet Trump is merely a symptom of the problem of the worst excesses of capitalism, and not the problem itself, which can only be addressed with the help of demonstrations that are, in Berger's words, "rehearsals for revolution." For a demonstration to be effective according to Berger, the participating protestors must be willing to provoke violence upon themselves. The purpose of the self-imposed violence is in order "to show the injustice, cruelty, irrationality of the existing State authority." For as the American poet, philosopher and tax resister Henry David Thoreau wrote in 1849, "Under a government which imprisons unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison."

In other words, protesters must join movements whose ideologies represent a tangible threat to the corrupt U.S. political establishment. Unless Americans are willing to work outside and against the system by embracing radical, alternative ideologies, their demonstrations will not be effective against an American government that lacks any democratic conscience.

The rising price of freedom

➔ They are brought home to us in reports of soaring suicide rates of military veterans who simply cannot escape the demons of the battlefield that have followed them home.

The Fourth of July holiday offers an excellent opportunity for the rest of us to stand up and express our appreciation for the sacrifices these heroes have made, and to listen to their testimony. That actually is the only proven therapy for post-traumatic stress.

Medical science has come up with all sorts of wondrous devices — advanced prostheses — to help wounded warriors compensate for missing limbs. Unfortunately, there are no pills or other medical magic to treat the inner wounds.

But there are ways we can help. The wounded warriors with post-traumatic stress derive great therapeutic benefit from discussing their experiences with people who are sympathetic and do not pass judgment.

■ Professional therapists

Sometimes they can share with professional therapists, but anyone who cares can lend an ear — a minister, a neighbor or just a friend. The wounded veterans are most comfortable with others who share their experience and can relate to what they have been through, but in a real sense, their stories are our own stories. They have gone through hell so we didn't have to.

The Fourth of July also offers an excellent chance to express support for the spouses of these victims of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress who must often bear full responsibility for their households, taking care of the children and paying the bills, while the warriors struggle to return to normalcy. These spouses — usually wives — are heroes, too, and they also need someone to listen. If you know one of these heroes, today would be a good opportunity to take some time from your busy schedule and lend an ear.

We had been drawing down our military commitment to Afghanistan and Iraq, but the extremists have seized that as an opportunity to renew their assault on civilization. We are now once again beefing up our military commitments to those war-torn lands. Soon the train of casualties will resume. The war continues with no end in sight. On this Fourth of July, let us all ponder the crisis that confronts us and our debt of gratitude to the warriors who put their own lives on the line so we back home can live in peace and freedom.

(Source: The Washington Times)

WBO agree to review Pacquiao-Horn bout but cannot overturn decision

The World Boxing Organization (WBO) has agreed to review the controversial points decision that led to Jeff Horn's welterweight world title win over Filipino veteran Manny Pacquiao, but cannot overturn the decision unless there is evidence of fraud.



The unanimous decision in the Australian's favor was questioned by observers and the Philippines Games and Amusements Board (GAB) sent a letter asking for a "thorough review" of the fight on Monday. Pacquiao backed the letter in his own statement on Wednesday.

"I would be very grateful if the GAB can provide any evidence indicating fraud or violation of law," WBO president Francisco Valcarcel said in his response on Thursday.

"The purpose of this review is to be able to give the fans certainty of who was the winner of the bout, even though we do not have the power to reverse the decision of the judges."

Horn won the match after judges scored the bout 117-111, 115-113 and 115-113 in the 29-year-old's favor. The WBO's review will have five judges re-watching the fight and providing their own scores.

Valcarcel further backed the original judges of the fight namely Waleksa Roldan, Chris Flores and Ramon Cerdan.

"The officials who participated in this fight are all professional, distinguished, honest and honorable human beings," Valcarcel added.

Pacquiao can redeem himself by activating the rematch clause in the contract and facing Horn for a second time but the 38-year-old is yet to make a decision regarding his retirement.

(Source: Reuters)

Firmino omitted from Brazil squad due to fatigue - Tite

Brazil national team boss Tite left Roberto Firmino out of his squad for two end-of-season friendlies because of fatigue, a decision the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) discussed with Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp.

Brazil played two matches in Australia last month, with Firmino absent from both fixtures.

Firmino's Liverpool teammate, Philippe Coutinho, played 90 minutes against Argentina before captaining his country for the first time in a 4-0 win over Australia four days later.

"Klopp asked Edu [Gaspar, CBF director] for a call forecast because he needed to make plans for the team for the season," Tite told GQ magazine.

