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UN renews support for nuclear deal



Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, briefs the Security Council on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on June 29, 2017.

Zarif meets French president

FM submits Rouhani's written message to Macron

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who was on a five-day trip to Europe met Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and the newly-elected French President Emmanuel Macron among other top officials from the two countries.

Zarif held talks with Macron in Elysee Palace on Friday and submitted Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's written message to him.

Macron and Zarif also discussed regional, international issues as well as bilateral relationship.

On Thursday, Zarif also held a meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. During the meeting Zarif called for expanding banking relations between the two countries. Iran is seeking closer ties with France in various areas especially economy, Zarif stated.

Economic relations between Tehran and Paris have greatly improved since the nuclear deal between Iran and great powers including France went into force.

The July 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into force in January 2016. **→2**

ISIL 'state of falsehood' came to end: Iraqi PM

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has announced an end to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group's "state of falsehood" following the recapture of the historical Grand al-Nuri Mosque at the heart of the city of Mosul.

"The return of al-Nuri Mosque and al-Hadba minaret to the fold of the nation marks the end of the Daesh (ISIL) state of falsehood," Abadi said in a statement on Thursday.

Iraqi forces, he said, would continue to hunt ISIL elements "to kill them and detain them, down to the last one."

The Iraqi army recaptured the venue of the iconic mosque on Thursday, with the country's state TV implying the liberation of the city, which has

been under the control of the terrorist group since 2014.

"Their fictitious state has fallen," an Iraqi military spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Rasool told state TV.

Earlier, the Iraqi military announced the news as it continues to gain more advances in Mosul's Old City.

Shortly after the announcement, the Iraqi state television reported the fall of the "mythical state," in reference to ISIL's so-called self-claimed caliphate.

The TV said the recapture of the mosque means Mosul, as the terrorist group's command center, has been liberated, while Iraqi forces are in the middle of a mop-up operation to cleanse the city of remaining ISIL elements. **→13**

Iran on a fast-track to beating noncommunicable diseases: WHO

Since the 1960s, the Islamic Republic of Iran's urban population has tripled and life expectancies have risen. This, however, has increased people's exposure to tobacco, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity — among the main risk factors for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), primarily cardiovascular and lung diseases, cancer and diabetes.

Thankfully, advances led by the very highest levels of government, and backed by WHO, to reduce the devastating impacts of NCDs are progressing rapidly, supported by strong governance and collaboration across all sectors of society.

Primary health care

IraPEN is part of the national health transformation plan, launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, to provide universal health coverage, including access to NCD prevention and care, and mental health services.

Health workers show Iranians how to deal with their conditions, provide access to affordable medicines, and guidance on practicing healthy habits, like regular exercise and healthy diet to control her blood sugar.

IraPEN has been successfully piloted in Iran's four main districts and its nationwide scale-up has begun in at least one district per province.

Across Iran, and thanks to the health transformation plan, the 11 key essential medicines for treating NCDs are available in the public health system. Their import prices have also fallen (a relative reduction of 26.5%). (Almost all Iranians (over 96%) are covered by health insurance, including 10 million people from marginalized areas.

Joining the dots to beat NCDs

Cross-sectoral collaboration is central to WHO's integrated support to fast-track progress in several countries to achieve global NCD targets. These include reducing premature death from NCDs by 25% by 2025, and by one-third by 2030 in line with the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. Iran has scaled up its political commitment to the highest level to tackle NCDs. **→13**

Mohammed bin Salman is architect of sanctions on Qatar: Mehran Kamrava

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Mehran Kamrava, a professor of the Middle East Studies in Georgetown University of Doha, tells the Tehran Times that Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) is obviously the architect of sanctions against Qatar.

MBS was promoted to the position of Saudi crown prince by his father King Salman on June 21, replacing Mohammed bin Nayef (MBN) who was second in line to the throne. Kamrava also predicts that MBS as "a less refined diplomat" will adopt "a more assertive foreign policy" in the region.

Following is the text of the interview:

What are the reasons behind Saudi King's decision to depose the sitting crown prince and replace him with his son Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz?

A: Mohammed bin Salman's (MBS) powers have been clearly on the rise lately, and it is not surprising at all that he was appointed as the Crown Prince. He has been in charge of a number of very powerful institutions, and at

the same time the powers of Mohammed bin Naif (MBN) have been on the decline. Especially in light of the recent developments in relation to Qatar, it is obvious that they are the work of MBS, and that MBS is increasingly powerful. He is credited with being the main force behind many of the changes and reforms that have been implemented in recent years, and anecdotal evidence indicates that he is very popular among young Saudis. So the removal of MBN and his replacement with MBS is not at all surprising.

What might be the reaction of the supporters of Mohammed bin Naif who has been relieved of all his positions?

A: Nothing. Mohammed bin Naif's powers have been severely limited lately, and he hasn't really had a powerbase for the last couple of years. And the religious authorities have endorsed the changeover. This means that MBN and his supporters are completely marginalized and cannot display any negative reactions.

It is with Iran's help that Daesh is on its last breath: Larijani

POLITICS Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Larijani has said that it is with the help of Iran that Daesh is on its last breath in Iraq and Syria.

In an exclusive interview with CNN published on website on Thursday, he said that Daesh would have occupied Baghdad without Iran's help.

He also expressed disbelief at the "watered-down" version of U.S. President Donald

Trump's travel ban.

The new U.S. policy will ban all arrivals from Iran, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Yemen and Somalia for 90 days, if the new arrivals have no relationship with a person or entity in the United States.

"At the time when Iraq was being overrun by Daesh, by ISIS, did the United States make the slightest move in defense of it? Or was it the Iranian nation that rendered aid to the Iraqi nation

Can the reshuffle be considered a soft coup d'état with the support of the U.S. and the UAE?

A: It is obvious that the UAE and the U.S. support the rise of MBS. But I would not say that they necessarily supported this change, and I would not call it a soft coup d'état. These sorts of changes in the line of succession have happened many times in the past.

What might be the effect of such a major reshuffle on Saudi foreign policy, especially towards the region?

A: MBS is known for his tougher line against Iran, and now Qatar. He is also less experienced, and therefore a less refined diplomat, and so I think this will be reflected in a more assertive foreign policy by Saudi Arabia.

Is the reshuffle somehow related to Trump's recent trip to Riyadh?

A: It is obvious that Trump and his son-in-law Jared Kushner think highly of MBS and are close to him. But I think the changeover was in process before Trump's visit to Riyadh.

and Iraq government?" Larijani said.

He said "numerous Iranians" live in the U.S., and called on the American administration to provide proof that any of them has been involved in terrorism.

"I have spoken about this before, so many Iranians live in the United States, study in the United States, engage in business in the United States, which one of them have engaged in terrorism?" he asked. **→13**



New Yorkers hold rally after Trump's Muslim ban takes effect

The United States begins implementation of President Donald Trump's controversial travel ban on nationals from six Muslim majority countries despite a great deal of opposition to the plan.

The ban went into effect on Thursday night, after the Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration to go forward with it, handing a surprising victory to the maverick Republican president. **→3**

Iran's Qeshm Air starts Tehran-Brussels nonstop flights

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran's Qeshm Air on Tuesday launched its maiden weekly direct flight connecting Tehran to Brussels with a return leg set to be operated on the same date.

The single weekly service may be extended to two or three in the future, ISNA quoted the airline's CEO Mahmoud Shekarabi as saying on June 25.

Qeshm Air is using Airbus A319s on the roughly 4000 kilometers route that takes some six hours.

The private airline has sealed a deal with U.S. planemaker Boeing to buy 10 Boeing 737 MAX jets, Press TV reported earlier this month. The 737 MAX is equipped with the latest technologies that have given it the highest efficiency, reliability and passenger comfort in the single-aisle market.

Last November, Qeshm Air received its TCO (third country operator) license from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), announcing five flights to Europe, including one Tabriz-Hamburg, Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, Amsterdam, and Cologne were among the destinations, according to Air Journal.

Two other Iranian airlines, namely Mahan Air and Zagros Airlines, have recently launched new direct flights to Spain and Russia respectively in a bid to accelerate the pace of tourism growth in the country.

Refurbishing Iran's aviation industry is essential for tourism boom in the country that aims to lure 20 million foreign travelers annually by 2025.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Cleric hails IRGC for timely response to Daesh

POLITICS TEHRAN — Tehran's interim Friday prayers leader has lauded the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps for inflicting losses on Daesh in Deir Ezzor, Syria, in retaliation for the terrorist group's attacks in Tehran in early June.

Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani said, "The Guards' missile launch was timely; we hope that the terrorists and their sponsors will understand that Iran does not tolerate such acts of terror and will give them some firm response."



Rouhani congratulates liberation of Mosul

POLITICS TEHRAN — Liberation of Mosul after 3 years of occupation and violence promises better and brighter days for Iraqi people as well as all the countries in the region, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tweeted on Friday.

Also, in separate letters to Iraqi President Fuad Masum and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Rouhani congratulated the military advances in the Iraqi city.

He expressed hope that through joint efforts, the people and states of the Middle East would purge the entire region from terrorists.



Iran FM: Trump travel ban a 'shameful exhibition of blind hostility'

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian foreign minister has strongly opposed the resumption of U.S. President Donald Trump's travel ban.

"U.S. now bans Iranian grandmothers from seeing their grandchildren, in a truly shameful exhibition of blind hostility to all Iranians," Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Friday.

The U.S. administration set new criteria on Wednesday for visa applicants and refugees from six majority Muslim countries, including Iran, where grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, fiances and other extended family are not accepted as "close family."



Iran willing to help reconcile two Koreas: Larjani

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ali Larjani, the speaker of Iran's Majlis, on Thursday voiced Tehran's willingness to use its influence to help reconcile North and South Korea.

Attending a conference in South Korea, Larjani said the Islamic Republic supports dialogue between Seoul and Pyongyang, and is willing to use its ties with North Korea to help improve relations between the two Koreas.

According to Yonhap, addressing Seoul-based reporters, Larjani added, "We maintain that we should use our bilateral relations to resolve the problems."



August 5 set for Rouhani's presidential inauguration

POLITICS TEHRAN — The date of the presidential swearing-in ceremony at the parliament would be August 5, the official website of the Majlis announced on Friday.

Earlier a member of parliament, Behrouz Nemati had said that the ceremony was scheduled to be held on August 6 but it was changed.

Iranians on May 19 re-elected Hassan Rouhani as the country's president for a second term.

According to the Constitution, the president-elect needs to be endorsed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution before swearing-in.



Iran condemns chopper attack on Venezuela government buildings

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Ministry on Thursday condemned a helicopter attack on Venezuela's Supreme Court and Interior Ministry buildings.

Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi described peaceful dialogue between the government and the opposition without foreign interference as the best way for settling disputes, according to the ministry's website.

He added "illegal and violent" moves against the Latin American nation's administrative and legitimate organizations would only complicate the situation.

He warned that armed attacks will obstruct settlement of the tension.

UN Security Council renews support for nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — The United Nations Security Council on Thursday renewed support for Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, underscoring that Tehran has shown full commitment to the accord and the resolution supporting it.

Briefing the Security Council, Jeffery Feltman, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said: "The Secretary-General believes that the comprehensive and sustained implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) will guarantee that Iran's nuclear program remains exclusively peaceful, while allowing for transparency, monitoring and verification."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif welcomed the UN support, tweeting: "The UN & entire world say Iran is in full compliance with its commitments, but US visceral hatred of Iran compels it to deny the obvious."

The top Iranian diplomat also hailed Europe for their unflinching honoring of the nuclear accord, saying: "Excellent meetings with leaders in Berlin, Rome & Paris. Despite US reckless hostility, EU committed to #JCPOA 7 constructive engagement."

Zarif touched down in Tehran on Friday after a five-day trip to three European countries of Germany, Italy and France.

The nuclear deal was forged in July 2015 between Iran and six world powers of the U.S., China, Russia, England, France and Germany after nearly two years of high-level negotiations.

The accord, which took force on January 16, 2016, removed all nuclear-related sanctions imposed on Iran in reward for it scaling back its nuclear activities.

Iran says its nuclear program has been peaceful from the outset, and rejects ever having thought of developing atomic weapons.

"It will also provide Iran with an opportu-



nity for greater engagement with the international community and assist in increasing its trade and economic relations [as well as] bring forth to a satisfactory conclusion the consideration of the Iranian nuclear issue by the Council," Feltman added.

Feltman told the 15-member body that the Secretary-General had not received any report, nor is he aware of any open source information regarding the supply, sale or transfer to Iran of nuclear-related items undertaken contrary to the provisions of the resolution.

"The Secretary-General is hopeful that all participants will continue to make progress in the implementation of the agreement, and in the process secure its durability," he said.

Tehran has complained that it is not getting economic benefits it was promised in the nuclear deal, arguing that the U.S. has not acted in consistent with the constructive spirit of the accord.

Iran cites paragraphs 26-29 of the JCPOA, official name for the accord, which

urge the Western side, including the U.S., to act in "good faith" in implementing the agreement.

Paragraph 26 says: "The United States will make best efforts in good faith to sustain this JCPOA and to prevent interference with the realization of the full benefit by Iran of the sanctions lifting..."

Despite the call and ongoing backing from the other signatories, Washington is critical of the accord.

Criticism launched at the deal by the Trump administration is unsubstantiated as since January 2016, the IAEA has verified on six separate occasions that Iran is fulfilling its JCPOA obligations.

In a statement released by the U.S. State Department in April, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Iran was making good on its commitment under the agreement, but added that President Donald Trump has ordered a review of the deal.

The review is due July 18, when President Trump is to extend six-month sanctions waivers.

Zarif meets French president



Zarif shakes hands with French President Macron (R)

1 → The Iranian foreign minister said that implementation of the nuclear deal benefits all.

For his part, Le Drian expressed support for implementation of the nuclear agreement. After his meeting with Zarif, Le Drian tweeted that he will follow the path of dialogue with Iran.

Zarif also held a separate meeting with Gerard Larcher, the president of the French Senate.

Larcher said France attaches great importance to

ties with Iran and is willing to have "continuous political consultations" with it.

Zarif who started his tour of Europe on Monday first visited Germany, where he addressed the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and held talks with German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Federal Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schauble.

■ Talks with Italian PM

After concluding his visit to Germany, Zarif headed to Rome, Italy, holding talks on bilateral relations with Prime Minister Gentiloni on Wednesday.

In a separate meeting with President of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy Laura Boldrini, Iran's chief diplomat called for ways to expand relations.

Zarif invited Boldrini to visit Iran.

He also met separately with Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano.

Alfano said the JCPOA benefits international stability and expressed support for full implementation of the international deal.

He also said Italy seeks to expand relations with Tehran.

President Rouhani visited Italy and France



Zarif meets Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni (R)

immediately for the announcement of the lifting of sanctions against Iran in January 2016.

The main goal of Rouhani's tour to Rome and Paris was to promote a stronger economic relationship between Iran and the European Union. During his visit to Rome, Iran and Italy signed contracts with a total value of \$18 billion. While in Paris, Rouhani also signed a contract to purchase about 100 Airbus planes.

Saudi Arabia releases 7 Iranian fishermen

POLITICS TEHRAN — Saudi Arabia has released seven Iranian fishermen, Iran's Arabic-language television network Al Alam reported on Thursday, giving hope for the freeing of at least ten more inmates in the country.

The report said the fishermen, in jail for over a year, had been handed over to Iran.

Confirming the release, Iran's foreign ministry declined to comment further.

Majid Babakhani, a border official with Iran's Interior Ministry, affirmed the news, Fars news agency reported.

The development comes after Iran demanded Saudi Arabia immediately free three Iranian fishermen who were detained by the Saudi navy in mid-June, saying their boats were pushed off course by waves.

Saudi coastguard officers opened fire on the fishing boats in the Persian Gulf, killing a fisherman.

Saudi Arabia's information ministry claimed that the arrestees were members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) who were trying to approach the kingdom's offshore Marjan oilfield for sabotage purposes.

"This was one of three vessels which were intercepted by Saudi forces. It was captured with the three men on board,

the other two escaped," a statement from the ministry's center for international communications said.

"The three captured members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard are now being questioned by Saudi authorities," it said, citing a Saudi official.

The statement was rejected by the IRGC as an "outright lie."

Last week, the Iranian Shargh paper published interviews with families of a number of fishermen held in Saudi Arabia, putting the number of inmates in the country at 18.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have no relations since the storming of the Saudi embassy in Tehran by an angry mob in January 2016 who objected to the Saudi execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, a Shiite cleric.

Relations between the two are at their most tense in years. Riyadh, along with other Arab governments, has severed ties with Qatar, citing its support of Iran as one of the main reasons for the move.

Also, in Syria, Tehran and Riyadh support opposite sides.

Foreign mediation has failed to lower tensions. Possibly the release has been brokered by Iraq, whose Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi took formal visits to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran on June 18-20.

Iran says U.S., its allies 'root causes' of human trafficking

POLITICS TEHRAN — Reacting to a recent human trafficking report by the U.S., Iran said on Wednesday that Washington and its allies are the "root causes" of the phenomenon.

"The root causes of human trafficking lie in unilateral, interventionist and aggressive policies as well as the wars of attrition, terrorism and ethnic cleansing in which the military and security forces of America and some of its allies are involved," a note carried on the official website of Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

The comments follow a report evaluating the U.S. Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report on Tuesday, June 27.

The report places Iran, alongside with China, Russia, North Korea and Syria among others, on "Tier 3", which the report says are "The governments of countries that do not fully meet the TVPAs (the Trafficking Victims Protection Act) minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so."

Iran was among "Tier 3" countries in the 2016 report, as well.

Governments of countries on Tier 3 may be subject to certain restrictions on assistance, whereby the U.S. president may determine not to provide U.S.

government non-humanitarian, nontrade-related foreign assistance.

Denouncing "the groundless accusations", the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi cited legislative moves by the country's parliament (Majlis) to address the issue.

The report comes "at a time when the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with Islamic teachings, has one of the most modern constitutions in terms of respecting human dignity, and the Iranian parliament has also approved a law on fighting human trafficking in all shapes and forms, and ratified punishments for it."

Qassemi further said the international community expects those behind anti-human policies which have caused and fuelled human trafficking in the world to be identified and dealt with.

"Undoubtedly, the U.S. government is responsible in this regard, and cannot shirk its responsibility for that by playing blame games and leveling unfounded and false accusations against other countries," Qassemi added.

Since inauguration of the Trump administration, Iran and the U.S. have been trading barbs over diverse issues.

Two weeks ago, Iran's Foreign Ministry said "confusion" was a major component of Washington's foreign policy under President Donald Trump.

Saudi-led bloc's demands unreasonable: Qatar

Demand for Qatar to close down al-Jazeera 'unacceptable': UN

Qatar says the demands submitted by the House of Saud regime-led bloc to Doha as a condition to lift their boycott on the country are impossible to be met because of their untrue nature.

Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt imposed a trade and diplomatic embargo on Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism.

They presented Qatar with a list of 13 wide-ranging demands and gave it 10 days to comply with them or face unspecified consequences.

The demands include closing the broadcaster Al Jazeera, removing Turkish troops from Qatar's soil, scaling back cooperation with Iran, expelling members of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and ending ties with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood movement.

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said on Thursday that his country was ready to discuss "legitimate issues" with the Saudi regime-led alliance, but some of the demands were not reasonable.

"We cannot sever links with so-called ISIL (Daesh), al-Qaeda and ... Hezbollah because no such links exist," he said in a statement.

Doha, he added, cannot expel IRGC members "because there are none in Qatar."

Since it was impossible for Doha to stop doing things it had never been doing, "we are left to conclude that the purpose of the ultimatum was not to address the issues listed, but to pressure Qatar to surrender its sovereignty. This is something we will not do," the top Qatari diplomat further emphasized.

Qatari rights group suing Saudi regime

Separately on Thursday, informed sources said Qatar's National Human Rights Commission (QNHR) was hiring Lalive, a Swiss law firm, to help seek compensation for citizens affected by Saudi sanctions.



They also noted that the firm was finalizing an agreement with the QNHR over the issue and that the deal will be announced on Saturday.

"The plan is to help Qataris pursue legal action against Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which cut ties with Qatar this month," said one of the sources.

The development came one day after QNHR Chairman Ali al-Marrisaïd said his organization would pursue compensation claims in courts in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain as well as in Europe.

Qatar should decide: Egypt

In another development on Thursday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Hassan Shoukry said the ball was in the Qatar

court, adding that it was time for Doha to decide.

"Qatar must choose clearly and without any ambiguity, whether to be a party that protects and safeguards the Arab national security, as well as maintains the stability and capabilities of the Arab countries, or to continue its failed attempt to destabilize the region, undermine the Arab national security in favor of external powers or rogue groups," Middle East News Agency quoted Shoukry as saying.

UN: 'unacceptable' demand

Meanwhile, the United Nations human rights chief said on Friday a demand by Saudi Arabia and three other Arab nations for Qatar to close down its

al-Jazeera TV channel is an "unacceptable attack" on the right to freedoms of expression and opinion.

UN High Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein is "extremely concerned by the demand that Qatar close down the Al Jazeera network, as well as other affiliated media outlets," his spokesman Rupert Colville told a news briefing.

"Whether or not you watch it, like it, or agree with its editorial standpoints, Al Jazeera's Arabic and English channels are legitimate, and have many millions of viewers. The demand that they be summarily closed down is, in our view, an unacceptable attack on the right to freedom of expression and opinion," Colville said. (Source: agencies)

China 'outraged' by \$1.42 billion planned U.S. arms sales to Taiwan

China urged the United States to revoke immediately its "wrong decision" to sell Taiwan \$1.42 billion worth of arms, saying it contradicted a "consensus" President Xi Jinping reached with his counterpart, Donald Trump, in talks in April in Florida.

The sales would send a very wrong message to "Taiwan independence" forces, China's embassy in Washington said in a statement. A U.S. State Department spokeswoman said on Thursday the administration had told Congress of seven proposed sales to Taiwan, the first under the Trump administration.

"The Chinese government and Chinese people have every right to be outraged," the embassy said.

China regards self-ruled Taiwan as a wayward province and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under its control. China's Nationalists fled to the island after losing the civil war with China's Communists in 1949.

The United States is the sole arms supplier to Taiwan. "The wrong move of the U.S. side runs counter to the consensus reached by the two presidents in and the positive development momentum of the China-U.S. relationship," the embassy said.

China's Defense Ministry said Taiwan was the "most important, most sensitive core issue in Sino-U.S. ties," warning the United States to end such sales to avoid fur-



ther damaging peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Trump was critical of China during his successful 2016 presidential campaign but his meeting at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida with Xi raised hopes for warmer relations.

Trump later played up his personal relationship with Xi, calling him a "good man," and stressed the need for China's help in reining in a defiant North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and missiles.

China's anger over the U.S. plan to supply Taiwan with weapons risks undermining Trump's attempts to press China to help on North Korea.

The proposed U.S. package for Taiwan includes technical support for early warning radar, high speed anti-radiation missiles, torpedoes and missile components.

Beijing's relationship with Taiwan has been frosty since President Tsai Ing-wen took power in Taipei last year. Tsai leads an independence-leaning party that refuses to recognize Beijing's "one China" policy.

Tsai's office said on Friday the planned sales increased Taiwan's confidence and ability to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Asked about the sales at an event on Thursday evening in Washington, Chinese Ambassador Cui Tiankai said the United States was "incorrigible" when it came to Taiwan, the official Chinese Communist Party People's Daily newspaper reported on its website.

"But we should still continue to instruct (them) and continue advancing on the right track of China-U.S. relations because this is what truly fits for both countries' long term interests," the paper quoted Cui as saying.

The sales, which require congressional approval, would be the first since a \$1.83 billion sale that former President Barack Obama announced in December 2015, also to China's dismay.

The previous package included two navy frigates in addition to anti-tank missiles and amphibious attack vehicles. (Source: Reuters)

Women, children returning from ISIL warzones could pose threats: EU

A senior European Union judiciary official warns that women and children related to Middle East-based Takfiri terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh), are increasingly returning to their home countries in Europe, with some of them posing security threats to their homeland.

In a report to the European Parliament on Thursday, Eurojust President Michele Coninx raised concerns over a "new trend" of females and juveniles heading from Middle East war zones back to European countries.

"We see that females and young children are coming back to Europe and they need special attention," said Coninx.

There have been growing concerns among European officials as Takfiri ISIL terrorists, many of them European nationals, are increasingly losing ground in Iraq and Syria amid army advances there.

The former Belgian prosecutor further said the fact that an individual returning from ISIL-held areas is a woman or child does not mean the person can-



not pose a security risk.

"It is not because you are a child or because you are a female that you are not dangerous. If you have the terrorist intent, and the capacity, and if you have both at the same time, you constitute a danger," said Coninx.

"Killing machines" could be among those returning from ISIL-controlled ter-

ritories, Coninx said, adding that they "must also be taken care of in the best possible way."

Coninx warned that some women returning to Europe from Middle East conflict zones, who had a criminal or terror-related record, were potentially "super dangerous."

However, the situation with the mil-

itants' children was more sensitive and required special consideration, Coninx explained.

"Minors coming back as victims must be taken care of in a very well adapted way," Coninx said.

Relocation of male ISIL terrorists

In past months, the ISIL terrorist organization has suffered heavy losses in its main strongholds in Iraq and Syria, Mosul and Raqqa, respectively.

Coninx said despite ISIL's defeat in the Middle East, the group's males were not accompanying the women and children heading to Europe.

The rates of ISIL male terrorists returning from the Middle East conflict zone to Europe "do not seem to be increasing," Coninx said.

Male ISIL terrorists "are going to be relocated in the war zones and there will be shifts from Syria, Iraq to other regions in the neighborhood," Coninx said.

Officials estimate some 5,000 European nationals have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join the ISIL Takfiris and other extremist groups. (Source: Press TV)

Trump's controversial travel ban comes into effect

1 → The Supreme Court on Monday narrowed the scope of lower court rulings that blocked Trump's Muslim ban from taking effect nationwide, and also agreed to hear the administration's appeal in these cases. The ban would affect people from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The court, however, granted the government's emergency request to put the presidential decree into effect immediately while the legal battle continues.

According to the ruling, citizens of the six countries who do not have a "bona fide" relationship with a person or entity in America would be denied entry, but people who can prove they have a relationship to a person or entity inside the U.S. will be permitted to travel to the country.

The justices said that the travel ban is in effect "with respect to foreign nationals who lack any bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States."

This means people who do not have close family or business relationships in America could be denied visas and barred entry.

"We expect business as usual at the ports of entry starting at 8 pm tonight," a Department of Homeland Security official said on Thursday. "Our people are well prepared for this."

Hawaii asks court to clarify travel ban ruling

Elsewhere, moments before the ban began at 20:00 Washington time, the state of Hawaii had asked a federal judge for clarification regarding the Supreme Court ruling, arguing that the Trump administration had interpreted the court's decision too narrowly.

Hawaii accused the federal government of attempting to violate the Supreme Court's instructions by improperly excluding people who actually have a close family relationship in the U.S.

According to the U.S. government, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces are not considered to be "bona fide" relations.

Trump issued the revised travel ban on March 6 after his initial directive signed in January was blocked by a federal judge in Washington state and upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit in San Francisco, California.

However, the revised order was also blocked by federal judges in the states of Hawaii and Maryland and upheld by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia.

New Yorkers hold rally after Trump's Muslim ban takes effect

Meantime, hundreds of people have descended upon Union Square in New York City to protest against Trump's travel ban that came into effect on Thursday.

Protesters were gathering in Union Square Park at 5:30 pm to protest what they call "Trump's Muslim Ban 3.0."

Organizers also attended a town hall meeting on Muslims Thursday night.

After five months of bitter legal squabbling, Trump's revised travel ban took effect on Thursday after the Supreme Court allowed the administration to go forward with the implementation.

The U.S. State Department has announced new criteria for visa applicants from six Muslim-majority countries. (Source: agencies)

New batch of Turkish troops arrives in Qatar

Qatar's ministry of defense has announced the arrival of a new group of Turkish armed forces to the military base where Turkey began its training mission last week.

The forces are set to take part in joint exercises within the framework of a defense agreement signed between Doha and Ankara aimed at raising Qatar's defense capabilities, supporting "counter-terror" efforts, and maintaining security and stability in the region.

Khalid bin Mohammed al-Attiyah arrived on Thursday to Ankara where he is scheduled to meet with his Turkish counterpart Fikri Ishik as well as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Turkey's parliament on June 8 approved 2015 deal with Qatar aimed at strengthening military cooperation between the two states, which gave Turkey the right to establish military bases in Qatar and deploy military forces.

The deal's approval came three days after the House of Saud regime and other Arab states severed diplomatic ties with Qatar over allegations that it supports "terrorism" and is too close to Iran - charges Doha has repeatedly denied.

Five armored vehicles and 23 military Turkish military personnel arrived to Doha on June 18. At the time, Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper reported there were already at least 88 Turkish soldiers in Qatar.

The number of Turkish soldiers sent to the Persian Gulf state could eventually reach 1,000, Turkish daily Hurriyet reported, adding that an air force contingent was also envisaged.

Joint exercises were expected to start after the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

The Turkish military base in Qatar is a first for Turkey in an Arab state. (Source: Al Jazeera)

Myanmar to deny entry to UN staffers investigating plight of Rohingya Muslims

Myanmar says it will refuse entry to the members of a United Nations fact-finding mission tasked with investigating allegations of crimes by Myanmar's security forces against Rohingya Muslims.

Kyaw Zeya, a permanent secretary at Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the government would not grant visas to the UN staffers.

"If they are going to send someone with regards to the fact-finding mission, then there's no reason for us to let them come," he said. "Our missions worldwide are advised accordingly."

The government in the capital, Naypyidaw, which is practically led by Aung San Suu Kyi, had already said it would not cooperate with a UN mission in the country.

The United Nations Human Rights Council agreed in March to send an international fact-finding mission to Myanmar and called on Suu Kyi to "fully cooperate." During a trip to Sweden this month, however, she claimed that the UN mission "would have created greater hostility between the different communities."

Myanmarese troops and police are accused of killing and raping Rohingya Muslims, who are denied citizenship in Myanmar and widely viewed as outsiders by the majority Buddhists. (Source: Press TV)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Tehran hosting 2 international exhibitions

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Two international exhibitions **d e s k** are being held concurrently at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) reported on Friday.

The 24th international exhibition of ceramic industry (Cerfair 2017) kicked off on June 30 with 170 Iranian and 40 foreign participants.

Companies from different countries like Italy, Spain, China, Switzerland, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, United Kingdom, USA, Bulgaria and Sweden are showcasing their latest products and achievements in the event.

Meanwhile, the 15th Kitchen, Bath, Sauna & Pool Industries & Equipment International Exhibition (K&B-S&P) is also underway with over 180 Iranian participants and 66 foreign exhibitors from different countries including South Korea, Turkey, Finland, China, France, Italy, Germany, Brazil, Spain and the Netherlands.

The four-day exhibits will wrap up on July 03.

Airbus CEO Enders to take control of plane sales in new shake-up

Airbus is launching a reorganization of its commercial aircraft sales operations in a move likely to focus fresh attention on a delicate balance of power at Europe's largest aerospace company, people familiar with the situation said.

From July, the globe-trotting sales team, best known for contesting leadership of the jetliner market with Boeing, will report directly to Airbus Chief Executive Tom Enders, bypassing commercial aircraft president Fabrice Bregier, the people said.



A spokesman for Airbus declined to comment.

The surprise move, announced by Enders at a management dinner on Thursday, is part of a wider effort to streamline the company by uniting the headquarters with its dominant civil planemaking business, giving substance to a recent internal merger.

But it is likely to raise questions about the coherence of the commercial planemaking operations and could revive speculation over the future of Frenchman Bregier, who has run the world's second-largest civil planemaker since 2012.

(Source: Reuters)

Japan's core CPI for May rises 0.4 percent on-year, rising for a fifth straight month

Japan's core consumer prices rose 0.4 percent in May from a year earlier, marking the fifth straight month of gains and offering the central bank some hope a strengthening economy will gradually lift inflation toward its ambitious 2 percent target.

But recent declines in oil costs and stubbornly slow wage growth could cloud the outlook and force the Bank of Japan next month to cut its rosy inflation projections yet again, some analysts say.

Separate data showed household spending fell 0.1 percent in May from a year earlier even as job availability was at its highest in 43 years, a sign that the tightening job market has yet to give a lasting boost to wages and consumption.

Japan's jobless rate unexpectedly rose to 3.1 percent in May, while the availability of jobs rose for the third straight month to reach the highest since February 1974, data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications showed.

The government said May's rise in the unemployment rate was the first increase since November last year and was due largely to workers resigning to seek better jobs and new entrants joining the labour market.

The rise in the core consumer price index (CPI), which includes oil products but excludes fresh food prices, followed a 0.3 percent gain in April and matched a median market forecast.

Core consumer prices in Tokyo, available a month before the nationwide data, were unchanged in June from a year earlier, government data showed on Friday, against a 0.2 percent gain projected in a Reuters poll.

Japan's economy expanded at an annualised 1.0 percent in the first quarter on robust exports and a boost from private consumption, prompting the BOJ to upgrade its economic assessment in April.

But consumer inflation remains subdued with companies wary of raising their prices for fear of scaring away cost-sensitive households, underscoring the challenge for the BOJ in driving up inflation to its 2 percent target.

The BOJ is set to upgrade its economic assessment again but cut its inflation forecast at a quarterly review of its projections in July, sources have told Reuters.

After three years of heavy asset buying failed to drive up inflation, the BOJ revamped its policy framework last year to one better suited for a long-term battle to beat deflation.

(Source: cnbc)

Linde resumes activity in Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Linde **d e s k** Group resumed its activities in Iranian market by granting its exclusive license to an Iranian company called Axon Machine Ariana, IRNA reported on Friday.

Attended by Linde's Chief Sales Officer Christophe Laustray, the event was celebrated on Thursday in Tehran.

"We are here once again and we will continue our activities in Iran both in good and bad times," Laustray said in the ceremony.

Linde was active in Iran before the West imposed sanctions on the country, collaborating with Iranian companies on several petrochemical projects.

According to the company directors, Linde is seeking a two digit market share in Iran since "Iran is a dynamic and escalating market in the region."

The company which is the world's largest industrial gas company by market share as well as revenue, also provides logistics and engineering services such as production of industrial vehicles, including forklift trucks.

After the implementation of nuclear deal (also known as JCPOA), Linde Group inaugurated its office in Tehran in a ceremony held in October 2016 with the presence of visiting German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel.



IFB market value witnesses 4% growth since late Mar.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The value **d e s k** of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), has increased four percent since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21), IRNA reported on Friday.

IFB value witnessed 0.7 percent rise in the week ended on Friday and its main index IFX closed the week at 910 points, with near one percent growth.

Fara Bourse could manage to attract five trillion rials (about \$133 million) of foreign investments during one year after the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal, known as JCPOA, in January 2016, according to IFB CEO Amir Hamooni.

Highlighting the ever-increasing trend of foreign investors' presence in IFB after nuclear deal implementation, Hamooni told IRNA in mid January that investors from Asia and Europe have entered IFB and purchased shares of Iranian companies, with which they used to cooperate during the sanction era.

The foreign investors are mainly from Germany, Persian Gulf littoral states and countries from eastern Asia, he added.

The announced amount of attracted foreign investment is not huge, IFB CEO underscored, so to increase the figure, it is vital to improve Iran's banking infrastructure, information technology, and regularly present transparent reports of Iranian companies' financial statements and data.

for May.

When talks do begin, the U.K. will lack leverage given it likely needs a deal more than its transatlantic partner. The U.S. might try to force Britain's financial services to sign up to Wall Street regulations and push the U.K. to open up industries such as health to American competition. It might also try to weaken the U.K.'s food standards. Fox's comments suggest May's government is still planning to withdraw from the EU's tariff-free customs union, which prevents trade accords with third parties. There has been speculation it may try to stay in the arrangement as part of a softer Brexit which would raise questions about Fox's job.

UK to start U.S. trade talks on July 24 in early Brexit test

The U.K. and U.S. will open negotiations over a post-Brexit trade agreement next month, posing an early test of Britain's ability to strike such deals and of its relationship with President Donald Trump.

"There are some very, very big markets that we will be able to take advantage of," U.K. Trade Secretary Liam Fox told BBC TV's "Question Time" program late Thursday. "I've got news for you -- that we are beginning our actual discussions on July 24."

Britain cannot formally sign trade deals with other countries until it leaves the European Union in March 2019, but can prepare the groundwork for them to be ratified soon after. Such accords are key to Prime Minister Theresa May's ability to deliver what she calls the "promise of Brexit."

The U.K. exports about 37 billion pounds (\$48 billion) more in goods and services to the U.S. than it imports, highlighting the importance of a deal for the British. After then-President Barack Obama last year warned the U.K. would be at the "back of the queue" for a trade pact



if it voted for Brexit, Trump has been warmer.

He told The Times in January that the U.S. is "gonna work very hard to get it done quickly and done properly." He subsequently told May that the U.K. would be able to continue to trade with the U.S. on at least the same terms it does now after Brexit.

Still, the Times reported in April that after talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Trump might ultimately prioritize talks with the EU. That would be a blow

"Ninety percent of global growth in the next 10 years will be outside Europe," said Fox. "If we as a country want to generate the wealth that we will need for all those things that everybody wants in terms of spending on public services, that growth is going to come from somewhere else."

(Source: Bloomberg)

Trump sanctions Chinese bank in bid to rein in North Korea

The Trump administration moved to block a Chinese bank with alleged illicit financial ties to North Korea from gaining access to the U.S. banking system.

In an effort to increase pressure on North Korea to curb its nuclear and ballistic missile program, the Treasury Department announced a series of sanctions and other measures. Among them: severing any financial ties U.S. banks may have with China's Bank of Dandong, which the administration claims acts as a pipeline to support alleged illicit North Korean financial activity.

"We will cut the money off to North Korea until they behave properly," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin at a White House briefing. He said the Chinese firm would not have any access to the U.S. financial system either "directly or indirectly" through U.S. and other foreign banks.

"It's the first bank that we've cut off," the secretary said. "We will continue to look at these actions and we will continue to roll out sanctions. We are committed to cutting off all illegal funds going to North Korea."

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Lu Kang objected to the decision, saying Friday that foreign countries should not sanction Chinese firms.

The Trump administration has been discussing with foreign counterparts -- in-

cluding Italy, Germany, Canada and Britain -- ways to use economic and diplomatic pressure to curb threats in North Korea and elsewhere.

Thursday's action is the first time the U.S. has applied its authority under the Patriot Act on a Chinese bank. In the past, it has imposed such special measures on financial institutions in Iran, Syria, and Lebanon.

The administration also slapped sanctions on two Chinese individuals and one Chinese company. In March, the U.S. took similar steps against several other Chinese businesses and individuals.

The latest move comes in response to North Korea's ongoing efforts to build missiles and its violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Washington has repeatedly urged China to exert more economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea. But Beijing has said its influence is limited.

President Trump has expressed signs of frustrations with the current approach.

"I wish we would have a little more help with respect to North Korea from China, but that doesn't seem to be working out," Trump said last week after tweeting that Chinese efforts to pressure North Korea have "not worked out."

Anthony Ruggiero, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democ-

racies, said the administration is "sending a message to China saying, 'Look, we are trying to work together but said you needed to do more.'"

Mnuchin quickly dispelled any questions that Thursday's decision was directed at China.

"We are in no way targeting China with these actions," Mnuchin said.

The Treasury secretary said the U.S. hopes China will "continue to work with us" to pressure North Korea. There are plans to hold talks with China and other countries at the upcoming G20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany next week on the issue, he said.

Moments before the sanctions were announced, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster told reporters that U.S. efforts should be about working with Beijing toward a common goal.