"Then we decided to rush the process to be able to pass the 'inside information' to Klopp. I had all the information from Liverpool's medical department about Roberto Firmino and Coutinho. Of the two, I did not summon Firmino.

"We knew Firmino was not in his best physical condition. He was playing because they were decisive matches to try and qualify for the Champions League. He would play for the club because they needed it, he would play for 75 minutes and come off

"So it was leading up to that. Since I want the best for the national team, but also for the club, I chose not to call the Firmino. Of course Klopp would also love it if I did not call either of them!"

Firmino was one of the players who returned to Liverpool preseason training at Melwood on Wednesday, while Coutinho will report back at a later date following his international commitments.

(Source: soccernet)

Mertesacker to retire next year and become Arsenal's academy manager

Arsenal have announced that club captain Per Mertesacker will retire at the end of next season to become the new academy manager at the Emirates.

The 32-year-old has been hampered by injuries in recent years, while knee problems ruled him out for most of last season, where his one and only Premier League appearance came in the final-day victory over Everton.

The centre-back, who has maintained his position as club captain throughout the struggles, will hang up his boots once the season is over and go on to work with the academy – and it's a role the German is eager to get stuck into.

"This is the start of an exciting new chapter for me and I am delighted that I will be able to stay part of the Arsenal family," Mertesacker told the club's website.

"This season I will remain fully focused on my job with the team and am looking forward to a successful last season on the pitch.

"After that, I look forward to the exciting challenge of helping produce young players good enough to play for the Arsenal first team."

Meanwhile, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger sang Mertesacker's praises, saying the defender is a "deep thinker" and would be a great inspiration in the role.

"Per is an exceptional character who is a great example for young players," Wenger said.

"He is a deep thinker about the game and committed to helping players fulfil their potential. He will be an inspirational figure for everyone connected with the academy."

Luke Hobbs, who took on the job after Andries Jonker left to join Wolfsburg earlier this year, will continue in the role until Mertesacker takes over.

(Source: Eurosport)

Garry Kasparov returns to chess for US tournament

Former world chess champion Garry Kasparov is coming out of retirement to play in a US tournament next month, organizers have said.

Kasparov, who dominated chess for more than 15 years, will compete against nine top players in St Louis, Missouri.

"Ready to see if I remember how to move the pieces! Will I be able to announce my re-retirement afterwards if not?!", Kasparov tweeted sardonically.

Kasparov left chess in 2005 for politics and founded an opposition movement called The Other Russia that accused President Vladimir Putin of returning the country to its dictatorial past. He became a powerful political voice and even tried to run against Putin in the 2008 Russian presidential election, leaving the country in 2013 and taking Croatian citizenship.

He became the youngest world chess champion at 22, beating Soviet grandmaster Anatoly Karpov in 1985 with an impulsive, energized attacking style that instantly gave him rock-star status in the world of chess.

At 54, Kasparov will be the oldest player competing for the Sinquefeld Cup. "Looks like I'm going to raise the average age of the field and lower the average rating!" he added.

Born Garry Weinstein in Azerbaijan to an Armenian mother and Jewish father, Kasparov has been described as "a monster with 100 eyes, who sees all".

He quickly understood the interest in combining computers with chess and in 1996 agreed to play against IBM's "Deep Blue" supercomputer. Kasparov won that match but lost a second a year later.

Sharp-worded criticism, such as likening Putin to Hitler, made him a target and he risked arrest after being accused of biting a police officer's hand at a protest in 2012. The opposition news website he founded, Kasparov.ru, has been blocked in Russia since 2014.

In another battle, Kasparov attempted in 2014 to dethrone the eccentric head of the World Chess Federation, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, but lost after securing



only 61 federation delegates votes out of 175.

Kasparov was given a wild card entry to the tournament. The current world No 1, Magnus Carlsen of Norway, will also play, as will Hikaru Nakamura, world No 2.

While he will not face Carlsen, Kasparov, who is in the Rapid and Blitz competition, may go against number two Hikaru Nakamura or the up-and-coming 26-year-old Russian Sergey Karjakin.

(Source: Guardian)

Lukaku to Man United: Spanish newspaper Marca say striker has passed medical



ROMELU LUKAKU has passed his Manchester United medical, according to Spanish sports paper Marca.

Manchester United look set to snatch Lukaku from under the noses of rivals Chelsea after agreeing a £75million fee.

Lukaku is expected to undergo a medical in the USA with a view to completing his transfer to United shortly.

But Spanish newspaper Marca said on their live transfer blog Lukaku passed his medical citing pictures of him with United star Paul Pogba at UC-LA's facilities as proof.