"It's not a question of pressuring China, it's a question of working with China to do more about this problem," said McMaster, who was aware of the upcoming sanctions announcement.

Experts have long predicted Trump and his advisers would eventually hit a wall -- just as past administrations have -- in their efforts to elicit stronger cooperation from the Chinese on the North Korean nuclear issue.

Pressed on whether the sanctions were

intended to send a signal to China ahead of the G20, Mnuchin insisted the U.S. is simply continuing its aggressive efforts to cut off North Korea's financing.

"Where we see illicit financing we will stop it," he said. "The message to everyone at the G20 is this is a serious issue, we're going to work with everybody and if there is illicit financing going on, we will cut it off from the U.S. financial system."

The latest actions come hours before Trump is set to meet with South Korea's new president Moon Jae-in at the White House. Both leaders are anxious to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile program, but have different ideas on how to reach that goal.

Traveling to Washington aboard Air Force One, President Moon said North Korea "must at least promise to a nuclear freeze for us to start taking serious measures for its denuclearization."

Ruggiero, a former senior Treasury official in the Office of Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes, said the administration's timing is "significant" ahead of Moon's visit.

"This becomes a line in the sand that leaves the idea for engagement with North Korea open for discussion. But when it comes to pressure, shows that the U.S. will do as much as it can," he said.

(Source: CNN Money)

Brightening economy sets euro up for strongest quarter since debt crisis

The euro came off yearly highs on Friday but was still set for its strongest quarter in six years as investors pile into the currency on a brightening euro zone economy and its implications for monetary policy in the bloc.

The single currency dropped 0.1 percent to trade at \$1.1426, but in the April-June quarter the euro has climbed over 7 percent, putting it on track for its biggest quarterly gain since January-March 2011. EUR=EBS

The euro shot to one-year highs after Tuesday's speech by European Central Bank President Mario Draghi bolstered expectations that a reduction in stimulus measures would be signaled as soon as September.

Though policymakers looked to play this down in the days that followed, investors appear convinced that economic strength will push them to end stimulus sooner rather than later.

"This is partly a response to Draghi's comments and also on the back of a euro zone economy that is firing on all cylinders and outperforming the rest of the



developed economies," said Investec economist Victoria Clarke.

Growth in the bloc outstripped that of the United States in the first quarter and set the stage for a strong 2017.

"It's at a different stage in the cycle as the U.S. so I do expect some of that to cool in the second half of the year, but the growth momentum doesn't seem to be going anywhere," said Clarke.

Money markets in the euro zone are fully pricing in

a rate rise from the ECB by July next year ECBWATCH.

Conversely, the dollar was on course for its worst quarter in seven years on Friday, recovering only marginally against major peers.

"Obviously there's a shift afoot. It really seems that there's some coordinated effort going on out here among the G10 central banks," said Stephen Innes, head of trading in Asia-Pacific for OANDA in Singapore, referring to the series of hawkish-sounding comments on monetary policy.

Bank of England Governor Mark Carney surprised many on Wednesday by conceding a rate hike was likely to be needed as the British economy came closer to running at full capacity.

Sterling GBP=D3 edged higher on Friday to \$1.301, adding to Thursday's 0.6 percent gain.

Two top policymakers at the Bank of Canada also suggested they might tighten monetary policy there as early as July.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran's July crude exports set to rise yr/yr: source

Iran's crude oil exports in July are set to be 1.86 million bpd, up 2 percent on a year ago, with 1.28 million bpd destined for Asia and 580,000 bpd to Europe, a person with knowledge of the country's tanker loading schedule said.

The biggest buyer China is set to load 658,000 bpd in July, the highest amount since last September and up 3 percent from June.

Total crude exports for July will fall 7 percent from this month's three-month high, mainly due to a decline in exports to Europe.

The country shipped 1.30 million bpd to Asia and 700,000 bpd to Europe this month.

The OPEC member has been raising oil production to recoup market share lost under Western sanctions to regional rivals such as Saudi Arabia. Its exports last year also showed a similar decline in July before recovering sharply from August.

Overall oil output was hovering at more than 3.9 million barrels per day (bpd) and is expected to reach 4 million bpd by March 2018, Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said this month.

Crude oil loadings from Iranian ports, excluding condensate from gas fields, will total 1.93 million bpd next month, with 2 million barrels of them being put into storage on tankers, according to the source.

Loading figures for condensate, an ultra-light crude, were not available for June and July.

India remained the second-biggest



buyer and is to load 395,000 bpd next month, down 15 percent on June, the source said.

India has been curbing Iranian oil imports in a possible retaliation for Tehran not awarding a gas field development to Indian companies. India's Iranian oil imports in May fell to their lowest since

June 2016.

Japan is scheduled to lift 134,000 bpd in July, up 34 percent from June and the highest since January. Loadings of crude for South Korea next month are to hit a four-month high of 97,000 bpd, up from 90,000 bpd this month.

In Europe, main buyer Turkey is lift-

ing 194,000 bpd next month, down 27 percent from June. Italy is loading nearly 100,000 bpd, down from 133,000 bpd this month.

Greece and Spain are each lifting nearly 65,000 bpd next month, little changed from June, the source added.

(Source: Reuters)

Crude oil prices firm, set for biggest weekly gain since mid-May

Crude oil futures on Friday were on track for their biggest weekly gain since mid-May, ending five weeks of losses with prices underpinned by a decline in U.S. output.

U.S. crude futures have added 5.1 percent this week, while benchmark Brent has gained 4.8 percent, marking the biggest rise for both markets since the week ending May 19.

U.S. crude was trading up 0.6 percent, or 27 cents, at \$45.20 a barrel at 0646 GMT on Friday, with Brent climbing 0.6 percent, or 30 cents, to \$47.72 a barrel.

"Oil prices received momentum from Wednesday's U.S. data and the market

rejected the lows that we saw. It has been a bullish week for the oil market," said Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at Sydney's CMC Markets.

"There are two key drivers. One is U.S. supply side response to low oil prices. We could see more gains if there is a further drop in oil output, and the other factor is a weaker U.S. dollar."

Data indicating a fall in U.S. production bolstered markets this week after crude prices hit a 10-month low last week in the face of a mounting supply glut.

U.S. crude output fell 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 9.3 million bpd last week, the steepest weekly fall since July 2016.

Meanwhile, the North Sea crude oil market is showing signs of long-lost strength, suggesting that some of the pessimism that has driven down oil futures and created a record bet against a price rise may be unjustified.

On Thursday, about 6 million barrels of North Sea Brent crude were being stored on ships, down from four-month highs of as many as 9 million last week, and trading sources said it seemed now refineries were starting to take in more cargoes.

In recent weeks, funds have been unloading long speculative positions, reducing bets on higher prices, while brokerag-

es including Goldman Sachs and Societe Generale have cut their 2017 forecasts for crude prices.

SocGen on Thursday estimated U.S. crude futures would average \$47.50 a barrel in the third quarter, down from previous expectations for \$55.

Global oil supplies remain ample despite output cuts of 1.8 million bpd by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers since January.

"The market's calls for further cuts from OPEC continue to be rejected by the oil group," ANZ said in a note.

(Source: Reuters)

Goldman sees oil staying lower without deeper OPEC cuts

OPEC may need to make deeper supply cuts to rebalance the oil market as booming production from Libya and Nigeria threatens to undercut the group's efforts, according to analysts at Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

Unexpected rebounds in those countries, which were exempted from OPEC's November deal to curb output, could offset inventory declines expected in the third quarter of 2017, according to a Goldman report by analysts Damien Courvalin and Jeff Currie released June 28. They lowered their three-month forecast for U.S. benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude to \$47.50 a barrel from \$55.

"This threatens to close the window of time for stocks to normalize before OPEC cuts end and raises the concerns that OPEC will then ramp up production to defend market share," Courvalin and Currie wrote. A ramp-up of shale drilling and slowing crude imports to China are also leaving more barrels in the market that need to clear by year's end.

Libya is pumping the most oil since 2013, with output currently above 900,000 barrels a day, according to an official at the National Oil Corp. Nigeria, meanwhile, has resumed exports at its Forcados terminal after a 15-month halt caused by sabotage.

In the U.S., rising rig counts suggest that shale production will keep growing by the time the OPEC deal expires. A majority of U.S. energy executives surveyed by the Dallas Fed said they don't see the market rebalancing until the second half of 2018 or 2019, in part driven by rising shale output.

Accelerating stockpile declines will require deeper cuts in the short term and a clear signal that OPEC will increase production in 2018, Courvalin and Currie wrote.

"The approach adopted so far by OPEC, akin to a central bank, has ultimately proved self-defeating by cutting too little but reassuring too much," they wrote. (Source: Bloomberg)

U.A.E. says OPEC doesn't plan to discuss deeper oil-output cuts

OPEC and its partners don't plan to discuss deeper oil-output cuts when they meet next month because they've already "done their part" to reduce bloated inventories, the United Arab Emirates energy minister said.

"There is no plan or talks" on further curbs, Suhail Al Mazrouei said in Paris, while attending an International Energy Agency conference. Increased demand in the third and fourth quarters will help to rebalance the market, he said.

Oil has given up almost all its gains since late last year, when OPEC and its allies, including Russia, agreed on output cuts to clear a global glut. Producers last month extended their accord through next March, though crude declined on concern the curbs aren't sufficient. Russia said Wednesday it isn't talking about deeper cuts, and the gathering on July 24 in St. Petersburg will focus on the "general market situation."

Stockpile depletion has been "a bit slower than expected," Al Mazrouei said. Nevertheless, "OPEC countries and non-OPEC countries who joined us have done their part. We are looking for others to do their part as well, and we are not worried about the market recovery." (Source: Bloomberg)

Crude slump wipes \$113 billion from oil drillers

Oil companies have spent three years slashing spending and firing workers to protect profits, only to find their hard work blown away as prices entered another bear market.

The MSCI World Energy Sector Index is heading for a second consecutive quarter of declines, mirroring the drop in crude. The 90 companies that make up the index, including giants like Exxon Mobil Corp. and Royal Dutch Shell Plc, have together lost \$113 billion in market value since the start of April, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

"The biggest companies are improving a lot operationally," said Iain Armstrong, an analyst at Brewin Dolphin Ltd, which owns shares in major energy producers. "But the

oil price will continue to drive the shares" and the outlook isn't great.

Energy companies started the year on a high note. They were the best performers on the MSCI World Index in 2016 after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies agreed to production cuts in December. However, the best first-quarter profit in years gave way to the realization that OPEC's historic deal wasn't eliminating the global supply glut as quickly as intended. Even an extension of the curbs until March 2018 couldn't stop prices heading for the biggest quarterly decline since 2015.

Brent crude, the global benchmark, has fallen about 10 percent since the beginning of April as U.S. production rose and

hundreds of millions of barrels of surplus fuel inventories proved difficult to shift.

Cost cutting

Companies reacted quickly to the downturn that began three years ago after prices tumbled from above \$100 a barrel to below \$50 today. Producers squeezed their suppliers by renegotiating contracts, delayed or canceled costly projects and eliminated tens of thousands of jobs to show the world they could live with lower oil prices.

First-quarter results showed some payoff for all that work. Profit per employee had dropped steadily for Exxon Mobil, Shell, BP Plc and Chevron Corp. throughout the downturn. For Shell, that metric doubled in the first three months of the year compared with the preceding period as earnings rose.

Exxon and Shell covered their dividend with cash from operations in the first quarter at an average price for international benchmark Brent crude of just under \$55. BP, which didn't generate enough money to cover the payout in the three months to March, will be able to do so this year if oil is between \$50 and \$55, Chief Financial Officer Brian Gilvary said in May.

More pain

That's still not good enough for these companies to be able to start paying down debt or expand investments. Brent traded at \$47.71 at 12:38 p.m. Singapore time Friday, and banks including Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Citigroup Inc. are still lowering their price expectations for this year.

For the moment, investors seem to be largely ignoring the operational improvements and focusing instead on prices.

The share prices of just 17 of the 90 companies in the MSCI World Energy Sector Index have gained this quarter compared with 27 in the preceding period. This has made energy the worst performer on the MSCI World Index this year. (Source: Bloomberg)



Iran Tobacco Company

INTERNATIONAL NOTICE

Iran Tobacco Co. located at Qazvin Ave, Qazvin square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, P.O.Box 1331838734, intends to identify qualified non Tobacco raw material suppliers that have certified permission from competent authorities.

The companies are invited to introduce themselves to the address shown above.

For more information you can contact to 0098 21 5126 1920, ITC commercial department

The Management of Communication and International Affairs Iran Tobacco Company



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National Iranian Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First publish/seconded publish) one-stage(compressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE	ESTIMATED VALUE (Rial)	SUBJECT OF TENDER	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro					
Rial					
4285	150,000,000	PART FOR "CRYOMECH" TRIPLEX PUMP	1489732	Tender No. : Indent No.: 08-22-9345095	1

Brief description of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase PART FOR Liquid Nitrogen TRIPLEX PUMP from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (j) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documents. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, 510,000 Rials should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.
Receiving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and receive tender documents from foreign procurement department in due date will be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees(A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents(B) along with qualification worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document received deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor, Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN.
Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A)Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activities licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranian Drilling Company.
Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR

Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۴/۱۰ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۴/۱۱

Mosul's fall won't stop Daesh spreading fear

By Mohamad Bazzi

Iraqi officials have declared that Daesh's caliphate is finished. On June 29, after months of urban warfare and U.S. air strikes, Iraqi forces say they are on the verge of expelling the terrorists from their last holdouts in Mosul. "Their fictitious state has fallen," an Iraqi general told state TV after troops



captured a symbolically important mosque in Mosul's old city. In Syria, U.S.-backed rebels are moving quickly through the eastern city of Raqqa, another capital of the self-proclaimed caliphate.

With the imminent fall of the last two urban centers under Daesh's control in Syria and Iraq, the group has now lost much of its territory. On 21 June, the terrorists destroyed the historic Grand Mosque of al-Nuri, where three years ago, as Daesh swept across northern Iraq, the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared a caliphate at Friday prayers.

The caliphate's fall

The ruined mosque's capture by Iraqi forces marks the most public symbol of the caliphate's fall, but it does not mean the end of Daesh or its reign of violence. The severe loss of territory in Syria and Iraq means that routes for foreign terrorists to reach the self-declared caliphate have contracted. But the group still has the capability to attract recruits, secure weapons, raise funds through theft and extortion, and dispatch sympathizers to carry out attacks abroad. As it gets weaker on the ground, Daesh has less to lose by unleashing attacks outside of Syria and Iraq. In recent months, the terrorist group has quickly claimed responsibility for a spate of attacks on civilians in Europe, especially in Britain and France. On March 22, a driver mowed down pedestrians on Westminster Bridge in London, killing five people before being shot by security forces as he tried to break into Parliament. Two months later, a suicide bomber killed 22 in an attack on a concert arena in Manchester. And on June 3, three assailants sped across London Bridge in a white van, ramming into pedestrians. They then emerged from the van with hunting knives and began stabbing people in nearby Borough Market. The attackers killed eight people and wounded dozens before police shot them.

Daesh has already adjusted to the imminent loss of its physical caliphate in Syria and Iraq, and to the potential loss of its top leaders. In mid-June, Russian officials said they believed that they had killed Baghdadi in an airstrike that targeted a gathering of senior terrorists outside Raqqa. The claim has not been confirmed, and Baghdadi was erroneously reported killed in the past. But continued fighting and new attacks underscore that the group must have contingency plans in place to deal with the loss of its senior leadership.

Lone wolf attackers

Indeed, it's clear that Daesh is already adopting the methods of a "leaderless jihad," a strategy that al Qaeda tried to use with less success. For more than a year, Daesh has inspired "lone wolf" attackers to act in its name, especially in the West. These radicalized individuals are heeding the call of Daesh leaders to use whatever methods they have at their disposal — trucks, cars, knives and axes — to carry out attacks that amplify the group's reach. While Daesh has organized assaults that required months of training and planning — such as the coordinated November 2015 attacks in central Paris, which killed 130 people — it has moved steadily toward inspiring loosely coordinated and sometimes haphazard attacks by self-radicalized perpetrators.

These attacks allow Daesh's leaders to create an illusion of strength to make up for their battlefield losses. They also signal that the group would revert to its roots as a terrorist insurgency, bent on large and small-scale attacks that instill fear but do little to help the terrorists keep control of territory in Syria and Iraq.

That's not to say the loss of territory hasn't weakened the group and caused some of its operations to fail. On 19 June, a 31-year-old man rammed into a French police van on the Champs-Élysées in Paris with an improvised car bomb. The explosives failed to detonate and the assailant was killed. A day later, a Moroccan national tried unsuccessfully to set off a suitcase bomb packed with nails and gas canisters inside the central train station in Brussels. Security forces killed the man.

During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 2016, Daesh urged its sympathizers to carry out a spate of bombings, mass shootings and stabbings across Europe, the Middle East and Asia. While the group called for a similar campaign during Ramadan this year, which ended on June 25, there were far fewer successful attacks.

Despite the amateurish nature of some recent attempts, cadres of terrorists who trained and fought with Daesh in Iraq and Syria have returned to Europe and are now able to train and radicalize others. "Several dozen people directed by [Daesh] may be currently present in Europe with a capability to commit terrorist attacks," the European Union's law enforcement agency, Europol, warned in a report released in December. It added that the group "has proven to be very effective in inspiring people to commit terrorist acts and in setting attacks in motion themselves."

Daesh's leaders realize that they are losing their "capitals" in Mosul and Raqqa. That means the group has squandered the caliphate that distinguished it from other terrorist movements, and helped it dominate headlines and attract new recruits. By relying on lone wolf attacks by individuals who are self-radicalized — and, in some cases, are mentally unstable — Daesh is able to project a greater reach than it actually has. And it can continue to spread fear, even as its caliphate crumbles.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

With new crown prince, Saudi Arabia doubles down on political repression and regional aggression

By Doug Bandow

Saudi Arabian King Salman bin Abdulaziz has shaken his nation's closed political system by making his youngest son his heir. Although heralded as a "modernizer," 31-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also known as MBS, is the architect of Riyadh's disastrous attack on Yemen and disingenuous campaign to turn Qatar into a Saudi satellite. Given President Donald Trump's warm embrace of the monarchy, Prince Salman's recklessness is likely to draw the U.S. more deeply into destabilizing regional conflicts.

Family's piggy bank

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an anachronism, an absolute monarchy in a democratic age. A few thousand princes sit atop a society of roughly 32 million, treating the nation's wealth as their family's piggy bank. The royals live a generally licentious lifestyle outside of public view, but buy off the KSA's fundamentalist Muslim clergy by promoting the intolerant Islamic sect of Wahhabism worldwide. The kingdom's population long has been a generous source of people and money for radical and terrorist groups, including those attacking the West.

What amounts to a totalitarian state — there is no religious or political liberty and only limited social freedom, at least in public — has no popular appeal other than its open checkbook. For that people are willing to fight and die. In contrast, the Saudi royals buy domestic loyalty while hiring foreigners to do the dirty work. With little to fight for, even the Saudi



The royals live a generally licentious lifestyle outside of public view, but buy off the KSA's fundamentalist Muslim clergy by promoting the intolerant Islamic sect of Wahhabism worldwide.

military performs poorly despite the best American weaponry.

Multitude of challenges

The kingdom confronts a multitude of challenges. For years a group of elderly brothers held the kingship and other top positions among themselves. This self-aggrandizing gerontocracy lost what little public appeal it had when oil prices dropped, reducing the financial benefits for the average Saudi. Riyadh's cash reserves have fallen by almost a third since 2014.

In 2015 King Salman succeeded to the throne. He appointed his nephew, Mohammed bin Nayef as Crown Prince, and his favorite son, MBS, as Deputy Crown Prince. But the king emasculated his nominal successor, merging Prince Nayef's court with his own and stripping the Crown Prince's other positions of authority. The 81-year-old king introduced his son to Washington, seeking unofficial blessing for his plans to anoint MBS his successor.

The young prince, whose experience had been limited to serving his father,

had the latter's ear and effectively ruled. MBS won praise for seeking to diversify the economy. Last year he initiated Project 2030, which promotes development beyond oil. He also imposed an austerity program, cutting benefits for the entitlement-minded population — only to restore some of them recently, to quiet discontent. Moreover, he loosened some social strictures and restricted the religious police, to the applause of many younger Saudis.

(Source: forbes.com)

Germany says Hamburg no place for Erdogan rally as G-20 meets

By Barin Kayaoglu

It looks like Turkish-German relations are not out of the woods.

On June 29, the German government denied Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's request to hold a rally for Turkish Germans on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Hamburg. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel called Erdogan's request "not a good idea" and added, "We do not have the intention to allow that other countries' domestic conflicts be imported into our population."

Former European Parliament Speaker Martin Schulz was even more forceful than his fellow German. Schulz called for an outright ban on Erdogan's rallies. Schulz said, "Foreign politicians, who [trample] our values at home, must not have a stage for speeches in Germany. ... I do not want Erdogan, who is holding dissidents and journalists in Turkey, to hold large-scale events in Germany."

In response, Ambassador Huseyin Muftuoglu, the spokesman for the Turkish Foreign Ministry, called Schulz's remarks "regrettable and unacceptable." The Turkish government condemned the German politicians' comments.

Erdogan and members of his Justice and Development Party (AKP) like to hold rallies in Europe because European Turks often vote for the ruling party.

Turkish-German relations

The latest row between Ankara and Berlin comes in the wake of other serious problems in Turkish-German



Former European Parliament Speaker Martin Schulz says, "Foreign politicians, who [trample] our values at home, must not have a stage for speeches in Germany."

relations. Last March, in the run-up to Turkey's April 16 referendum on establishing an executive presidency, European governments — especially German municipalities — denied AKP leaders from holding meetings with the Turkish diaspora communities there. At the time, Erdogan had accused Germany and other European countries of "Nazi practices" in a serious breach of diplomatic etiquette.

(Source: Al Monitor)

Trump and Moon should get on the same page

The allies need to resolve their differences quietly

By Benedict Spence

Given past comments and the personalities involved, this week's summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in could easily go off the rails. That's why both sides need to set aside domestic political considerations and deal with their most pressing issue: North Korea.

Encouragingly, Moon's administration seems in recent days to have reached the same conclusion. Korea's left-wing president had raised hackles in Washington by halting deployment of additional elements of a U.S.-made missile defense system — known as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or Thaad — and pressing for a softer approach in the nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula, possibly including the reopening of a joint economic zone that would funnel hard currency to the North.

Lately, however, Moon and other Korean officials have made clear that they don't intend to reverse the Thaad deployment, or to push for a quick reopening of the Kaesong economic zone. In calling for dialogue with the North, Moon now says, he's proposing nothing more than what Trump himself has: talks when the time is right.

The greater burden thus lies on Trump. He's roiled relations by complaining about the cost of stationing U.S. troops on the Korean Peninsula and by demanding that



Belatedly, the White House seems to have recognized the folly of bypassing the South and relying on China to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table.

South Korea pay the \$1 billion price tag for the Thaad deployment. Trump has also blasted the Korea-U.S. free-trade agreement, or Korus, and threatened to scrap it.

Belatedly, the White House seems to

have recognized the folly of bypassing the South and relying on China to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table. Any serious frictions between the U.S. and South Korea will only further relieve pressure on China to act. Tensions

would also complicate efforts to deepen the trilateral defense and intelligence relationship with fellow U.S. ally Japan.

Trump should handle any disagreements with Moon as he did earlier this week with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi: quietly.

Korus, for instance, is a good deal for both sides. It can be improved around the margins, and better enforced, without histrionics. Repeatedly questioning how much money South Korea is contributing to the military alliance is also shortsighted. Instead, Trump should send a message to both China and North Korea by strongly and unconditionally reaffirming the U.S. commitment to South Korea's defense.

The U.S. should also work through South Korea to develop alternate channels of communication to the North, to clarify each side's positions, and explore the outlines of more formal talks. There's no reason the U.S. couldn't support Moon's efforts to deepen people-to-people contacts with the North, as opposed to commercial relations; any measures that help to open up North Korean society and spread information about the outside world will help undermine the Pyongyang regime.

As Moon has noted, he and Trump share the same goal: a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. To achieve it, they'll have to work together.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Tehran was always America's final destination, target of ISIS terror attack

By Tony Cartalucci

Several were left dead and many more injured after coordinated terror attacks on Iran's capital of Tehran. Shootings and bombings targeted Iran's parliament and the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini.

According to Reuters, the so-called "Islamic State" claimed responsibility for the attack, which unfolded just days after another terror attack unfolded in London. The Islamic State also reportedly took responsibility for the violence in London, despite evidence emerging that the three suspects involved were long-known to British security and intelligence agencies and were simply allowed to plot and carry out their attacks.

It is much less likely that Tehran's government coddled terrorists - as it has been engaged for years in fighting terrorism both on its borders and in Syria amid a vicious six-year war fueled by U.S., European, and Persian Gulf weapons, cash, and fighters.

Armed Violence Targeting Tehran Was the Stated Goal of U.S. Policymakers

The recent terrorist attacks in Tehran are the literal manifestation of U.S. foreign policy. The creation of a proxy force with which to fight Iran and establishing a safe haven for it beyond Iran's borders have been long-stated U.S. policy. The current chaos consuming Syria and Iraq - and to a lesser extent in southeast Turkey - is a direct result of the U.S. attempting to secure a base of operations to launch a proxy war directly against Iran.

Which path to Persia?

In the 2009 Brookings Institution document titled, "Which Path to Persia? Options for a New American Strategy toward Iran," the use of then U.S. State Department-listed foreign terrorist organization Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) as a proxy for instigating a full-fledged armed insurgency not unlike that which is currently unfolding in Syria was discussed in detail.

The report explicitly stated: The United States could also attempt to promote external Iranian opposition groups, providing them with the support to turn themselves into full-fledged insurgencies and even helping them militarily defeat the forces of the clerical regime. The United States could work with groups like the Iraq-based National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and its military wing, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK), helping the thousands of its members who, under Saddam Husayn's regime, were armed and had conducted guerrilla and terrorist operations against the clerical regime. Although the NCRI is supposedly disarmed today, that could quickly be changed.

Brookings policymakers admitted throughout the report that MEK was responsible for killing both American and Iranian military personnel, politicians, and civilians in what was clear-cut terrorism. Despite this, and admissions that MEK remained indisputably a terrorist organization, recommendations were made to de-list it from the U.S. State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organization registry so that more overt support could be provided to the group for armed regime change.

Based on such recommendations and intensive lobbying, the U.S. State Department would eventually de-list MEK in 2012 and the group would receive significant backing from the U.S. openly. This included support from many members of current U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign team - including Rudy Giuliani, Newt Gingrich, and John Bolton.

However, despite these efforts, MEK was not capable then or now of accomplishing the lofty goal of instigating full-fledged insurrection against Tehran, necessitating the use of other armed groups. The 2009 Brookings paper made mention of other candidates under a section titled, "Potential Ethnic Proxies," identifying Arab and Kurdish groups as well as possible candidates for a U.S. proxy war against Tehran.

Under a section titled, "Finding a Conduit and Safe Haven," Brookings notes:

Of equal importance (and potential difficulty) will be finding a neighboring country willing to serve as the conduit for U.S. aid to the insurgent group, as well as to provide a safe haven where the group can train, plan, organize, heal, and resupply.

For the U.S. proxy war on Syria, Turkey and Jordan fulfill this role. For Iran, it is clear that U.S. efforts would have to focus on establishing conduits and safe havens from Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province and from Kurdish-dominated regions in northern Iraq, eastern Syria, and southeastern Turkey - precisely where current upheaval is being fueled by U.S. intervention both overtly and covertly.

Brookings noted in 2009 that: It would be difficult to find or build an insurgency with a high likelihood of success. The existing candidates are weak and divided, and the Iranian regime is very strong relative to the potential internal and external challengers.

A group not mentioned by Brookings in 2009, but that exists in the very region the U.S. seeks to create a conduit and safe haven for a proxy war with Iran, is the Islamic State. Despite claims that it is an independent terrorist organization propelled by black market oil sales, ransoms, and local



The recent terrorist attacks in Tehran are the literal manifestation of U.S. foreign policy.

taxes, its fighting capacity, logistical networks, and operational reach demonstrates vast state sponsorship.

The ultimate proxy, the perfect conduit and safe haven

The Islamic State reaching into Iran, southern Russia, and even as far as western China was not only possible, it was inevitable and the logical progression of U.S. policy as stated by Brookings in 2009 and verifiably executed since then.

The Islamic State represents the perfect "proxy," occupying the ideal conduit and safe haven for executing America's proxy war against Iran and beyond. Surrounding the Islamic State's holdings are U.S. military bases, including those illegally constructed in eastern Syria. Were the U.S. to wage war against Iran in the near future, it is likely these assets would all "coincidentally" coordinate against Tehran just as they are now being "coincidentally" coordinated against Damascus.

The use of terrorism, extremists, and proxies in executing U.S. foreign policy, and the use of extremists observing the Islamic State and Al Qaeda's brand of indoctrination was demonstrated definitively during the 1980's when the U.S. with the

assistance of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan - used Al Qaeda to expel Soviet forces from Afghanistan. This example is in fact mentioned explicitly by Brookings policymakers as a template for creating a new proxy war - this time against Iran.

For the U.S., there is no better stand-in for Al Qaeda than its successor the Islamic State. U.S. policymakers have demonstrated a desire to use known terrorist organizations to wage proxy war against targeted nation-states, has previously done so in Afghanistan, and has clearly organized the geopolitical game board on all sides of Iran to facilitate its agenda laid out in 2009. With terrorists now killing people in Tehran, it is simply verification that this agenda is advancing onward.

Iran's involvement in the Syrian conflict illustrates that Tehran is well aware of this conspiracy and is actively defending against it both within and beyond its borders. Russia is likewise an ultimate target of the proxy war in Syria and is likewise involved in resolving it in favor of stopping it there before it goes further.

China's small but expanding role in the conflict is linked directly to the inevitability of this instability spreading to its western Xinjiang province.

While terrorism in Europe, including the recent London attack, is held up as proof that the West is "also" being targeted by the Islamic State, evidence suggests otherwise. The attacks are more likely an exercise in producing plausible deniability.

In reality, the Islamic State - like Al Qaeda before it - depends on vast, multinational state sponsorship - state sponsorship the U.S., Europe, and its regional allies in the Persian Gulf are providing. It is also sponsorship they can - at anytime of their choosing - expose and end. They simply choose not to in pursuit of regional and global hegemony.

The 2009 Brookings paper is a signed and dated confession of the West's pliability toward using terrorism as a geopolitical tool. While Western headlines insist that nations like Iran, Russia, and China jeopardize global stability, it is clear that they themselves do so in pursuit of global hegemony. (Source: Global Research)

The Islamic State represents the perfect "proxy," occupying the ideal conduit and safe haven for executing America's proxy war against Iran and beyond.



What will U.S. do after fall of ISIS?

By Firas Samuri

The numerous reports from the battlefield, telling us about crucial victories of the Syrian Arab Army over the terrorist groups in all sectors of the front and the decisive steps of diplomats both in Astana and Geneva, which contribute much the early solution of the Syrian crisis help us to conclude that lasting for more than seven years civil war is approaching an end.

However the closer is the peace treaty the better dividends will be shared between the parties. Primary the Syrian people will return for peaceful life and be engaged in formation future generations. The main achievement for the Syrian authorities will become the establishment of full governmental control over the territory of the country as well as expel terrorists beyond the borders of Syria.

Undoubtedly, other participants of the crisis will not stay away. Iran and Russia as guarantor states of the Syrian ceasefire regime will strengthen its positions on the global stage. In addition, the Russian side with the authorization of the Syrian government will keep its Khmeimim air base and set up another one in Tartus to ensure security and stability in the region. At the same time it will become the return of Russia to the Middle East.

Essentially, there are parties including the Syrian opposition and other Western states like the United States which will be

dissatisfied with these outcomes. As they have got their own scenario. The U.S. is not going to leave Syria as they have wasted a great sum of money and resources for establishing itself in the region. It should be mentioned, that since the beginning of the military operation in Syria, the U.S.-led International Coalition carried out more than 9,500 strikes. It was obviously expensive. But except of numerous victims among civilians and destruction of key urban infrastructure it brought nothing.

Such plans of the U.S. are confirmed by irrefutable evidence. In June, several Media reported that Washington concluded an agreement with Kurds to set up a new military base in Tabqa, which is located to the east of Raqqa.

It is reported that the new base will be located in the military housing area, the Mohammed Fares School as well as the military and security buildings in the third district of the town. The U.S. forces reportedly intend to build a command center and

residential buildings for its troops.

It will be the third U.S. base, which was illegally established in the territory of Syria. The first two were set up previously in April and May in the settlements of At-Tanf and Al-Zakf. These U.S. measures violate the sovereignty of Syria and contradict the UN charter and the international law.

According to Global Research, agreement in principle has recently been reached between the Pentagon and Kurds. The agreement will allegedly allow the U.S. military to stay in the YPG-held areas for 10 years. In its turn, the US will continue providing military aid and weapons to YPG.

This combination of circumstances may indicate that Washington is getting ready for the new stage of war. Perhaps after defeat of ISIS, enlisting the support of powerful partner, the Kurdish militia would continue fighting not against terrorists but the legitimate Syrian government, which doesn't suit Washington.

It is worth mentioning that not so long ago the current U.S. Administration was going to stop its participation in the Syrian conflict and completely withdraw its military contingent from the country. However, Washington is not the first time violating its own promises given not only to the world community, but also to its nation. Preferring a military solution to the political one, the U.S. will not achieve any results other than the spent millions and condemnation of the world community.



The U.S. is not going to leave Syria as they have wasted a great sum of money and resources for establishing itself in the region.

Trump plays nuclear 'chicken' with Putin over Syria

By Eric Zuesse

U.S. President Donald Trump is playing a game of nuclear "chicken" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, regarding Putin's threat on June 19th to go to war against the United States if the U.S. again shoots down, inside Syria - in the sovereign territory of the internationally-recognized-as-legal sovereign Syrian government - Syrian aircraft, or the aircraft of any of the foreign governments that have allied with Syria: Russia, Iran, and China.

After the U.S. had shot down a Syrian government plane on June 19th, which was bombing jihadists whom the U.S. government backs in order to overthrow the Syrian government, Russia announced:

"In areas where Russian aviation is conducting combat missions in the Syrian skies, any flying objects, including jets and unmanned aerial vehicles of the international coalition discovered west of the Euphrates River, will be followed by Russian air and ground defenses as air targets" - meaning ordered out, or else immediately shot down.

That would place the U.S. and Russia in a traditional war against each other, over Syrian territory (Russia to protect Syria's government, U.S. to replace it by a Saudi-allied jihadist one). The loser in that war, over the battlefields in Syria, would then have only one way to prevent defeat, which is a blitz nuclear attack against the other's homeland, World War III be-



tween Russia and U.S., which would be 'won' by whichever of the two sides suffered the less damage (irrespective of whether the entire planet and ultimately all life will then have actually been destroyed by the exchange). The first side to attack would knock out many of the other side's retaliatory silo-based ICBMs and thus probably be the 'winner', though that's not certain (since most nukes aren't silo-based).

Russia's announcement is basically saying that direct war

Russia's announcement is basically saying that direct war between Russia and the U.S. will result if the U.S. persists in its effort to conquer Syria.

between Russia and the U.S. will result if the U.S. persists in its effort to conquer Syria, but the Washington Post has said that it's really only a 'bluff', and CNBC has said that it's only 'bluster', and Trump is now splitting hairs over whether he goes with that view (the neoconservative view) to continue the war against Assad, or whether Trump instead will abandon the neoconservative effort and withdraw American forces from Syria once ISIS

there is defeated.

Whereas Trump's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has served as Trump's mouthpiece to allege that the U.S. will not conquer and has no intention to conquer Syria, Trump's press-spokesman and also his U.N. Ambassador have threatened that the U.S. will again directly attack Assad's forces if and when it wants to do so.

Both President Emmanuel Macron of France, and Prime Minister Theresa May of UK, have already gone on record as supporting the neoconservative position, that the U.S. and its allies should dictate to the sovereign government of Syria, and that Syria's government should obey. Macron himself has even warned that "the use of chemical weapons will be met with a response, and even if France acts alone."

The summit meeting of the heads of state of the G20 countries will take place in Hamburg on 7 and 8 July 2017. Included there will be not only the U.S.-allied leaders - especially Macron, May, and Saudi Arabia's King and Crown Prince - but also Putin, and also China's Xi Jinping. There is some press-speculation that Trump wants to negotiate a deal there for Russia to abandon its alliance with Syria, and also its alliance with Iran. President Obama had tried to do that, but Putin declined the proposal. Perhaps the Western alliance is making these soundings of moving forward despite the Russian warning, so as to increase the pressure on Putin to cave, to crack him. In any event, the jihadists (agents of the Saudis) in Syria know that if they again set up a chemical attack so as to blame it on Assad, the U.S. and its allies have already committed themselves to go to war to overthrow Syria's government (for 'humanitarian reasons'). Any jihadist group there could thus pull the trigger even prior to the G20 Summit.

Perhaps a jihadist will indeed pull the trigger, but would the U.S. then serve as the gun that some of Trump's federal employees have promised the U.S. will be in such an instance? In a game of chicken, each side threatens, and maybe also deceives, so that its opponent will believe the worst; but the individual who pulls the trigger might turn out to be an obscure person about whom the general public knows nothing. It happened in WW I, and there is no reason why it couldn't happen again. Furthermore (as that linked-to source also well documents), underestimating the seriousness of a head-of-state's commitments, can produce global catastrophe.

(Source: Global Research)

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of 'They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010,' and of 'CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity.'

Why Morocco's street protests are growing more dangerous

By James Rupert

Seven months after a Moroccan street vendor, Mouhcine Fikri, was crushed to death in a garbage truck amid a confrontation with police, thousands of young Moroccans are defying King Mohammed VI's government with mass street protests. Recently, the demonstrations have spread from Fikri's native region, the Rif Mountains, notably to Casablanca and the capital, Rabat.

Mohammed tried to calm the anger and quell the protests with public condolences to Fikri's family. His ministers then jailed local officials over the fish-seller's death, fired the regional governor and declared a new-found determination to bring economic development and jobs to the neglected Rif. In the past month, they also tried heavier methods to snuff the protest movement, arresting its leaders and firing tear gas.

But protesters — young men and, increasingly, women — continue to jam city streets and shutter marketplaces with general strikes. Their response this month to the arrests has included demonstrators chanting "Peaceful (protest) is finished!" and throwing rocks in clashes with police.

■ Uncorrupt government

The protests' persistence signals that the expiration date

is approaching on Mohammed's tactics for defusing and diverting Moroccans' demands for democratic, uncorrupt government. If Mohammed is to maintain the "Moroccan exception" — his nation's relative stability in the turbulent Arab world — he can no longer offer merely symbolic changes that preserve authoritarian rule.

Moroccans' insistence on real change, and the dangers of violent upheaval if they are ignored, are growing. With them grows the danger that extreme and violent Islamist movements, which so far have been contained in Morocco, will spread in an increasingly frustrated young population.

Here's the problem: Mohammed may be unable to produce the real democratization and transparency that protesters demand, because that would risk exposing the steady growth of systemic corruption under his rule. The United States, which routinely acknowledges corruption's corrosive effect on Morocco's governance, will not press Mohammed on the issue.

■ Public image

Mohammed has the political capital to achieve reforms, and he began by displaying the intent. In his first decade in power, Moroccans and foreigners admired his public image

as a benevolent "king of the poor." He promised to open Morocco's political space, expanded legal rights for women, freed political prisoners held by his father, Hassan II, and permitted a limited investigation into the "forced disappearances" of dissidents under his father's rule. He presided over economic growth and an impressive reduction in extreme poverty.