However, these pictures – shared by Pogba on his Instagram story – are not thought to be from Lukaku's medical.

Express Sport understands Lukaku will have his medical with United in America, where he is currently on holiday.

And the Manchester Evening News reports Lukaku has NOT yet had said medi-

cal, despite being expected to join Manchester United.

BBC journalist Simon Stone tweeted: "No Lukaku medical yet. Obviously can't happen until United ask for – and get – permission."

Chelsea are thought to still be in the hunt for the Everton striker, with his move to United not a foregone conclusion.

Antonio Conte is furious that Chelsea could be gazumped for the 24-year-old, with fears he could walk out of Stamford Bridge over the deal.

A source told Express Sport: «Conte is due back to work on Sunday but many staff expect this to be delayed after a series of phone calls with technical director Michael Emenalo.

«I've heard Conte has made it clear how angry he is and getting Andrea Belotti or Alvaro Morata might not be enough to calm him down.

Bernard Tomic pays financial penalty for Wimbledon behavior

Australian tennis star Bernard Tomic is starting to pay a price for being "bored" with tennis.

The 24-year-old has lost a sponsorship deal with sports equipment and clothing company Head and also has incurred a \$15,000 fine from the Wimbledon referee following his controversial round-one exit from Wimbledon.

"Tomic was fined \$15,000 for his comments in the press conference," said an International Tennis Federation (ITF) spokesman in an email sent to CNN.

"This fine was from the Wimbledon referee and not the ITF, as has been widely misreported."

Still only 24, Tomic has had a rollercoaster career but the comments he made following Tuesday's defeat by German Mischa Zverev were condemned by a number of Wimbledon champions.

"I felt a little bit bored out there to be completely honest with you. You know I tried at the end and stuff ... but it was too late," said Tomic after the loss, adding that he "couldn't care less" about winning or losing at the US Open later this year.

"Holding a trophy or doing well doesn't satisfy me anymore," Tomic explained.

■ Punished

Tomic's comments haven't gone down well with Head,



who released a statement to their official website on Thursday July 6, noting they were "extremely disappointed."

"His opinions in no way reflect our own attitude for tennis, our passion, professionalism and respect for the game," read the statement.

"Therefore, we have decided to discontinue our collaboration with Bernard Tomic."

Head's treatment of Tomic is in contrast to its decision to continue working with Maria Sharapova, despite the Russian's doping ban.

Ranked world No. 59, Tomic got to as high as No. 17 just last year.

Lionel Messi to pay fine for tax fraud as prison sentence is lifted



Barcelona forward Lionel Messi is officially exonerated from a prison sentence, as a Spanish court said Friday that the soccer star agreed to pay close to \$285,000, which will replace a 21-month prison sentence for tax fraud, according to several media outlets.

Messi and his father, Jorge Horacio, were found guilty by a Barcelona court on three counts of tax fraud equaling up to \$4.68 million earned from image rights. Messi's father also had his 15-month sentence exchanged for a fine of around \$205,000.

Neither Messi nor his father would have actually gone to jail, because the law allows those without a previous conviction to be permitted to serve any sentence of under two years on probation.

A Barcelona court found both guilty

in 2016 of defrauding taxes from 2007 and 2009 — equaling out to the three counts of tax fraud — for using shell companies to avoid taxes on income from the player's image rights. Messi was originally fined around \$2.3 million and his father around \$1.7 million in a ruling last July, and Messi's father had his 21-month sentence reduced to 15 months after Messi repaid the defrauded money. Messi appealed the sentence in April.

Messi, who had expressed frustration with the lack of public support he was receiving amid the tax fraud case, just signed a lucrative contract extension through 2021 a few days ago. Messi led the Spanish soccer league with 37 goals this past season, but couldn't lead Barcelona to the title, falling to Real Madrid.

(Source: USA Today)

"I think this is my eighth Wimbledon already and I'm 24 years old," added Tomic in his media conference. After factoring in his fine, he will leave Wimbledon with \$30,000 in prize money.

"It's tough to find motivation out there."

The \$15,000 fine was imposed for unsportsmanlike conduct, though Tomic reportedly plans to appeal.

"I was being honest," Tomic told the Herald Sun. "People say the fine is for calling for the doctor, but it's not. I don't think the fine is fair."

However, some of Tomic's fellow professionals offered support to the Australian.

"He's going through a tough stage, and you have to kind of understand it and support it," former world No. 1 Novak Djokovic was quoted as telling the Herald Sun.

Latvian Ernests Gulbis said: "Unfortunately, yes, nowadays you get penalized a lot when speaking up your mind and saying some unpopular things. But I know him. He's a good guy."

Tomic isn't the only player to be punished by the tennis authorities this week at Wimbledon. Daniil Medvedev was fined \$14,500 for disorderly conduct after the Russian threw coins at the chair of umpire Mariana Alves.

(Source: CNN)

FIFA rankings: Iran move seven places up

S P O R T S Iran moved seven places up to 23rd in the latest FIFA world rankings released on Thursday.

Iran remain Asia's highest representatives in the rankings, followed by Australia, Japan, South Korea and Saudi Arabia.

Germany have usurped Brazil at the top of the rankings following their Confederations Cup victory.

With the Seleccion in second, Argentina are now third, while Portugal occupy fourth spot in the latest standings.

Switzerland moved up four places to fifth, above Poland, whose ranking of sixth is their highest ever.

Chile and Colombia are seventh and eighth respectively, while France and Belgium complete the top 10 in the most recent standings.

The FIFA rankings, weighing team's results over a four-year cycle, will have an impact later this year. FIFA typically uses the rankings to decide seeding for World Cup playoffs and the finals tournament draw, which is made on Dec. 1 in Moscow.

Following 177 matches around the globe, many UEFA members will be looking back on the last month fondly. Portugal (4th, up 4) and Switzerland (5th, up 4) have made strong gains in the top ten, while Sweden (18th, up 16) and Iceland (19th, up 3) – their best-ever placing – have climbed into the top 20.

Andorra (129th, up 57) were the month's biggest movers and the likes of Peru (14th, up 1), Northern Ireland (22nd, up 6), Congo DR (28th, up 11), Curaçao (68th, up 2), and Mauritania (81st, up 23) all join Poland and Iceland in registering their highest positions to date.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be published on 10 August 2017.



FC Groningen eye Persepolis striker Mehdi Taremi



S P O R T S FC Groningen are reportedly ready to consider a move for Persepolis forward Mehdi Taremi in this summer's transfer window.

Taremi has one year left remaining on his current contract at Persepolis.

He scored 24 goals for the Reds in 37 matches in Iran Professional League and the AFC Champions League last season.

Taremi is reportedly being consid-

ered as a replacement for Alexander Sørloth who left Groningen for FC Midtjylland.

Taremi has scored three vital goals in Iran's last three matches in the 2018 World Cup qualification.

The 24-year-old striker has been already linked with a move to Greek teams Panionios and AEK Athens and Dinamo Zagreb.

Persepolis have signed a contract with Nigerian striker Gowdin Mensha.

Asian Volleyball Championship: Iran learn rivals



S P O R T S Iran discovered their rivals at the 19th edition of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship.

The Iranian team have been drawn along with Iraq, Chinese Taipei and Pakistan in Pool B.

Pool A consists of Indonesia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kazakhstan.

Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Sri Lanka are in pool C and China have been pitted against Australia, Thailand

and Hong Kong in Pool D.

The 2017 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship will be the 19th edition of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, the biennial international men's volleyball championship of Asia organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC).

It will be held in Surabaya, Indonesia from 24 July to 1 August 2017. It will be the second time that the Indonesia hosts the tournament after the 2007 Asian Championship.

Sarmayeh Bank crowned Asian Club Volleyball champion

Sarmayeh Bank underlined their domination at the SMM 2017 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship at the Ninh Binh Gymnasium after pulling off a hard-fought 39-37 25-14 25-23 victory over spirited Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza in the final showdown on Thursday to make it two in a row and Iran's 12th title at the top-tier competition.

Sarmayeh Bank captured their maiden victory at the previous edition in Myanmar last year after powering past Al Arabi Sports Club from Qatar in the final clash. This time, the Iranians had already beaten Al Arabi in the semi-finals and their repeated feat over Japan's Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza in the Thursday showdown gave Sarmayeh Bank a clean sweep in the nine-day tournament and ended their title defence campaign with a remarkable unbeaten record.

Paykan Tehran were the first team from Iran to win the Asian Men's Club title in 2002 and have dominated the tournament from 2006 to 2011. The remaining five titles of Iran came from Sanam Tehran in 2004, Kalleh Mazandaran in 2013, Matin Varmint in 2014 and Sarmayeh Bank in 2015 and 2016.