When the 2011 Arab Spring protests spread to Morocco, Mohammed quickly announced reforms to democratize the government. But he tightly controlled that process, picking the men who would write a new constitution, preventing meaningful public debate on the changes, and rushing the draft constitution to a referendum for an officially proclaimed 98 percent "yes" vote.

The new constitution formally recognized the language and culture of Morocco's ethnic Berbers, reducing one longstanding grievance that had fueled the country's Arab Spring ferment. The new law seemed to democratize by requiring the king to choose a prime minister from the majority party in parliament, but it sustained the monarchy's power to manipulate and marginalize parliament by preventing any one party from holding a majority. The king quickly held an election that pushed forward an Islamist

"man of the people," Abdelilah Benkirane, whom the king named prime minister.

■ Public hope

The reforms, both real and pretended, and the charismatic Benkirane built enough public hope for change to help the palace isolate and suppress the main Arab Spring protest movement. This effectively bought Mohammed's government time to offer real reforms to meet public demands — for democratization, jobs, government services such as health care, and critically, a halt to endemic official corruption.

Five years later, that time has largely been squandered. To be sure, Mohammed's economic modernizations have created wealth, reflected in gated communities with pools and golf courses that advertise villas for sale outside Rabat, Marrakesh and other cities. But while Morocco halved overall poverty between 2007 and 2014, unemployment remains high — 9 percent overall and a dangerous 39 percent among youth in the cities. And regions outside the triangle between Tangier, Fes and Agadir remain underdeveloped. The Rif's development was neglected for decades because of tensions between its Berber populations and King Hassan II. →13

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What's your walking excuse?

How to overcome the most common walking excuses

By Wendy Bumgardner

Why aren't you walking? What excuse is keeping you from stepping out the door or onto the treadmill? You've found the right place. These excuse busters will exorcise your exercise excuses.

1. Excuse: "I'm too busy to walk"

You have work, school, cooking, cleaning, shopping, kids, laundry. There isn't enough time to do everything. How are you supposed to fit in 30 minutes of walking to meet the minimum requirement for health? How can you sneak in enough steps so your Fitbit friends aren't leaving you in the dust?

■ How to bust the "I'm too busy" walking excuse

- Commit to a walking time: Put your walking time on your calendar. Add it to your smartphone calendar with the repeating time, you only have to add it once for it to prompt you every day. Or, you can go old-school and write it in your day planner and set a manual alarm clock.

- Invite others: Invite your family, co-workers, and friends to join you. You'll have the social pressure to keep the commitment. Walking together is perfect for social multi-tasking and having conversations with your kids, spouse or friends. The time away from screens will be welcome for making real connections.

- Work walking into your chores: Instead of stopping on the way home from work to do errands, walk to the market and post office and carry things back in a backpack. Walk to and from a restaurant in the evening. Walk the kids to school instead of driving them. You'll have peace and quiet on your walk back to prepare for the rest of the day.

- Sneak walking into a busy day: Walk during your breaks and lunch at work, or go for a quick walk at home while a pot is stewing. Although it is best to walk for a half hour or more continuously, sneaking in a couple of 10- to 15-minute walks burns calories and gets you into the habit of exercising. It's one way that health authorities recommend achieving 30 minutes per day of moderate-intensity exercise, by breaking it up into bouts of 10 minute or more.

2. Excuse: "I'm too tired to walk"

It's time for your walk but you are tired. You didn't get enough sleep, or you're worn out from work and other activities.

■ How to bust the "I'm too tired to walk" excuse:

- Don't sit down, don't lie down, don't dally over a cup of coffee. But do have a good drink of water and a snack so you aren't dehydrated or starting on empty.

- Get started: Don't let yourself know that you are actually going to walk. Don't think about it as you tie on your shoes and head out the door. Don't wake up your tired brain. Once you are walking, it is amazing how the fatigue goes away.

- Still tired? If the fatigue isn't gone or is worse after 15 minutes, you may be coming down with a cold or may be overtraining. Finish your walk, drink lots of water and take care of yourself. If you haven't had a rest day, take a rest day tomorrow.

3. Walking excuse: "it's too cold"

Is your walking excuse that it's too cold to walk outdoors? A nip in the air can nip your desire to walk. Slipping and falling on ice or snow is a real safety concern.

■ How bust the excuse that it's too cold to walk

- Dress in layers: Dress right for the cold in layers, with a hat and gloves. Start with a sweat-wicking long-sleeved top, then an insulating layer of fleece, wool, or down, and a windproof jacket. You can add a muffler or wear a balaclava or Buff to protect your neck.

- Keep your toes warm: Use these tricks to keep your feet warm. The simplest one is to tuck a paper napkin between the top of your foot and the upper part of the shoe.



Dress right for the cold in layers, with a hat and gloves. Start with a sweat-wicking long-sleeved top, then an insulating layer of fleece, wool, or down, and a windproof jacket.

- Keep your hands warm: Gloves are good, but mittens are even better. Also use a chemical handwarmer packet to keep your fingers unfrozen.

- Chains for your shoes: Wear foot traction devices such as slip-on cleats that work with your regular walking shoes or boots.

- Walking poles for stability: If it's slippery enough to wear foot traction, it's wise to add a pair of walking poles to your winter walking ensemble.

- Treadmill time! It may not be ideal if you prefer walking outdoors, but it can get you through the winter. Tips for finding free/bargain treadmills to use.

- Walk indoors: Find an indoors track, or join the mall walkers. Use the corridors of large buildings as your walking path. If all else fails, you circle your house or apartment. It's amazing how many steps you can put in circling the kitchen table while watching television.

4. Excuse: "it's raining"

Is your walking excuse that it's raining and you don't walk in the rain? Walking in the rain can be unpleasant, or you can change your attitude and go singing in the rain.

■ How to bust the excuse and walk in the rain

You may be the sweetest person on earth, but you aren't made of sugar and you won't melt in the rain. Use these tactics.

- There's no such thing as bad weather, just inadequate gear: You can stay dry underneath if you wear the right waterproof gear, at least for shorter walks. If nothing else, those cheap plastic rain ponchos from the dollar store will work.

- Umbrella: An umbrella is an easy and simple solution for a moderate stroll. Look for a windproof design and one with a comfortable grip.

- You are drip-dry: Sometimes bare limbs are better than wet fabric. If it's warm enough, just go walking and experience the rain. You can change into dry clothes afterward.

- Plan your reward: Set out the bath

oil and aromatherapy candles and have the cocoa ready to make when you get back. Nothing feels better than a warm terrycloth robe after a great walk in the rain.

- Take in the fresh sensations: How does the rain feel on your face and as it drains from your arms and hands? Listen to the sounds rain creates around you. Stick out your tongue and taste the rain. Look around you at the drops on the leaves and flowers. Sunny is boring. Rainy is interesting and makes for great photos.

- Walk indoors: You don't have to walk in the rain if you don't want to. But you still need to exercise. Walk indoors on the treadmill, in the mall, at an indoors track, or walk the halls of large buildings.

5. Excuse: "it's too hot"

Hot weather poses real risks to walkers. Beat the heat and bust the excuse.

■ How to bust the hot weather walking excuse

- Love your sweat. Accept it. You are glowing!

- Dress for the heat: wear breathable wicking fabrics such as CoolMax which draw the sweat away from the skin so the evaporation can cool you. Wear a hat to keep the sun off your head. ?Hot weather walking gear

- Drink up: Drink 16 oz. of water an hour before you walk so you start off well-hydrated. Then drink a cup or more of water each mile. Drink a big glass of water when you finish.

- Cool times: Walk in the early morning or in the cool part of evening to avoid the hottest part of the day. Choose shaded trails or those with a breeze.

- Walk indoors: Walk on a treadmill, walk in the mall, walk an indoors track, walk the halls of large buildings.

6. Excuse: "I'm too fat to walk in public"

You would like to walk, but you just feel too fat to exercise in public. This excuse is self-sabotage.

■ How to bust the excuse that

you feel too fat

- Time for positive self-talk: Look in the mirror and start giving yourself affirmations. "I am healthy and beautiful. My body is strong. I can walk for miles. I am an athlete."

- You are a hero: The overweight walker is a role-model. You can make a difference in the lives of everyone who might see you. What are they thinking? "What's my excuse?"

- Dress for success Buy yourself walking clothes that fit the shape you are in now. As you get fit, they will become looser.

- Join a walking event or walking club: You will see many people who are overweight walking a marathon, half marathon, 10K, or 5K. Join a walking club and you'll meet many other people who are active at every size.

- They will cheer you!: At run/walk events, runners are extremely supportive of overweight walkers. You'll hear clapping and, "Looking good!" You'll have to give lots of high fives. They know your challenges, many of them have been there as well.

- Walk proud: Walk like the athlete you are and 99.9 percent of passersby will be thinking, "She is out there exercising, maybe I should." Don't let any idiot from the other 0.1 percent ruin one second of your day or keep you from doing what is good for you.

- Check with your doctor: Check with your physician if you are just beginning an exercise program or have a medical condition such as diabetes or heart disease. They can advise you about the safety of walking and give you schedules that are appropriate for your condition. They may also know of walking groups available through local medical centers and clinics.

- Don't ignore pain: If you have pain or injury to your knees, ankles or feet, see a physician. These can often be treated and get you walking comfortably.

7. Excuse: "I'm too old to walk"

Exercise is for young 'uns, right? How to bust the excuse that you think you're too old to walk:

- You need to keep exercising as you age. Brisk walking is one of the moderate-intensity aerobic exercises recommended by health authorities for people of all ages, including those over age 65. You need to do it five days a week for 30 minutes to reduce health risks and maintain fitness.

- Don't get left out. Almost 10 million Americans age 55 and over list walking as their sports activity. You'll see plenty of gray hair and wrinkles at the finish line for a 5K, 10K, half marathon or marathon.

- Be a role-model to the younger folks. If you take to your rocking chair at age 55, what are they to think?

(Source: verywell.com)



Forgetful? It might actually make you smarter, study says

By Amanda MacMillan

You know those people who always boast about having a perfect memory? Maybe they shouldn't, because having total recall is totally overrated. That's according to a new paper in the journal *Neuron*, which concludes that forgetting things is not just normal, it actually makes us smarter.

In the new report, researchers Paul Frankland and Blake Richards of the University of Toronto propose that the goal of memory is not to transmit the most accurate information over time. Rather, they say, it's to optimize intelligent decision-making by holding onto what's important and letting go of what's not.

"It's important that the brain forgets irrelevant details and instead focuses on the stuff that's going to help make decisions in the real world," says Richards, an associate fellow in the Learning in Machines and Brains program.

The researchers came to this conclusion after looking at years of data on memory, memory loss, and brain activity in both humans and animals. One of Frankland's own studies in mice, for example, found that as new brain cells are formed in the hippocampus -- a region of the brain associated with learning new things -- those new connections overwrite old memories and make them harder to access.

This constant swapping of old memories for new ones can have real evolutionary benefits, they say. For example, it can allow us to adapt to new situations by letting go of outdated and potentially misleading information. "If you're trying to navigate the world and your brain is constantly bringing up conflicting memories, that makes it harder for you to make an informed decision," says Richards.

Our brains also help us forget specifics about past events while still remembering the big picture, which the researchers think gives us the ability to generalize previous experiences and better apply them to current situations.

"We all admire the person who can smash Trivial Pursuit or win at Jeopardy, but the fact is that evolution shaped our memory not to win a trivia game, but to make intelligent decisions," says Richards. "And when you look at what's needed to make intelligent decisions, we would argue that it's healthy to forget some things."

So what does that mean for those of us who frequently forget things we just read, people we just met, and where we put our keys? For one, we should stop being so hard on ourselves, says Richards -- to a certain extent.

"You don't want to forget everything, and if you're forgetting a lot more than normal that might be cause for concern," he says. "But if you're someone who forgets the occasional detail, that's probably a sign that your memory system is perfectly healthy and doing exactly what it should be doing."

Especially in today's computers-at-our-fingertips society, Richards says, our brains no longer need to store information like phone numbers and facts easily found on Google. "Instead of storing this irrelevant information that our phones can store for us, our brains are freed up to store the memories that actually do matter for us," he says.

Richards also recommends "cleaning out" your memory system on a regular basis by doing regular gym workouts. "We know that exercise increases the number of neurons in the hippocampus," he says. Yes, that may cause some memories to be lost, he says -- "but they're exactly those details from your life that don't actually matter, and that may be keeping you from making good decisions." (Source: CNN)

5 ways exercise helps men live longer and better

There is good news for men who want to live longer and healthier. It only takes a few basic lifestyle changes to lower the chances of getting many age-related diseases and increase your chances of staying active and independent. One of the most powerful of these is getting, and staying, physically active. Getting regular exercise can help you:

1. Have a healthier heart. Regular physical activity raises healthy HDL cholesterol levels and reduces unhealthy LDL cholesterol and triglycerides. It also lowers blood pressure, burns body fat, and lowers blood sugar levels -- all of which benefit heart health. The power of exercise to help the heart cannot be understated. Following a heart attack, an exercise-based rehabilitation program can reduce the likelihood of dying from heart disease by one-third.

2. Keep your brain sharp. Exercise helps keep blood vessels throughout the body healthy and helps reduce the risk of stroke. Several studies suggest that exercise might also help ward off Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

3. Control blood sugar levels. Regular physical activity not only helps you maintain a healthy weight, but also boosts sensitivity to insulin and thereby modestly reduces blood sugar levels. This can help people with diabetes better control their disease -- and help those at risk for diabetes sidestep this condition. One study found that only two-and-a-half hours of brisk walking a week cut the risk of diabetes by 30%.

4. Possibly lower cancer risk. Some evidence suggests that regular exercise may reduce the risk of certain cancers. One review found consistent evidence that regular physical activity reduced risk for colon cancer by about 24% in men. Other research suggests that regular exercise may reduce risk of lung cancer by about 20%. There is no proof that exercise lowers the risk of developing prostate cancer -- but once a man is diagnosed, physical activity can reduce the chances that it will spread.

5. Stay strong and mobile. It might surprise you to learn that men also can develop thinning of the bones with age. Regular weight-bearing exercise can help slow this bone loss. Putting weight on your bones -- whether by walking, playing football, or lifting weights -- stimulates the growth of new bone. Exercise also helps keep joint cartilage healthy. Strong muscles support joints and lighten the load upon them. Exercise may limit and even reverse knee problems by helping to control weight.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

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 IBM, along with club that hosts Wimbledon, has also created a technology that can predict how close a match will be based on a metric they developed called "competitive margin," which compares the players' ratios of forced to unforced errors. This will help attendees find matches that are likely to be particularly exciting to watch. The company's tech will also point out what strategies each player might use in a given match and who's most likely to win.

2 Roku's legal battle in Mexico has taken a hit. Last week, a judge ordered importation and sales of Roku devices to cease in the country, but Roku later won a suspension of that ruling. This week, however, a Mexico City tribunal overturned that suspension, reinstating the stop to Roku sales and distribution.

3 LG V30 might not feature secondary display, concept could be replicated on new OLED screen. Also, midframe leak tips a wireless charging coil, might mean a sealed battery as well.

4 Apple's future iPhones might be the reason for Samsung's rumored OLED super factory. According to insightful industry insiders, Samsung might be poised to build another OLED factory that will essentially reaffirm it as the global leader in OLED display manufacturing. The factory will be built in South Korea in two stages.

5 Nokia announced that it has hired Gregory Lee, former President and CEO of Samsung Electronics North America. Lee will be taking on the role of President of Nokia Technologies and a member of the Group Leadership team.

6 More than 300 Play Store apps found to be using infected apps are constantly requesting ads and then claiming the user has clicked on them, which generates ad revenue for the fraudster.

7 Amazon announces its 2017 Prime Day shopping event - 30 hours of deals in 13 countries. For the first time those with a Prime account will be able to access no less than 30 hours of deal shopping, starting at 6pm PT/9pm ET on Monday, July 10. The deals will be refreshed every five minutes, and this time around they will be available to shoppers in 13 high-profile markets - U.S., U.K., Spain, Mexico, Japan, Italy, India, Germany, France, China, Canada, Belgium and Austria.

8 Google offers four months of free Play Music and YouTube Red subscriptions to new users. Google is trying to lure more fans into its subscription-based services, Play Music and YouTube Red, by offering them for free for a longer period. In case you didn't know, Google Play Music is available for free for two months, but after that, you'll have to pay a \$9.99 monthly subscription.

9 The upcoming Huawei Mate 10 could shape up to be one beastly device. A recent post from an industry analyst on Chinese website Weibo indicates that the high-end handset could be the first to feature Huawei's in-house Kirin 970 chip that will be built on a 10nm process.

10 Chinese company has made a 360-degree camera that is small enough to fit in an iPhone 7 Plus. A Chinese company, named ProTruly, has already produced two overly large and odd-looking smartphones that sport built-in 360-degree cameras, and released them in China last December.

British teenagers among world's most extreme internet users

More than one in three British 15-year-olds are "extreme internet users" who spend at least six hours a day online - which is more than their counterparts in all the other 34 OECD countries apart from Chile, research has found.

The report, by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) thinktank, says: "Over a third (37.3%) of UK 15-year-olds can be classed as 'extreme internet users' (6+ hours of use a day) - markedly higher than the average of OECD countries.

British children also start going online for the first time at a young age by international standards, the report discloses. "Nearly a third (27.6%) of young people in the UK were six years old or younger when they first used the internet. This is younger than the OECD average," it says.

The report - by Emily Frith, an adviser to Nick Clegg when he was the deputy prime minister - adds that 95% of 15-year-olds use social media before or after school, again higher than the OECD average.

(Source: Guardian)



Report estimates a \$6.3 trillion app industry by 2021



Recent App Annie estimates predict that the global app industry will expand by whopping 380% percent in the next four years, almost quadrupling its current annually generated revenue of \$1.3 trillion, to reach \$6.3 billion in 2021. (numbers base of total spend is gross and includes mobile commerce, app store and in-app advertising)

On average, last year, app users spent \$379 on average, per person on app store purchases, in-app ads and mobile online shopping, and the figure is set to rise to \$1,008 in the next four years. The last factor, namely online purchases, is said to be largest driving force behind the projected increases, with Asia being the quickest expanding app market. The report highlights Alibaba's impact on the market, with online buys accounting for 79% of the company's retail in China.

Furthermore, the report supports its prediction about the Asian market, as it makes a reference to statistics that show Chinese consumers are much more engaged with app and online interactions.

"Compared to U.S. consumers, Chinese consumers are nearly three times as likely to buy food and groceries via their devices, twice as likely to transfer

money using apps, and four times more likely to spend a majority of disposable income on mobile," the report said.

In this regard, App Annie estimates that the Chinese app market will be worth \$2.59 trillion in 2021, while US' will stand at \$820 billion.

All of the foregoing is obviously going to affect app store revenues in the years

to come as well. The report suggests that Apple's App Store will see revenues of \$40 billion this year, while Play Store will average at \$21 billion, pretty much maintaining their current ratio. By 2021, App Annie predicts that Apple's iOS platform will enjoy revenues of \$60 billion, while all third party Android app stores will catch up with Google Play.

You don't really need a PhD in nuclear mathematics to correlate all staggering numbers above to our ever-increasing fondness of spending time online, bent over our smartphones. Apparently, app interactions at a global level took a total of 1.6 trillion hours away from people's lives, while expectations are that this figure would increase to 3.5 trillion over the next four years. The numbers we have quoted so far are also related to the fact that, according to the report, the number of people who use apps will almost double in the mentioned timeframe, with a projected number of 6.3 billion app users, compared to a current figure of 3.4 billion.

App Annie's calculations are generally reliable, but even if they were off by a fraction, they certainly indicate a future where commerce and daily routines are largely running and supported by related apps, for about two thirds of Earth's population. The app boom is definitely changing how we live and its momentum seems to be in full swing, as technology and app-enabled devices become available for record numbers of people.