In the third-place playoff earlier, Qatar's Al Arabi Sports Club, which took silver at the previous episode last year in Myanmar, avenged the first-round loss to Altay VC, beating the Kazakh side with a comeback 3-1 (22-25 25-13 25-20 25-19) win to grab bronze.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Al-Bahri Sport Club caused a major sensation after cruising past Beijing Baic Motor from China in four-setter 25-14 25-14 19-25 25-22 in the 5th-6th playoff. Al-Bahri took home the fifth place, with the Chinese side leaving the competition site with heads low in great despair following their below-par performance to finish a disappointing sixth in Vietnam.

The 7th-8th place playoff between Vietnam Sports Club and Taichung Commercial Bank from Chinese Taipei was held at the Nam Dinh Gymnasium, which saw the strong visitors come from behind to beat the host side with dramatic 3-1



(21-25 25-20 25-22 25-17) victory.

Taichung Commercial Bank, the Asian Men's Club winners at the 2015 edition on home soil, were led by devastating Liu Hung-Min, who scored 19 points including 17 kills from 34 attempts for Taichung Bank. Chen Chien-Chen proved to be an asset for the team to hand the team additional 18 points. Tu Thanh Thuan led the host team with 16 points.

At the awards presentation, Sarmayeh Bank stood proudly on the victory podium to receive the prestigious trophy and gold medals, with second-placed Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza and third-placed Al Arabi Sports Club claiming silver and bronze medals respectively. As the eventual winners, Samaryeh Bank have qualified for the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship as the Asia's representatives.

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

At Nam Dinh Gymnasium

7th-8th playoff: Taichung Commercial Bank (Chinese Taipei) b Vietnam Sports Club (Vietnam) 3-1 (21-25 25-20 25-22 25-17)

At Ninh Binh Gymnasium

5th-6th playoff: Al-Bahri Sport Club (Iraq) b Beijing

Baci Motor (China) 3-1 (25-14 25-14 19-25 25-22)

Bronze medal match: Al Arabi Sports Club (Qatar) b Altay VC (Kazakhstan) 3-1 (22-25 25-13 25-20 25-19)

Championship match: Sarmayeh Bank (Iran) b Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza (Japan) 3-0 (39-37 25-14 25-23)

FINAL RANKINGS

1. Sarmayeh Bank (Iran) – qualified for 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship
2. Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza (Japan)
3. Al Arabi Sports Club (Qatar)
4. Altay VC (Kazakhstan)
5. Al-Bahri Sport Club (Iraq)
6. Beijing Baic Motor (China)
7. Taichung Commercial Bank (Chinese Taipei)
8. Vietnam Sports Club (Vietnam)
9. Air Force VC (Thailand)
10. Canberra Heat (Australia)
11. Sri Lanka Ports Authority (Sri Lanka)
12. Maldivan Sports & Recreation Club (Maldives)
13. Yan Chai (Hong Kong)

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

BEST SETTER: Zygdalo Lukasz (Sarmayeh Bank, Iran)

BEST OUTSIDE SPIKER (Tetsu Yamachika (Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza, Japan)

2ND BEST OUTSIDE SPIKER: Milad Ebadipour Gharah (Sarmayeh Bank, Iran)

BEST MIDDLE BLOCKER: Mohammad Mousavi Eraghi Seyed (Sarmayeh Bank, Iran)

SECOND BEST MIDDLE BLOCKER: Damir Akimov (Altay, Kazakhstan)

BEST LIBERO: Koichiro Koga (Toyoda Gosei Trefuerza, Japan)

BEST OPPOSITE: Gyorgy Grozer (Al Arabi Sports Club, Qatar)

MVP: Shahram Mahmoudi (Sarmayeh Bank, Iran)

(Source: asianvolleyball)

Iran discover opponents at AFC Futsal Championship qualifiers

Iran learned their opponents at the AFC Futsal Championship 2018 qualifying round.

The official draw was held at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday, the-afc.com wrote.

Teams competing in the qualifiers were divided into four zones - East, ASEAN, South & Central and West where they were seeded within their zones based on the AFC Futsal Championship Uzbekistan 2016 ranking.

In the East Zone and Central & South Zone, seven teams from each zone were drawn into two groups of four and three teams respectively. The matches will be played from November 1 to 11 for the East Zone and October 13 to 22 for the Central & South Zones.

The ASEAN Football Federation Futsal Championship Vietnam 2017 on October 23 to November 3 will serve as the qualification competition for the ASEAN Zone with four slots up for grabs.

In the West Zone, eight teams were drawn into two groups of four teams. The Group Winners and Runners-up from each group will qualify for the 2018 AFC Futsal Championship on February 6 to 18. Sixteen teams will compete in the 2018 AFC Futsal Championship.

The Islamic Republic of Iran emerged Champion in the 2016 AFC Futsal Championship with Uzbekistan the Runner-up while Thailand and Vietnam finished third and fourth respectively.

DRAW RESULT

East Zone

Group A: A1 Japan A2 Chinese Taipei A3 Macau A4 Mongolia

Group B: B1 China PR B2 Korea Republic B3 Hong Kong

South & Central Zone

Group A: A1 Uzbekistan A2 Kyrgyz Republic A3 Turkmen-

istan A4 Nepal

Group B: B1 Islamic Republic of Iran B2 Tajikistan B3 Af-

ghanistan

West Zone

Group A: A1 Iraq A2 Saudi Arabia A3 United Arab Emir-

ates A4 Bahrain

Group B: B1 Qatar B2 Lebanon B3 Jordan B4 Syria

(Source: AFC)

Indonesia withdraw from 2023 AFC Asian Cup bid

The Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI) have withdrawn from the bidding process for the hosting of the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

China PR, Korea Republic and Thailand are the three remaining countries bidding to host Asian football's premier event in 2023. Subsequent to Bidding Regulations issued to all Bidding Member Associations on April 3, 2017, the AFC will now organize a Bid Workshop for the AFC Asian Cup 2023 on July 12 and 13, 2017 in the AFC House, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The 2018 AFC Congress will decide on the host country in accordance with the voting procedure set out in the AFC Statutes.

(Source: AFC)

Haddadi claims gold at Asian Athletic Championships

Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Haddadi won a gold medal at the 22nd Asian Athletics Championships on Thursday.

The Iranian won the gold medal with a best throw of 64.54m while Malaysia's Muhammad Irfan took the silver with 60.96m.

The bronze medal went to Vikas Gowda from India bronze with a best effort of 60.81m.

"After the 2016 Olympic Games, I underwent surgery three times. I am happy due to winning the gold medal in the Asian Championships and I hope to win the gold medal in the world championships," Haddadi said.

The 2017 Asian Athletics Championships are the 22nd edition of the Asian Athletics Championships. It is underway from 6 July to 9 July 2017 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, India.

(Source: Tasnim)

Azmoun among five stars who shone at the AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers

Sardar Azmoun from Iran is among the five stars who shone at the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers.

The 2018 AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers kicks off in under a fortnight, and Asia's young elite will be taking center stage, hoping to help their nations to glory.

With 40 teams, from West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, ASEAN and East Asia, there are some superbly talented young players set to strut their stuff, many of whom have already been capped at senior international level or are key players at club level.

We look back at five of the continent's current stars who appeared in the previous two editions of qualifying for the AFC U-23 Championship (formerly known as the AFC U-22 Championship) and excelled.

Sardar Azmoun, Islamic Republic of Iran

Now a star and first-choice striker of Iran's senior national team, Azmoun was part of an U-23 Iran side that was joint-top scorers in qualifying for the 2016 AFC U-23 Championship.

The young Team Melli netted 15 times in qualifying for Qatar 2016 and the then 20-year-old Azmoun – who had already shown his potential at the 2015 AFC Asian Cup in Australia – was in fine form, netting four times.

Azmoun was not among the players at the 2016 finals – by then Team Melli's starting center-forward – but he played a key role in helping his U-23 team-mates secure their place.

(Source: AFC)

“The Skater” scoops awards at Isfahan intl. film festival

A R T TEHRAN — “The d e s k Skater” by FereyduN Najafi won six awards in several categories including best film at the 30th International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan on Thursday.

“The Skater” tells the story of a boy from Kuhrang who faces problems on his way to take a little ibex to a tribal ritual in a snowy, remote region in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province.

The film that was screened in the international and national competition sections also won the Golden Butterfly for best director.

Amir-Reza Faramrzi was crowned best actor for the portrayal of the boy in “The Skater” in the international section. He also won the best actor award in the national section.

In the national section, the film also received several awards including the awards for best film and best director.

Winners of other sections were also honored at the ceremony.

The Golden Butterfly for best director of an animated film was presented to “Chieri and Cherry” by Makoto Nakamura from Japan, while “Long Way North” by Remi Chaye from France was named best animated film.

Celeste Holsheimer, actress of “The Day My Father Became a Bush” directed by Nicole van Kilsdonk from the Netherlands received the best actress award in the international section.