(Source: appannie)

Police suggest Petya ransomware attack was a distraction

The primary target of a crippling computer virus that spread from Ukraine across the world this week is highly likely to have been that country's computer infrastructure, a top Ukrainian police official told Reuters on Thursday.

Cyber security firms are trying to piece together who was behind the computer worm, dubbed NotPetya by some experts, which has paralyzed thousands of machines worldwide, shutting down ports, factories and offices as it spread through internal organizational networks to an estimated 60 countries.

Ukrainian politicians were quick on Tuesday to blame Russia, but a Kremlin spokesman dismissed "unfounded blanket accusations." Kiev has accused Moscow of two previous cyber strikes on the Ukrainian power grid and other attacks since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

A growing consensus among security researchers, armed with technical evidence, suggests the main purpose of the attack was to install new malware on computers at government and commercial organizations in Ukraine. Rather than extortion, the goal may be to plant



the seeds of future sabotage, experts said.

International firms appear to have been hit through their operations in the country.

Slovakian security software firm ESET released statistics on Thursday showing 75% of the infections detected among its global customer base were in Ukraine, and

that all of the top 10 countries hit were located in central, eastern or southern Europe.

Arne Schoenbohm, president of BSI, Germany's federal cyber security agency, told Reuters in an interview on Thursday that most of the damage from the attack had hit Ukraine, and Russia to a lesser extent, with only a few dozen German firms affected.

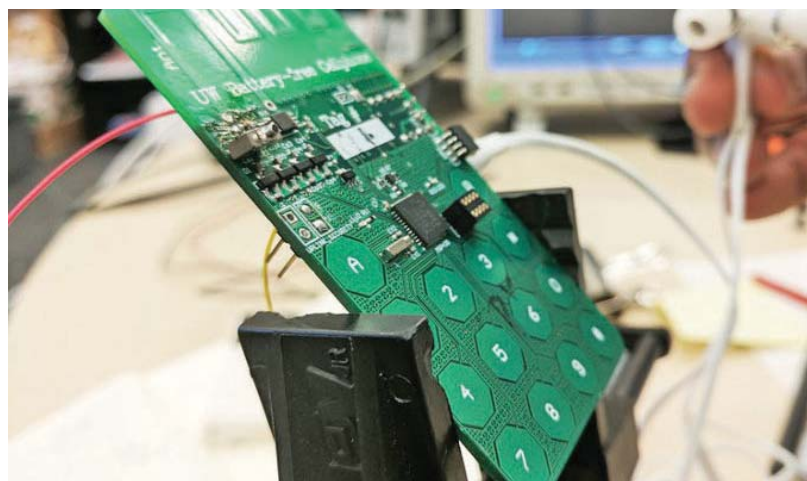
"In all of the known cases, the companies were first infected through a Ukrainian subsidiary," the German official said.

A top Ukrainian police official told Reuters that the extortion demands were likely a smokescreen, echoing working hypotheses from top cyber security firms, who consider NotPetya a "wiper," or tool for destroying data and wiping hard disks clean, that is disguised as ransomware.

"Also involved was the hosting service of an internet provider, which the SBU (Ukraine's state security service) has already questioned about cooperation with Russian intelligence agencies," he said, according to a statement.

(Source: fortune)

Meet the first cell phone that needs no battery to make calls



A research team at the University of Washington in Seattle, headed by Vamsi Talla, has managed to create a prototype which can call by harvesting ambient energy. The research associate at the university's computer science and electrical engineering has been dreaming about this for years now, and the team targeted cell phones precisely because they are the most ubiquitous gadget we never leave home without. Joshua Smith, the head of the research lab, chimes in: "A cell phone is one of the most useful objects there is. Now imagine if your battery ran out and you could still send texts and make calls."

To build the battery-free prototype, the team had to redraw the internals from the ground-up for using the least amount of energy, and goes with analog voice transfer to save on power. It also

appropriated an old Soviet spy tech used to listen to US embassy talk by blasting an emitter with specific radio waves that both activated it, and powered it for the duration. That means a base station is still needed for the battery-free phone to operate, but Mr Talls thinks that cell phone towers could easily serve that purpose, and increase the range significantly in the process.

Currently the prototype only has buttons to dial and an LED light, but the next edition is prepped with an E-ink display for texting, and better call quality. Good times. After all, it was Martin Cooper himself who announced not long ago that radio charging from afar may be the next big thing in mobile, and looks like he might be right. Again.

(Source: wired)

Qualcomm launches new Snapdragon Wear 1200 platform for wearables and IoT



Chipset makes Qualcomm made quite a few announcements at MWC Shanghai earlier today, which revealed the upcoming availability of new platforms for smartphones, wearables and IoT (Internet of Things).

Since we've already reported about the new Qualcomm Snapdragon 450 chip, let's take a look at what the U.S. company has to offer for the wearable market.

The new Snapdragon Wear 1200 complements the existing Snapdragon Wear 1100 and Snapdragon Wear 2100 platforms but brings a couple of new features into the mix.

First of all, the platform includes an LTE system-on-chip (SoC), power management integrated circuit and wireless transceiver, ultra-low power management operation, as well as a global

multimode M1/NB1/E-GPRS modem with support for 15 global RF bands, which have been pre-certified by major carriers across the world.

Also, the Snapdragon Wear 1200 benefits from support for GPS, GLONASS, Galileo and BeiDou constellations, low power geofencing, and cloud-based location services. The platform packs an integrated applications processor (up to 1.3GHz) for Linux and ThreadX based apps and is fully scalable to support VoLTE (voice over LTE), Wi-Fi, and Bluetooth.

The primary purpose of the Snapdragon Wear 1200 platform is to bring LTE connectivity to the wearables industry. According to Qualcomm, the new chip is commercially available and shipping today.

(Source: Qualcomm)

Instagram introduces automatic blocking of offensive comments

Instagram isn't as infamous for its toxic user base as other social media services are (looking at you, Twitter), but just like pretty much every online community out there, there exists a specific subset of its users that take advantage of the relative anonymity to abuse others. To combat this problem, Instagram has just launched a new feature: automatic blocking of offensive comments.

The filter will work both in posts and live video, and will

block comments it finds abusive or offensive. Together with it, a new spam filter is also being introduced, and both of them will be powered by machine learning, which also explains why the company didn't elaborate on what it finds offensive.

But while the offensive comment filter will initially only be available in English, the spam filter will also work in eight additional languages: Spanish,

Portuguese, Arabic, French, German, Russian, Japanese and Chinese. Since Instagram specifically mentions that the algorithms will "improve over time," expect them to be a little rough around the edges. But if you'd rather not trust a computer's judgement on what is and isn't offensive, the feature can optionally be disabled in the app's settings.

(Source: Instagram)

Why neonicotinoid pesticides are slowly killing bees

The typical levels of neonicotinoids found in agricultural areas kill bees and hurt their ability to reproduce, according to the first, large-scale studies on the issue.

Neonicotinoid pesticides commonly found in agricultural areas kill bees and hurt their ability to reproduce, two separate large-scale studies confirmed for the first time Thursday.

The two studies — one that examined honeybees in Canada and the other that looked at three bee species in the United Kingdom, Germany and Hungary — were the first large-scale investigations to test the popular agrochemicals influence on bees in real world settings.

While many studies had connected neonicotinoids — a common class of insecticides derived from nicotine — to bee deaths in the past, few studies had examined how much pesticide is needed to harm bees or how long the exposure must take. Critics argued previous scientific studies used unrealistic quantities of pesticides in their experiments.

■ Bee colonies

The new studies say the environmental levels of neonicotinoids surrounding farms do not obliterate bee colonies outright, but instead kill them over extended periods of time. The pesticides also threaten bee queens in particular — which means colonies have lower reproductive rates.

The new studies say neonicotinoids do



not obliterate bee colonies outright, but instead kill them over extended periods of time. The pesticides also threaten bee queens in particular — which means colonies have lower reproductive rates.

"Neonicotinoids are not the only problem that bees face," Dave Goulson, a biologist at the University of Sussex, who was not involved in either investigation,

said. "But certainly both of these studies suggest very strongly that exposure to these pesticides is one of the factors causing bees to decline."

■ Agricultural chemical use

Amro Zayed, a biologist at York University in Toronto, decided to measure agricultural chemical use near Canadian cornfields grown from neonicoti-

noid-treated seeds. While earlier studies had periodically tracked these chemicals at farms, Zayed's team opted to study them over a full five-month growing season.

Neonicotinoids dissolve in water, and easily make their way into waterways via agricultural runoff, Zayed said. Flowers miles away from a farm can take up the chemicals, which seep into the stems, leaves, pollen and nectar. So Zayed's team of researchers looked for the presence of the neonicotinoids on dead bees, forager bees, nurse bees, larvae, pollen and in nectar.

They found a combination of herbicides, fungicides and pesticides, including a handful of neonicotinoid chemicals. To their surprise, neonicotinoids were mostly detected on pollen from plants other than corn — willow trees, clovers and wildflowers — located near the crop fields.

Before, ecologists had thought bees were only exposed to the pesticides when near a treated, flowering crop, but Zayed's study, published Thursday in *Science*, countered this mindset. The researchers also found the pesticides stuck around throughout the growing season. People had previously assumed the bees' vulnerability to the pesticide lasted only as long as the crop was in bloom.

(Source: pbs.org)

The new studies say neonicotinoids do not obliterate bee colonies outright, but instead kill them over extended periods of time.

An algorithm helps protect Mars Curiosity's wheels

A new algorithm is helping the rover do just that. The software, referred to as traction control, adjusts the speed of Curiosity's wheels depending on the rocks it's climbing. After 18 months of testing at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, the software was uploaded to the rover on Mars in March. Mars Science Laboratory's mission management approved it for use on June 8, after extensive testing at JPL and multiple tests on Mars.

Even before 2013, when the wheels began to show signs of wear, JPL engineers had been studying how to reduce the effects of the rugged Martian surface. On level ground, all of the rover's wheels turn at the same speed. But when a wheel goes over uneven terrain, the incline causes the wheels behind or in front of it to start slipping.

This change in traction is especially problematic when going over pointed, embedded rocks. When this happens, the wheels in front pull the trailing wheels into rocks; the wheels behind push the leading wheels into rocks.

■ Climbing wheel

In either case, the climbing wheel can end up experiencing higher forces, leading to cracks and punctures. The treads on each of Curiosity's six wheels, called

grousers, are designed for climbing rocks. But the spaces between them are more at risk.

"If it's a pointed rock, it's more likely to penetrate the skin between the wheel grousers," said Art Rankin of JPL, the test team lead for the traction control software. The "wheel wear has been cause for concern, and although we estimate they have years of life still in them, we do want to reduce that wear whenever possible to extend the life of the wheels."

The traction control algorithm uses real-time data to adjust each wheel's speed, reducing pressure from the rocks. The software measures changes to the suspension system to figure out the contact points of each wheel. Then, it calculates the correct speed to avoid slippage, improving the rover's traction.

■ Torque sensor

During testing at JPL, the wheels were driven over a six-inch (15-centimeter) force torque sensor on flat terrain. Leading wheels experienced a 20 percent load reduction, while middle wheels experienced an 11 percent load reduction, Rankin said.

Traction control also addresses the problem of wheelies. Occasionally, a climbing wheel will keep rising, lifting off the actual surface of a rock until it's free-spinning.



That increases the forces on the wheels that are still in contact with terrain. When the algorithm detects a wheelie, it adjusts the speeds of the other wheels until the rising wheel is back into contact with the ground.

Rankin said that the traction control software is currently on by default, but can be turned off when needed, such as for regularly scheduled wheel imaging, when the team assesses wheel wear.

(Source: phys.org)

Iceberg the size of Delaware will break off Antarctic ice shelf, scientists say

One of the largest icebergs ever recorded is about to break off an Antarctic ice shelf and float away. The separation of roughly 10 percent of the Antarctic Peninsula's Larsen C ice shelf — equivalent in size to the state of Delaware — from the main body is imminent.

The "calving" event, as scientists call the break, will take place within "days, hours or weeks," the MIDAS Project predicted on Wednesday. A UK-based Antarctic research project, MIDAS investigates the effects of a warming climate on Larsen C and has been monitoring the growth of this major rift in the shelf.

The soon-to-be iceberg, which it's only called once it completely breaks off, is still attached to the ice shelf but moving faster than ever, tripling in speed to more than 10 meters, or about 33 feet, per day

between Saturday and Tuesday. Once the iceberg detaches, the remaining ice shelf will be its smallest recorded size.

■ Significant risk

The event itself will not contribute to sea level rise, since the ice is already in the water. But MIDAS cites one study published in the journal *The Cryosphere* in 2015 that concluded that the break off could pose a significant risk to the stability of the whole ice shelf. If Larsen C were to disintegrate or collapse, as Larsen B (about the size of Rhode Island) did in 2002 and Larsen A did in 1995 that could have an impact on sea levels.

"Ice shelves actually hold back the ice which is on land, (acting) as a cork in bottle," Jonathan Kingslake, a glaciologist and assistant professor at Columbia University's earth and environmental science



department, tells *Newsweek*. "If an ice shelf were to disappear, ice on the land would start to flow faster." Without an ice shelf to block it, an ice sheet could make its way toward water more quickly and contribute to sea level rise. According to

a research team from Swansea University in Wales, if all the glaciers blocked by Larsen C ended up in the water, global sea levels would rise about four inches.

The break off of an iceberg from an ice shelf is a "very dramatic visually stunning event," Kingslake says, but it's a "natural process which is going on all the time. It just so happens that this is a very large one," he adds. "There's no reason to tie this one particularly to human-induced changes." In other words, the Larsen C "calving" is a larger-scale example of a regularly occurring event, but it's not qualitatively different. And though it could indirectly lead to sea level rise if it helps galvanize the disintegration of the entire shelf, Kingslake says there's no consensus that this sequence of events will play out.

(Source: Newsweek)

Cocoa and chocolate are not just treats -- they are good for your cognition

A balanced diet is chocolate in both hands - a phrase commonly used to justify ones chocolate snacking behavior. A phrase now shown to actually harbor some truth, as the cocoa bean is a rich source of flavanols: a class of natural compounds that has neuroprotective effects.

In their recent review published in *Frontiers in Nutrition*, Italian researchers examined the available literature for the effects of acute and chronic administration of cocoa flavanols on different cognitive domains. In other words: what happens to your brain up to a few hours after you eat cocoa flavanols, and what happens when you sustain such a cocoa flavanol enriched diet for a prolonged period of time?

Although randomized controlled trials investigating the acute effect of cocoa flavanols are sparse, most of them point towards a beneficial effect on cognitive performance. Participants showed, among others, enhancements in working memory performance and improved visual information processing after having had cocoa flavanols. And for women, eating cocoa after a night of total sleep deprivation actually counteracted the cognitive impairment (i.e. less accuracy in performing tasks) that such a night brings about. Promising results for people that suffer from chronic sleep deprivation or

work shifts.

■ Mental load

It has to be noted though, that the effects depended on the length and mental load of the used cognitive tests to measure the effect of acute cocoa consumption. In young and healthy adults, for example, a high demanding cognitive test was required to uncover the subtle immediate behavioral effects that cocoa flavanols have on this group.

The effects of relatively long-term ingestion of cocoa flavanols (ranging from 5 days up to 3 months) has generally been investigated in elderly individuals. It turns out that for them cognitive performance was improved by a daily intake of cocoa flavanols. Factors such as attention, processing speed, working memory, and verbal fluency were greatly affected. These effects were, however, most pronounced in older adults with a starting memory decline or other mild cognitive impairments.

And this was exactly the most unexpected and promising result according to authors Valentina Socci and Michele Ferrara from the University of L'Aquila in Italy. "This result suggests the potential of cocoa flavanols to protect cognition in vulnerable populations over time by improving cognitive performance. If you look at the underlying mechanism, the cocoa flavanols have bene-



ficial effects for cardiovascular health and can increase cerebral blood volume in the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus. This structure is particularly affected by aging and therefore the potential source of age-related memory decline in humans."

So should cocoa become a dietary supplement to improve our cognition? "Regular intake of cocoa and chocolate could indeed provide beneficial effects on cognitive functioning over time. There are, however, potential side effects of eating cocoa and chocolate.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Dugongs starve as climate change destroys their food supply

The ocean has always attracted the curious, its hidden depths the subject of folklore and many adventurous tales. One marine creature that has captured the imagination are the sirens of the sea, better known as the dugongs (Order Sirenia). These mammals are quiet companions to shallow waters throughout the Indo-Pacific, including the northern coasts of Australia.

Dugongs are listed as vulnerable on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. Their species decline is obvious from numbers along the Queensland coast; compared to about 72,000 in the 1960s, just 500 were recorded between Cairns to Rockhampton in 2011.

Scott Wooldridge is an ecological modeller and spatial (GIS) analyst. His research focuses on developing management-focused decision-support tools that assess the combined impact of local and global stress factors on the health and resilience of coral and seagrass communities. He has written a paper that investigates how impacts to water quality from river run-off are negatively affecting conditions for the growth of seagrass on which dugongs graze.

To determine water quality in the study zone — the Townsville region of the Great Barrier Reef, which is affected by run-off from the Burdekin River — he integrated remote satellite imagery measuring the depth of sunlight penetration and linked it to the abundance of seagrass recorded during field surveys off the coast. Traditionally scientists have dropped secci discs (devices that measure water clarity) to measure water quality, he says, "whereas in recent years we have been able to link those secci depth measurements with the observations from the satellite".

The innovative technology provides an enhanced view of the Great Barrier Reef that will help marine scientists predict stressors to coastal waters and advise marine park managers how to reduce impacts to ecosystems.

(Source: Cosmos Magazine)

A lizard-inspired robot gripper may solve our space-junk problems

Space junk is a huge problem in orbit. Over 500,000 pieces of debris are currently orbiting the Earth at up to 17,500 miles per hour, and we haven't yet figured out how to clean it up. But engineers at Stanford may have made a breakthrough: They've designed a robotic gripper based on gecko's feet that works in zero-g. The end goal is to use it to clean up space junk.

The problem with existing technology is that everything is designed to work at Earth's gravity, within Earth's temperature range. Scotch tape and other sticky substances aren't adhesive in the cold temperatures of space. Suction cups rely on atmospheric pressure, which doesn't exist in the vacuum of space. And many other devices, such as harpoons, nets and traditional grippers, require too much force, which could send debris in dangerous and unintended directions.

Geckos can climb up walls and other vertical surfaces because of microscopic flaps on their feet that create an adhesive force. By modeling their technology on these flaps, the team was able to create a gripper that only requires a small push to stick to a surface. Instead of using force to grab the object, coauthor Elliot Hawkes says in the news release, "I can touch the adhesive pads very gently to a floating object, squeeze the pads toward each other so that they're locked and then I'm able to move the object around."

So far, the gripper has been tested in multiple zero gravity environments, including on a parabolic airplane flight (also known as the vomit comet).

A small version of the robotic gripper was sent to the International Space Station for testing aboard the station, but it hasn't yet been used outside in the vacuum of space.

(Source: Engadget)

Jellied sea creatures confound scientists

Drifting throngs of jelly-like, glowing organisms native to tropical seas far from shore have invaded Pacific coastal waters from Southern California to the Gulf of Alaska this year, baffling researchers and frustrating fishing crews.

Known as pyrosomes, they are tubular colonies of hundreds or thousands of tiny individual creatures called zooids, enmeshed together in a gelatinous tunic roughly the consistency of gummy bear candy.

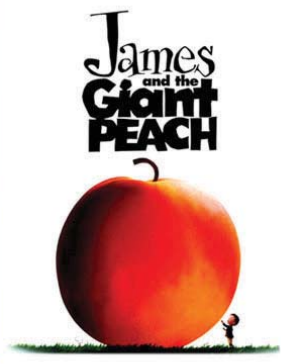
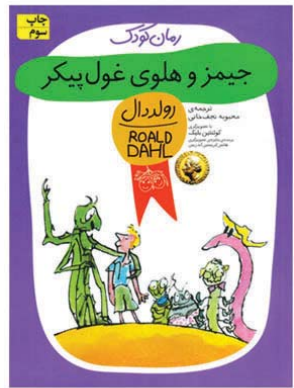
No relation to jellyfish, they resemble bumpy, opaque pickles in the water, typically a few centimeters or inches long, though some grow 1 or 2 feet (30cm or 60cm) in length.

They feed by filtering microscopic algae, or phytoplankton, as they float with the current, and are known to glow in the dark — a bioluminescent characteristic that gives the organism its scientific name — *Pyrosoma*, Greek for "fire body."

Pyrosomes have rarely if ever been seen along the U.S. West Coast until 2012, when first spotted in California waters. Since then, they have gradually multiplied and spread north, before exploding in numbers this spring, according to scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

(Source: Reuters)

READ AND WATCH!



James and the Giant Peach

James and the Giant Peach is a popular children's novel written in 1961 by British author Roald Dahl. A 1996 British-American musical fantasy film directed by Henry Selick was produced based on the book.

The Iranian website ketabak.com introduce the Persian version of the book and the animation for children and young adults. The book was translated into Persian by Gita Gorgani in 2006 and the Karavan publication released the book.

What is about?

It centers on a young English orphan boy who enters a gigantic, magical peach, and has a wild and surreal cross-world adventure with seven magically-altered garden bugs he meets. They set off on a journey to escape from James' two mean and cruel aunts. Roald Dahl was originally going to write about a giant cherry, but changed it to James and the Giant Peach because a peach is "prettier, bigger and squishier than a cherry."

TIME OUT IN TEHRAN



The Adventure of Rock Pool

Play time: June 6- July 11

Director: Hossein Fadaee-Hossein

Location: Honar Hall, Tehran

Written by British playwright David Wood, the play is originally titled "The Selfish Shellfish" in English.

It depicts the dilemma of rock pool creatures facing pollution from an oil slick. Urchin, Mussel, Starfish, Seagull and the shellfish H.C. fight to survive an oil spill resulting from the collision of ships at sea. The audience is encouraged to participate in battles with Sludge and The Great Slick.

M's LITTLE BOOKSHELF



کلاغ سیاه به سفر می رود!

The Black Crow Goes on a Journey!

Author: Babak Saberi

Illustrator: Shabnam Chaichian

Publisher: Fatemi

The book centers on the importance of companionship. It is about a black crow who decides to go on a journey. He does not need any suitcase or ticket for his travel. All he needs is a friend to accompany him to enjoy the journey together.

WORLD OF TALES

The Rolling Pumpkin



There was an old lady whose daughter lived on the other side of the jungle. One day she missed her daughter and her son-in-law, and decided to visit them. The way of the jungle was long, dangerous and full of animals. The next morning she put her stuff together and was on her way.



She hadn't gone far yet that she was confronted by the wolf. The wolf said "wow what a great meal, a wonderful one!" The old lady was afraid but did not lose her cool. "Hi Mr. wolf. How are you feeling? You are nice and kind, clean and well spoken. Please step aside please let me get on my way... I want to go to my daughter and son-in-law." The wolf said "no way I let you go, it's been two days that I have had anything to eat and haven't given my kids any food." The smart old lady said "I am small and tiny, see how weak I am. Let me go to my daughter's, I will be eating all sort of different kind of food and I will gain a lot of weight. Then I'll come and you can eat me." The old lady went on her way until it was noon time.



All of a sudden a big tiger jumped in front of her from a tree, and with a howl said: "wow what a great meal, a wonderful one!" The old lady was very scared but tried to keep her cool and said "hi my tiger my beautiful tiger. I know you are kind let me go to my party!" The tiger said "I am hungry old lady." The old lady with a sigh said "I am no use for you, just skin and bone. Let me go to the party, you know the reason? I want to go and eat roasted chicken and all sort of food and get chubby." The tiger was satisfied and told her to go but come back very soon.



The old lady continued her journey until sun down when a horrifying sound of a lion froze her on her spot. The old lady with such a nice tongue said "Hay Mr. Lion the king of the Jungle! The Lord of tiger and wolf! You are the king of all the animals! You are the Lord of elephants and mouse! Let me go, I have got lots to do. The lion said "No way! I let you go, the road is closed you cannot go." The old lady with her wisdom said "wow what a pleasure, but I am very tiny and weak. Let me go to the party, you know the reason? I want to eat roasted chicken and all sort of food. Then I'll be chubby and fat then I'll be back. You can eat me." The lion said "I have given up eating you, I'll be here waiting for you!"



At night the old lady arrived at her daughter's. They were very happy to see her and kissed and hugged her. They made her delicious food. The old lady told her the story. Few days passed and it was time to go back home. The old lady told her daughter "my kind daughter, all your problems should be mine, do you have a very big pumpkin?" When she brought her the huge pumpkin, they emptied inside of it. The old lady said goodbye to her daughter and her husband and went inside of the pumpkin. Her daughter put the top on the pumpkin and pushed it.



The pumpkin rolled and rolled and rolled until it got to the lion. The lion yelled "Hay rolling pumpkin have you seen an old lady on your way? An old lady that is fat and big?" The old lady from inside of the pumpkin said with shaking voice "Swear the God I have not seen, I am not aware of an old lady. Push me, Roll me, and Let me go." The lion was tricked pushed the pumpkin.



The pumpkin rolled and rolled until it got to the tiger. The tiger screamed "Hay rolling pumpkin have you seen an old chubby and fat lady?" The old lady from inside of the pumpkin said with terrified voice "Swear the God I have not seen, I am not aware of an old lady. Push me, Roll me, and Let me go." The tiger was tricked and pushed the pumpkin.



The pumpkin rolled and rolled until it got to the wolf. When the wolf asked the rolling pumpkin of the old lady, he recognized her voice, and said "you are the old lady, I'll catch you with both of my hands." The wolf attacked the pumpkin. The wise old lady that had thought of everything, jumped out from the other end of the pumpkin and when the wolf jumped inside the pumpkin she pushed it towards the edge of the rocky road and the wolf fell down the deep edge. The old lady went to her house happily.

(Source: koodakan.org)

LITTLE HANDS

Very hungry caterpillar with egg carton!

This simple Book Week craft activity is a great one for toddlers. Just cut them a row of egg cups from the carton and let them loose with the paints. You can then use it as a prop while you're reading Eric Carle's classic, The Very Hungry Caterpillar.

What you need

- 1 x row of egg cups from an egg carton
- Red paint
- Green paint
- 2 x googly craft eyes
- 1 x small piece black pipe cleaner
- Glue

Activity

Cut a row of six egg cups from the carton. Trim and tidy the cups using a craft knife so you get a nice caterpillar shape. Now let your toddler loose with green paint for the body and red paint for the head. Glue on the googly eyes. Now pierce two holes in the top of the caterpillar's head. Form a small piece of pipe cleaner into a 'V' shape and thread it through the holes, so it pokes up as antennae. All done!



(Source: kidspot.com.au)

PLAY TIME

Music Matching

Write the correct number in front of each word:

clarinet	guitar	piano
French horn	drum set	violin
electric guitar	tambourine	harp
trumpet	maracas	mandolin
bass	saxophone	xylophone

A maze for a child to navigate, starting from a character at the bottom and ending at a school building at the top.

Fools line up

Here's the sneaky solution that your foolish victims will soon be seeking.

Man tried to ram car into people outside French mosque

A man has been arrested after he tried to drive a car into a crowd in front of a mosque in the French capital of Paris suburb of Creteil, police said.

The 4x4 vehicle "struck pillars and barriers in place to protect the mosque of Creteil", in the southeast of the capital, before speeding off and crashing into a traffic island, police said before adding that no one was injured in incident.

The driver, who was also the owner of the vehicle, fled but was arrested "without incident" at his home shortly afterwards, police added.

An investigation, to be carried out by a regular police department rather than an anti-terrorism unit, would determine if the man could be held accountable for his actions, the statement said.

Police said the motive behind the actions were unclear but Le Parisien newspaper said the man wanted to avenge the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit-linked attacks in France.

Last week, six people, including two children were injured when a car ploughed into a crowd of Muslim wor-



shippers as they left a sports center after offering Eid al-Fitr prayers in the northern English city of Newcastle.

Earlier this month, a man drove a van at Muslim worshippers leaving a mosque in London. He was charged with terrorism-related murder and attempted murder.

One person was killed and at least 10 others wounded in the attack outside London's Finsbury Park mosque.

The driver was grabbed at the scene by some of the Muslim worshippers and pinned down until police arrived, while others did what they could to help the

wounded.

After being seized, the suspect said he had wanted to kill "many Muslim people", one witness told journalists.

Thursday's incident in Creteil happened as French religious sites and other public places remain under high security after a string of attacks.

France has been in a state of emergency, which gives sweeping powers to the police, since November 2015, when at least 130 people were killed in coordinated attacks.

The country has suffered several attacks since then, including a truck-ramming assault that killed at least 86 people in Nice last year.

France's President Emmanuel Macron is seeking to extend the country's state of emergency until at least November 1, according to a statement from the president's office.

He has also asked his government to prepare draft legislation to reinforce security measures permanently beyond the state of emergency.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Trump's taste for confronting Putin to be tested face-to-face

The United States President Donald Trump heads into his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin with one question looming large: how much is he willing to confront the man whose meddling in the 2016 election may have helped him win?

The encounter scheduled for the sidelines of next week's G-20 summit in Germany comes amid a widening federal investigation into possible collusion between Trump associates and the Russian government. Trump last week gave a rare explicit acknowledgment of the Kremlin-directed effort to disrupt the U.S. presidential campaign.

National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster told reporters on Thursday there was no set agenda for the meeting, and he didn't know whether the president planned to raise the issue of electoral interference.

But for Trump, who remains a foreign policy novice, the encounter could prove a defining moment in his presidency. Five months after becoming commander-in-chief, he's now responsible for confronting foreign efforts to undermine national security.

While Trump referenced Russia's meddling in the U.S. election in a tweet on June 23, he did so by blaming his predecessor in a series of tweets for not having done more to stop the interference. He followed that up on Monday with a tweet that former President Barack Obama's inaction amounted to obstruction or collusion, two accusations that Trump's critics have directed at him.

World Watching

During next week's Group of 20 meeting in Germany, Trump will be under intense pressure to demonstrate that he's not the Putin "puppet" Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton labeled him during the campaign. Not only will American voters and foreign leaders be watching, but so will a special counsel now examining whether Trump tried to impede the Russia investigation.

The Trump administration hasn't taken any new steps to punish Russia over the political interference since entering office, and it has taken only modest action to shore up the nation's election system against future manipulation by foreign adversaries.

His aides and allies say he has responded with appropriate action, including a commission led by Vice President Mike Pence to examine the nation's voting systems, all of which are controlled by state and local

governments.

The panel is examining "everything from voter fraud here domestically to possible hacking by foreign governments," senior adviser Kellyanne Conway told ABC News on Sunday.

Tolerance Signal

But Trump appointed the commission to investigate his own unsubstantiated claim that 3 million ineligible immigrants cast ballots for Clinton, not to probe Russian meddling in the election. And critics say the administration hasn't done enough to deter future interference.

"We have yet to see any strong statement from the current administration condemning what the Russians did and warning them not to do it again," Obama's Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said during a national security conference held at the U.S. Capitol on June 22.

The Trump administration's handling of the episode is "sending the signals" that future attempts at meddling in the U.S. political process won't bring consequences, Johnson said.

Trump allies have also pointed to an executive order he issued last month instructing federal agencies to take steps to prevent cyber-attacks.

In January, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designated the U.S. voting system as "critical infrastructure," meaning state election officials can receive the kind of federal assistance offered to financial institutions and electric utilities.

At a June 21 Senate Intelligence Committee hearing, Jeanette Manfra, the department's acting deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity and communications, said DHS is "leading federal efforts" to partner with state and local election officials as well as private-sector vendors to improve security at the ballot box.

Sanctions Bill

Aides also say Trump's foreign policy decisions refute accusations he is too cozy with Russia.

In Syria, the administration has maintained that Putin-ally Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must leave power, and escalated U.S. involvement there, bombing a Syrian airfield where the administration says a chemical weapons attack was launched. On Monday, the White House warned the Syrian regime would pay a "heavy price" if it mounted another chemical attack, saying the U.S. had detected preparations for such an operation.

The Treasury Department also identified 38 additional individuals and entities subject to financial sanctions Obama imposed against Russia over its incursion into Ukraine.

But Democrats argue Trump should use additional sanctions to punish Russia over the elections. Chuck Schumer, the Senate Democratic Leader, said in an interview on Sunday with ABC News that "if Donald Trump wants to do something about Russia and Russia meddling, instead of just saying, 'Obama didn't do enough,' he should support a measure introduced in the House to toughen penalties.

Presidential Prerogatives

A White House official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe internal discussions, said the administration was concerned that the bill would restrict Trump's freedom to conduct foreign policy and limit his ability to bargain sanctions relief for concessions from the Kremlin.

The Trump administration has embraced the existing Russia sanctions imposed under Obama, both in relation for the incursion into Crimea and for the election interference, the official said. Obama ejected 35 Russian diplomats from the country and seized two U.S. compounds used by Russian diplomats. He imposed financial penalties on people alleged to have participated in the hack of material from the Democratic National Committee and Clinton's campaign.

The White House official acknowledged that the Trump administration is considering returning the two compounds to the Russians, but said no decision had been made. Trump won't give something away for nothing, the official said.

Less clear is whether the Trump administration has conducted any offensive cyber operations in response to the 2016 Russian interference. Obama authorized a plan to seed cyber weapons inside Russian infrastructure that could be detonated amid an escalating exchange, according to the Washington Post report that appeared to prompt Trump's public comments. The White House official said that many national security efforts are classified, and that the administration by policy did not telegraph potential responses to adversaries.

(Source: Bloomberg)

It is with Iran's help that Daesh is on its last breath: Larijani

The Parliamentary speaker argued the ban was unlikely to work, because terrorists "seldom to never" enter a country under their own names or nationalities.

"President Trump and American officials are aware of this. The terrorists must be defeated at the source. Where are their sources? Where are they? They are in Afghanistan, in Syria, in Iraq," he said.

Saudi demands on Qatar not 'logical'

Larijani criticized the ongoing boycott of Qatar by

Saudi Arabia and its allies until a series of demands, including cutting ties with Iran, are met.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt sparked a rift with Qatar on June 5, accusing the country of supporting terrorism and destabilizing the region.

Among the conditions of the embargo were that Qatar must: shut down the Al Jazeera news network, halt the development of a Turkish military base in the country, and cut ties to extremist organizations.

The U.S. has called for a resolution to the crisis.

Larijani questioned whether Saudi Arabia had the right to "dictate" conditions to another independent nation.

"Is it logical, is it mature for one country to dictate to another and say you must do as I say? Well you must cease relations, for example, with Iran?" he said. "I do not believe that ... the Saudis carry this sort of weight to say these sort of things."

(Source: Press TV)

Iran on a fast-track to beating noncommunicable diseases: WHO

The Supreme Council of Health and Food Security, led by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, facilitates multilateral collaboration across government, taking a "health in all" approach that considers health as integral to all policies, from agriculture and trade to urban planning.

In addition, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education has established a national NCD committee to coordinate its national NCD action plan. Health authorities have signed agreements with multiple ministries and organizations, like sport and education, to collaborate on beating NCDs, from promoting healthier lifestyles to producing healthier food.

"Physical activity should be enhanced in workplaces and in schools," says President Rouhani. "People should be trained and encouraged to have a healthy diet and be sufficiently physically active. In-

take of salt, sugar and fatty acid should be reduced. All sections of our society, individuals, government, NGOs, charities, have a shared responsibility for health and should collaborate with each other."

The case for change

Such action is crucial in Iran, where NCDs account for over three-quarters of all deaths. In the past 20 years, NCD deaths have risen by 14.5%. An adult Iranian's probability of dying prematurely (between 30 and 70 years) from one of the four main NCDs is now 17%.

Responding to the NCDs epidemic in all countries is feasible. But high-level commitment is essential. And in Iran, the country's leadership is demonstrating such support.

"Iran is unique in harnessing its system and context to make it work for NCDs," says Dr Asmus Hammerich, from WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office's Department of NCDs. "They have lots of

engagement from all areas, including the political and economic sectors."

Achieving outcomes on NCDs is feasible

In line with its sixth National Development Plan, Iran recently announced a €450 million (US\$ 480 million) increase in its NCDs budget per year over the next five years, demonstrating action on NCDs is critical for its future.

Dietary risk factors, linked to cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity, receive strong attention. The Food and Drug Administration urges manufacturers to reformulate products to contribute to a health-enabling environment by making healthier foods more available.

Since 2016, Iran has introduced a "traffic light" food labelling scheme; salt, sugar, and fat regulation; and restrictions on imports of palm oil or food containing it.

Subsequently, salt in fresh cheese

has halved, from 4% to 2%. Levels of trans-fatty acids in cooking oils used at home, and by food industries, have been cut to below 2% and 5% as part of a push to reduce fats in Iranian diets by 10%. Sugar in flavoured, carbonated or fruit drinks has fallen below 10%. A health promotion campaign combating obesity educates people on the benefits of healthy diets and physical activity.

The goal: a healthier society

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is showing it is feasible for countries, and the world, to respond to the NCDs epidemic," says Dr Oleg Chestnov, WHO's assistant director-general for NCDs and mental health. "Through political commitment and all-of-government action, progress is being made to improve the health of Iranians, by protecting them from NCDs and providing needed care."

(Source: World Health Organization)

ISIL 'state of falsehood' came to end: Iraqi PM

ISIL terrorists late on June 21 blew up the Grand al-Nuri Mosque and its Hadba (Hunchback) minaret.

Iraqi authorities and officials from the United States-led coalition purportedly fighting ISIL terrorists said the destruction of the site, sometimes referred to as Iraq's Tower of Pisa, is a sign of the extremists' imminent loss of Mosul.

The Iraqi army forces have besieged the last ISIL positions in the southern areas of Old Mosul and they expect to purge the area of the terrorists by the next few days.

Iraqi government forces are nearing the end of their eight-month campaign to capture the de-facto capital of ISIL in Iraq.

The media bureau of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command announced in a statement on Wednesday that army troops had established full control over Hadarat al-Saada and al-Ahmadiyya neighborhoods northwest of Grand al-Nuri Mosque, where purported ISIL ringleader Ibrahim al-Samarrai aka Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the formation of the group's so-called caliphate back in 2014.

Earlier on Wednesday, Federal Police Forces Commander Lieutenant General Shaker Jawdat said security forces were moving through al-Farouq district and advancing towards Bab al-Toub, Serjkhana, Bab al-Jadid and Bab al-Lakash areas in the heart of Mosul's Old City.

He revealed that government troops were in control of more than 70 percent of ISIL's last bastion in Mosul.

Jawdat noted that army troops were engaged in fierce battles with an estimated 300 ISIL terrorists in the Old City.

Iraqi forces seize more ground

Reports coming out of Mosul say ISIL terrorists have been using Mosul residents as human shields. The terrorists force women and children to cover them in the streets as they know that Iraqi security forces will not target civilians.

Moreover, when the terrorists lose a region, they use human shields to secure their way out of the area.

The Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting, and launched the battle in the west on February 19.

An estimated 862,000 people have been displaced from Mosul ever since the battle to retake the city began nine months ago. A total of 195,000 civilians have also returned, mainly to the liberated areas of eastern Mosul.

(Source: Press TV)

Yemeni missile hits Saudi base, kills six soldiers

Yemeni army soldiers, backed by fighters from allied Popular Committees, have conducted a fresh missile attack against a military base in Saudi Arabia's southern Najran region, killing six Saudi regime soldiers.

The Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported that the missile hit the al-Shabakah base.

Yemeni forces carried out a similar attack on the al-Farizah military base in Saudi Arabia's southwestern Jizan region, which set the post on fire, the report added.

The Yemeni forces have recently stepped up their retaliatory assaults against Riyadh's deadly war on the impoverished country.

Separately on Thursday, a Yemeni military source reported intense clashes between militants loyal to former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, and Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters in the Sirwah district of the central Ma'rib Province.