The award for best screenwriter was



Amir-Reza Faramrzi accepts the award for best actor for his role in “The Skater” during the closing ceremony of the 30th International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan on July 6, 2017.

presented to Jytte-Merle Böhrnsen and Natja Brunckhorst for their collaboration on “Mountain Miracle - An Unexpected Friendship” by German director Amelie Rennet.

“Are You a Volleyball?” by

Mohammad Bakhshi was picked as best short film in the international section.

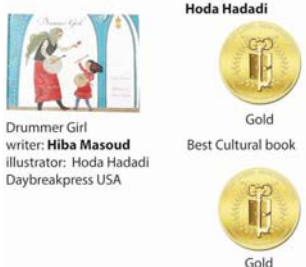
The winners were honored during a special ceremony attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza

Salehi-Amiri and a large number of cineastes and children.

The 30th International Film Festival for Children and Youth ran in the central Iranian city from June 30 to July 6.

Illustrator Hoda Haddadi honored at Literary Classics Intl. Book Awards

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian illustrator Hoda Haddadi won the gold medal for best illustrator at the Literary Classics International Book Awards, a U.S. literary honor that is presented to promote children’s literature.



Haddadi won the award for her illustrations for “Drummer Girl”, a book written by Pakistani author Hiba Masood, the organizers announced on their official website.

Published by Daybreak Press in the U.S., the book tells the story of a young girl named Najma, who wakes up the fasting people for the pre-dawn meal during Ramadan by beating a drum.

The book also received the gold medal for the best cultural book and the Literary Classics Seal of Approval.

The award ceremony will be held during September in Rapid City, South Dakota.

NEWS IN BRIEF



“Dark Places” at Iranian bookstores

A R T TEHRAN — American writer Gillian Flynn’s 2009 novel “Dark Places” has recently been published by Chatrang Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Mehdi Fayyazikia, the book is about Libby Day, a young woman who was the witness of the murders of her two sisters and mother when she was seven. She testified that her fifteen-year-old brother, Ben, was the killer.

Now, 25 years after the crime, Libby, in need of money, meets with a group of amateur investigators who believe that her brother is innocent.

WHAT’S IN ART GALLERIES

Photo

■ Photos by Mitra Torabi are on display in an exhibition at Atashzad Gallery.



The exhibit named “Life Melody” will run until July 16 at the gallery located at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St., near Vanak Sq.

■ An exhibition of photos by Emad Dolati is currently underway at Behnam Daheshpur Gallery.



The exhibit titled “The Moment” has been organized to raise funds for people suffering from cancer.

The showcase will be running until July 12 at the gallery located at 13 Marmari Alley, off Masjedi Alley, Jabarian St. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

Painting



■ A collection of paintings by Mehdi Mohammadi is on display in an exhibition at Gallery No. 26.

The exhibit entitled “Double” will run until July 18 at the gallery that can be found at 26 Salmanpur-Zahir St., in the East Farmanieh neighborhood.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Mahdiah Doostvandi is currently underway at Elaheh Gallery.



The exhibit named “Transformation of the Mind of Modern Man” will be held until July 17 at the gallery located at 47 Golfam St., off Africa Ave.

Riccardo Muti praises Iranian musicians



Italian maestro Riccardo Muti conducts a joint concert by the Giovanile Luigi Cherubini Orchestra and the Tehran Symphony Orchestra at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on July 6, 2017. (IRNA/Abdollah Heidari)

A R T TEHRAN — World-renowned Italian maestro Riccardo Muti praised Iranian musicians after conducting a joint concert by the Giovanile Luigi Cherubini Orchestra and the Tehran Symphony Orchestra in Tehran on Thursday.

“I want to thank everyone who helped us over the past few days to perform this concert,” he said at the concert held at Vahdat Hall.

“I’m very glad to collaborate with the Iranian musicians in performing pieces by the Italian composer [Giuseppe Verdi] and I’m very impressed by the performance,” he added.

“Since Iran and Italy enjoy rich ancient

civilizations, we can use music to bridge between the two civilizations,” he noted.

A large number of officials and diplomats attended the concert that will be also reprised at the Pala de André Center in the Italian city of Ravenna tonight.

“Muti’s visit to Tehran was extremely valuable for us and I hope everything goes well at the joint performance in Italy,” said Tehran Symphony Orchestra conductor Shahrzad Rohani, who invited Muti to Tehran.

The orchestras also performed the national anthems of Iran and Italy at the beginning of the concert. Rohani called it the best performance of Iran’s national anthem that he has ever heard.

Czech orchestra of disabled musicians gets world attention

PRAGUE (AP) — It’s an unusual orchestra, one that has played in London, Madrid, Moscow and Jerusalem. Its next stops are New York, Washington and Chicago.

The Tap Tap, created 18 years ago to give students at a renowned school for the disabled in Prague an extracurricular activity, has become a major musical operation that has drawn millions of fans, first at home and gradually abroad.

You can’t tell from its professional, typically rhythmic sound that many of the musicians are in wheelchairs with serious disabilities. And that’s just what its director wants.

Band leader Simon Ornest believes that often the disabled aren’t challenged enough and people tend to be too solicitous of them.

“My goal from the very start was not to do it as a therapy but as a band with everything that it could involve,” Ornest said. “(Those) around 18 to 20 years old are confronted in our band for the first time with a situation where we really want something from them. We insist on it.”

Ornest said he had a feeling the concept was viable but has been astounded at its success.

“I wouldn’t believe it would be possible to develop it as we have done. It’s an elaborate system with hard work behind it, unexpectedly hard work,” he said.

He said the band’s strength is based on its two



In this picture taken on Thursday, Feb. 23, 2017, members of the Tap Tap orchestra perform during a charity concert in Prague Czech Republic. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

essential roles.

“We come on time and we do what we promised among ourselves to do. It’s a pretty good basis for any teamwork,” he said.

In the beginning, The Tap Tap started with cover versions of their favorite songs. Today it produces music of its own, with help from local musicians, and lyrics that target the world of the disabled.

“We try to sing about the people with disabilities in a sensitive but also humorous way,” Ornest said.

Their recent hit, “The Bus Director” is about a bus driver who prevents a disabled man from boarding the bus with his bicycle. The song has had over 6.9 million views on YouTube - quite an accomplishment

Ministry of Communications supports Iranian game developers

A R T TEHRAN — Iran’s Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has supported national game design companies over the past year, minister Mahmud Vaezi said on Friday.

He made the remarks during his visit to the Tehran Game Convention (TGC) underway at the IIRB International Conference Hall.

“Last year, the ministry and Iran’s National Foundation for Computer Games came to an agreement to support the companies and game developers with a low-interest loan administered by the foundation,” Vaezi said.

“Over the past year, the ministry has dedicated a loan of 50 billion rials (over \$1,320,000) to the companies,” he added.

“Since we do not have the detailed knowledge to choose the companies, we trusted the NCFG to allocate funds under the loan and will continue supporting the companies in the future,” he added.

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri, also visiting the two-day exhibit on Friday, said that he is proud to see a number of young game developers at the exhibit.

“I feel proud to see this large number of youth and these young people are a source of hope. Computer games are not well known in the country and we need to introduce this potential to the society,” he said.



Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mahmud Vaezi talks to reporters during a visit to the Tehran Game Convention (TGC) at the IIRB International Conference Hall on July 7, 2017.

“We feel responsible for removing the financial problems of these young developers so that they can have a better chance to flourish,” he said.

A jury including 21 game developers from some international companies will honor top Iranian computer games of the year today.

Samuel Gatte from Bandai Namco, Phil Elliot from Square Enix, Victoire Fouquet from Orange, Pawel Ksiazek from Cenega and Adam Wroblewski from Muve are among the jury members.

Also included are Martine Spaans from Tamalaki, Robert Pontow from Active Gaming Media, Sylvain Cunzi from Next Games and Wolfgang Walk from Walk Game Productions.

NCFG has organized the Tehran Game Convention in collaboration with the Game Connection, a major international exhibition of computers games in Paris.

for a song sung in Czech in a country of only 10 million.

“At the beginning, people were more curious about what we are, about what the disabled can perform,” said Jana Augustinova, a The Tap Tap singer. “And then (came) pity, wonder. Now, we have fans as any other band. They like our music and they don’t consider us a band of disabled kids but as a real band.”

Today, the 20-member ensemble plays about 60 concerts a year and has been preforming a musical at the National Theatre in Prague. Despite all the difficulties of going on the road, The Tap Tap has played a number of European capitals. This year it is crossing the Atlantic to put on concerts in New York City, Washington D.C. and Chicago.

The orchestra’s next project for next year is to perform in Czech prisons together with inmates in concerts that will be broadcast live by Czech public television.

“What the people just released from prison and the disabled have in common is that the public doesn’t expect much from them,” Ornest said.

Ladislav Angelovic, the band’s master of ceremonies, said The Tap Tap is ready to face a whole new level of challenges.

“We started as an extracurricular activity and it got out of our hands a bit,” he said. “In fact, we are a professional ensemble now.”