Six pro-Hadi militants and 14 Ansarullah fighters lost their lives in the clashes over the past 24 hours, the source added.

Yemen's Khabar news agency said a high-ranking pro-Hadi commander was among the casualties of the Ma'rib scuffles.

Other reports said dozens of Saudi regime mercenaries had been killed in the clashes.

The House of Saud regime has been leading a brutal military campaign against Yemen for more than two years to eliminate the Ansarullah movement and reinstall Riyadh-backed Hadi.

The Saudi regime aggression, however, has failed to achieve its goals and killed more than 12,000 Yemenis.

The Ansarullah movement, backed by the army and popular forces, has been defending Yemen against the protracted Saudi war. It has also been running state affairs since 2014, when Hadi resigned and fled to Riyadh at a time the country was grappling with threats from al-Qaeda terrorists.

(Source: Press TV)

Why Morocco's street protests are growing more dangerous

The greatest single obstacle to democratization and better development is Morocco's endemic corruption. Moroccans recount bribes extracted by police, doctors and government officials. Accounts by Moroccan business executives and investigative journalists describe systemic looting of the economy from the royal palace, run in part through companies owned by Mohammed and his family. "Corrupt practices" that existed under Hassan II "have become much more institutionalized with King Mohammed VI," a leaked U.S. diplomatic cable reported back in 2009. Subsequent reports by the Moroccan investigative website Lakome, and in the French daily Le Monde sketched parts of this corrupt system, after which authorities shut down the website and arrested its editor. In the king's annual Throne Day message last year, he urged Moroccans to "fight corruption ... publicly exposing those who are involved." Yet Moroccan journalists who investigate corruption are periodically arrested.

Perhaps the king and his aides can concoct a new mix of promises and repressions to subdue the current protests as they did the Arab Spring. Even if they manage that, their pretense of reform to defuse public grievance and violent upheaval is getting less effective each time — and more dangerous.

(Source: Newsweek)

Bournemouth sign Chelsea defender for a club record fee

Bournemouth have signed defender Nathan Ake for a club record fee from Premier League champions Chelsea.

The Netherlands international, 22, had a spell on loan with the Cherries last season and scored three goals in 12 games before being recalled.

The fee, reported to be £20m, breaks Bournemouth's previous record - the £15m paid to Liverpool for winger Jordan Ibe in July 2016.



Ake has signed a long-term deal and is the Cherries' third summer signing.

England striker Jermain Defoe signed on Thursday from Sunderland and Bosnia goalkeeper Asmir Begovic arrived from Chelsea in May.

Ake joined Chelsea in 2012 and made 17 appearances for the Stamford Bridge side. He spent the 2015-16 season on loan at Watford in the Premier League.

"I had a great time last season so I'm really happy to be back," said Ake. "The fan haven't seen the best of me yet."

Ake, who moved to Chelsea from Dutch side Feyenoord aged 16, has two caps for Netherlands and made his debut in a friendly against Morocco in June.

Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe said: "Nathan is an outstanding young player with a fantastic attitude and a great desire to learn and develop."

"He has a very bright future ahead of him and I'm very pleased to say that future is here."

(Source: BBC)

Farah admits more work needed to defend world titles

British long-distance runner Mo Farah acknowledges he needs to be in a better shape to defend his 5,000 meters and 10,000m titles at London's world championships in August.

Running his first 10,000m race since claiming a gold at 2016 Rio Olympics, Farah triumphed in Ostrava on Wednesday but fell short of breaking his own British record.

The double Olympic champion hopes he has enough time to improve before the world championships starting on Aug. 4.

"I still need to do a lot more work," Farah told reporters. "I'm not quite there yet and it showed. I was a bit rusty."

"But it is my first 10,000m (this season). I've got more work to do so now I'll get on my flight to London, be there for a few days and then back to my training camp in Font Romeu. Hopefully I've got enough time."

Farah's back-to-back Olympic 5,000m and 10,000m gold medals and five world titles make him one of the greatest distance runners of all time.

The 34-year-old, who is scheduled to appear at Diamond League meetings in London and Monaco next month, will be turning his attention on running marathon events after the championships.

(Source: Reuters)

Real Madrid sell Zinedine Zidane's son to Alaves

Real Madrid have sold midfielder Enzo Zidane, the son of manager Zinedine Zidane, to Alaves.

The deal was announced on Thursday as the younger Zidane signed a three-year contract with the club that finished ninth in La Liga last season.



The 22-year-old had come up through the Madrid academy and scored in his lone appearance with the senior team in November in a 6-1 Copa del Rey win over third-tier Cultural Leonesa.

He appeared in 78 games for Madrid's Castilla reserve team, scoring seven goals with 15 assists.

Enzo Zidane is the oldest of the Real Madrid boss' four children.

A statement on Alaves' official website added: "Deportivo Alaves wants to welcome Enzo Zidane and wishes him the best of luck for the new season."

(Source: Soccernet)

Draw pits Murray against qualifier

Andy Murray will begin his Wimbledon title defence against either a qualifier or lucky loser and has been drawn in the same half as French Open champion Rafael Nadal.

Murray will not find out his opening-round opponent until later on Friday but the British world No 1 has been handed a potentially tricky first week.

He could face Dustin Brown in the second round, the German knocked out Nadal two years ago, while big-hitting Italian Fabio Fognini may lurk in round three.

The Scot could face former two-time Wimbledon champion Nadal in the semi-finals with a potential blockbuster between Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic also on the cards.

(Source: BBC)

Chile: Five questions for the finalists

Penalty-shootout winners over Lionel Messi's Argentina in the 2015 and 2016 Copa America finals, Chile claimed another scalp from the spot on Wednesday evening, overcoming Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in the shoot-out that decided the first semi-final at the FIFA Confederations Cup Russia 2017.

While there is evidently more to Argentina and Portugal than their star players, these three hard-fought wins are proof that Chile's current generation have learned how to approach such high-stakes encounters.

In analyzing the victory that took La Roja into the final of Russia 2017, FIFA.com asks and answers five key questions.

1. Did Chile up their game from their previous match?

Yes. Operating as a unit once more and playing a precise passing game, La Roja controlled the pace of play, expending energy only when they needed to. Though tired by their exertions, the Chileans ended the game in good shape and pressed more convincingly for the winner than their opponents, with Pizzi using only three of his four substitutions.

Juan Pizzi: "I think we deserved to win. We created more chances than them and better ones too, especially in extra time. It was hard to make changes because we were doing well and it might have upset our balance. We're worthy finalists."

2. Did they meet their defensive objectives?

Yes. The Chileans cancelled out a fearsome attack led by the in-form Ronaldo. As well as cutting the supply to him, they forced him to drop uncomfortably deep. Pizzi's men also covered well, dropping back whenever needed to prevent the Portuguese from creating opportunities.

Jean Beausejour: "We won because we stuck to our usual game plan, which is to dictate the play and keep the ball, getting forward at the right times and taking the necessary precautions."

3. Did they meet their attacking objectives?

No. Once again Chile failed to translate



their spells of domination into goals. While their opponents have had a part to play in that, the fact is that La Roja have managed just two goals in 300 minutes. That said, their determination to get forward allowed them to keep the ball away from their box and, by maintaining possession, take some well-earned breathers.

Pizzi: "I'll be more worried the day we don't create any chances. Fortunately, we were right on target in the shoot-out."

4. Did their star players perform?

Yes. While Claudio Bravo excelled in the shoot-out, he also distinguished himself in normal and extra-time. Arturo Vidal covered virtually every blade of grass, and though Alexis Sanchez did not have the

greatest of games, he did create one of his side's best chances and tucked his penalty away. There needs to be a special mention also for one of Chile's habitual unsung heroes, Charles Aranguiz, who did not put a foot wrong.

Bravo: "Penalties are not a lottery. You have to work at them and there's a lot of information and intelligence involved too, not to mention your own skills. I knew what I had to do, but we all did a great job in beating the European champions, which is no easy thing."

5. Is the so-called "Pinilla Syndrome" now a thing of the past?

Yes. On 28 June 2014, Chile faced FIFA World Cup™ hosts Brazil in the Round of

16, a match La Roja lost on penalties after Mauricio Pinilla had struck the crossbar with a minute of extra-time remaining. When Vidal struck the post on Wednesday two minutes from the end of extra-time and Martin Rodriguez hit the rebound against the crossbar, the South Americans could have been forgiven for casting their minds back to that fateful day at Brazil 2014. This time, however, the outcome was entirely different, an indication of the winning mindset of this Roja squad.

Vidal: "When things get tough, this team does what it's always done and shows exactly what it's made of: unity, commitment and good old Chilean heart."

(Source: FIFA)

Vicente del Bosque 'would like Alvaro Morata to stay' at Real Madrid



Vicente del Bosque says that he would try and persuade reported Manchester United target Alvaro Morata not to leave Real Madrid were he still at the club.

Reports in both Spain and England have claimed that personal terms have been agreed between Morata's camp and United, but Madrid are holding out for a fee of at least €80 million, although Blancos president Florentino Perez has denied that any formal negotiations with United have taken place.

Former Madrid and Spain coach Del Bosque, who first knew Morata as a kid in the club's youth system, told El Transistor that were he in charge he would be looking to keep a player who scored 20 goals despite limited playing time.

"These are decisions for the players," Del Bosque said. "If I were the Real Madrid coach I would like him to stay. He is a senior Spain international and Madrid should never let go the best players."

Del Bosque also commented on the situation with Cristiano Ronaldo, whose future remains unclear due to his apparent upset and anger at being called to appear in a Spanish court on July 31 to answer to an alleged €14.7 million tax fraud.

"On a footballing level it is clear that Real Madrid would lose a huge amount [were Ronaldo to leave]," Del Bosque said. "The other question is still to be seen, and whether it is about an interpretation or not, everyone has to pay [their taxes]."

(Source: Soccernet)

Usain Bolt seeks quick fix for back issue with German doctor



Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt believes his German doctor Hans-Wilhelm Mueller-Wohlfahrt will fix the retiring world record holder's back problems in time for the August world championships in London.

Bolt will see his long-time physician after suffering a stiff back in the build-up to his 100 meters run at the Ostrava Golden Spike meeting on Wednesday, a race he won in a modest 10.06 seconds.

"I am going to see my doctor now so I know he will fix every problem," Bolt told reporters. "Then all I need to do is train hard and get myself into some shape."

Bolt also went to Mueller-Wohlfahrt with a hamstring injury before winning

three gold medals at the Rio Olympics last year.

The Jamaican is scheduled to feature in only one more event at next month's Diamond League meeting in Monaco ahead of the championships but is not worried about lack of activity.

"I tell you guys year after year, one run doesn't really matter to me -- it always comes down to the championship," he added. "For me it is all about getting myself into great shape and that is the focus for me right now."

Bolt, who has eight Olympic gold medals and 13 world championship medals, is scheduled to retire after the world championships.

(Source: Reuters)

Police find tennis star Venus Williams at fault in fatal car crash

Venus Williams, the world's former top-ranked tennis player, was the driver at fault in a two-car crash in Florida on June 9 that killed a passenger in the other vehicle, according to the initial police report on the incident released on Thursday.

News of the fatal wreck near Williams' home in Palm Beach Gardens surfaced in media accounts on Thursday, days before the 37-year-old athlete was planning to compete at Wimbledon, which begins in England next week.

An accident report filed by the investigating police officer, given to Reuters by the city clerk's office, said Williams was to blame for failing to yield the right of way to another motorist at a four-way intersection.

The report said the other driver, Linda Barson, 68, had just entered the intersection on a green light when she reported seeing Williams' sport utility vehicle "cut across in front" of her and "was unable to avoid crashing into" Williams.

Another motorist who saw the accident also told police Barson had a green light when Williams crossed in front of her.

According to the report, Williams told police she drove into the intersection after exiting from another street on a green



light, but stopped at the median break to wait for cross-traffic to clear, then proceeded without seeing Barson.

"The driver of (Williams' car) is at fault for violating the right of way of", the investigating officer concluded.

Barson's passenger, identified in the report as Jerome Barson, 78, was taken to a Florida trauma center. He died 13 days later, according to the Palm Beach county medical examiner.

The police report estimated Williams was traveling at about 5 miles per hour (8 kph) at the time of impact and was not distracted or suspected of any drug or alcohol use.

Williams' attorney, Malcolm Cunningham, did not directly address the accident report's finding that his client was at fault, but said the tennis star was not issued "any citations or traffic violations."

He expressed condolences to the man's family and said he had no reason to believe the accident would affect Williams' plans to play at Wimbledon. There was no indication in the report that she was injured.

"This is an unfortunate accident, and Venus expresses her deepest condolences to the family who lost a loved one," Cunningham said.

An attorney for the Barson family did not return a call seeking comment.

Williams is currently ranked 11th in the world and seeded 10th at the Wimbledon tournament, which she has won five times.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran wins four medals at World Taekwondo Championships

S P O R T S The Iranian delegation snatched four medals at the 2017 World Taekwondo Championships in Muju, South Korea.

In the men's under-54kg category, Iran's Armin Hadipour lost to South Korean Kim Tae-Hun, bronze medallist at the 2016 Rio Olympics, 10-6 to in the final match.

Mirhashem Hosseini from Iran lost to China's Zhao Shuai 11-5 in the men's under 63kg final match.

Iran's Masoud Hajizavareh claimed a bronze medal in the men's under -74 kg category.

The gold medal went to Russian Maksim Khramtsov in the class.

And finally, Kimia Alizadeh, the first Iranian woman to win an Olympic medal, claimed a silver medal after being defeated by Ruth Gbagbi from Ivory Coast 19-9 in the women's -62kg class.

Host South Korea captured five gold medals to lead all participants, and its 10 medals overall also topped the standings. South Korea had one silver and four bronze medals to go along with its five titles.

This was the largest world championships ever in the competition's 44-year history, with 971 athletes and 796 officials from 183 nations participating.

The competition made history on another level. The North Korea-led International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) sent a demonstration team of 16 to perform at both the opening and closing ceremonies. It was the first-ever ITF demonstration at a WTF event held in South Korea.



© Tehran Times/ Maezdi Zare

Iran fails to qualify for FIVB Volleyball U21 World Championship semis

S P O R T S Iran failed to book a place at the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship after losing to Poland on Thursday.

The Persians were defeated against their powerhouse European opponent 3-2 (27-29, 25-21, 20-25, 25-20, 15-11) in Pool E.

Tomasz Fornal was the best scorer for his team

with 20 points. Bartosz Kwolek and captain Jakub Kochanowski followed with 17 and 16, respectively. Iran's captain Rasoul Aghchehli was once again the best scorer of the match with 25 points.

Iran will play Argentina on Saturday in 5th-8th place classification match.

"That was not a match, it was a war. Both teams

showed excellent performances. The important point is that we made more mistakes. That is why Poland won the battle," Iran coach Behrouz Ataei told fivb.org.com.

Javad Karimi, player of Iran, said: "We made a very good match against the world champion from 2015. We tried very hard to win and we are so sad to have lost."

Cristiano Ronaldo announces the birth of twins



Cristiano Ronaldo announced the birth of twins via his Facebook page.

The announcement came after Portugal's loss to Chile at the Confederations Cup in Russia on Wednesday, confirming earlier reports from Portuguese outlets.

"I was in the service of the national team ... even though my two (children) were born," Ronaldo wrote in Portuguese.

He added that he was headed to be with his "children for the first time" and will miss the third-place game. Sunday's game in Moscow will be against either

Germany or Mexico.

Ronaldo says he "will not forget" the understanding shown by Portugal team management.

The Portuguese news media reported that Ronaldo used a surrogate from the U.S., according to the BBC. Ronaldo also has a 7-year-old son, Cristiano Ronaldo Jr.

The Portuguese football federation said Ronaldo had informed the organization before the announcement that the twins had been born, according to the BBC.

(Source: USA Today)

Tour de France 2017: 'Carry on living' in face of terror



With 12 million people set to line the roadside for the Tour de France and the changing face of terrorist attacks targeting large public gatherings, security is at its peak for this year's race.

France remains in a state of emergency and on high alert to a possible terror attack and two teams of French special forces will oversee the race for the second successive year, one in a helicopter overhead and another on the road alongside the Tour.

Race director Christian Prudhomme's home city of Paris is no

stranger to terrorist attacks, notably the ones in November 2015 when 130 people were killed.

"Do you think young people in a café on November 13 were aware they were taking risks?" "The main message is we have to carry on living despite the measures around us."

Prudhomme feels a personal responsibility that everyone -- riders, fans, even stray dogs -- makes it home safe from this year's three-week race as it gets under way in Dusseldorf in Germany on Saturday.

(Source: CNN)

Iranian women pocket four medals in Kyrgyzstan Alysh wrestling cup

The Iranian women's national Alysh wrestling team has collected four medals, including two gold ones, at an international tournament in Kyrgyzstan.

On Thursday evening, Zahra Yazdani recorded impressive performances in the 55-kilogram freestyle competitions, and clinched the gold medal of the weight division. She prevailed over a representative from the host nation 6-0 in her first contest, before overwhelming an Uzbek competitor by technical fall in the next bout and progressing to the final.

Yazdani downed a Bulgarian belt wrestler in the final showdown and claimed the title.

In the 65-kilogram weight category of freestyle contests, Leila Salarvand defeated a Kazakh wrestler and advanced to the final round, where she lost to a Kyrgyz sportswoman and received the silver.



Earlier in the day, Yazdani and Salarvand had received a silver and bronze medal respectively in classic bouts.

The international alysh wrestling tournament in Kyrgyzstan was held on June 28 and 29. The event

brought together dozens of wrestlers from various countries, including Bulgaria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Alysh is an upright wrestling style. Competitors wear trousers, jackets and belts, and must hold on to their opponents' belts at all times.

Their objective is to throw their rivals onto the mat. Throws are given scores between 1 and 6, and the first player to win 6 points wins the match. The sport is regulated by International Federation of Wrestling of Belts "Alysh" (IFWBA).

Alysh has a centuries-old history in Iran, and is practiced in the country's northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran, as well as southwestern Khuzestan Province and central-north Semnan Province.

(Source: Press TV)

Arsenal chief executive: 'I want the club to be successful'

Arsenal chief executive Ivan Gazidis has insisted that the club are "looking for top-quality players" this summer and defended the Gunners' decision to stick with manager Arsene Wenger.

The longtime Arsenal boss came under fire from supporters during a campaign in which the club finished outside the top four for the first time since 1996, Wenger's first year in charge.

However, Wenger was given a new two-year contract after leading the Emirates club to the FA Cup title in May. And Gazidis believes it was the right decision for the club.

"It wasn't a sentimental decision," Gazidis

said at a Q&A with fans.

"It was a mutual one."

Arsenal have traditionally been reluctant to spend big on transfers compared to the likes of Premier League rivals Manchester United, Manchester City and Chelsea, which has become a point of frustration for fans of the club.

The club spent more than £30 million for each of Granit Xhaka and Shkodran Mustafi last summer, and are looking to make further investments into the team this summer.

"We spent an unprecedented amount. Over £110m during that summer," he said. "We signed one of the players in the Bundesliga team of the season.

"We're looking for top-quality players. We've got three times as many scouts as we had four years ago. I believe that to be a world-class football club you've got to be world class off the pitch.

"I care about the club and those values. I want the club to be successful."

Gazidis also defended Arsenal majority owner Stan Kroenke, who last month received a bid of \$1.3 billion for his shares from minority owner Alisher Usmanov, a source confirmed to ESPN FC.

Kroenke has faced increasing criticism from Arsenal supporters in recent years, with some fans viewing him as an absentee owner

who is more interested in profit than trophies.

"He hasn't put debt on the football club," Gazidis said. "He's been nothing but supportive. If you think it's all about money, there are far more easier ways than owning sports teams.

"I think we do need a better connection with our fanbase. I was telling someone recently I hadn't had an hour of my time since the end of the season which wasn't about club business.

"The goal is to win things for this football club and do it in a way which is consistent with our club values."

(Source: Soccernet)

Iran team named for World Para Athletics Championships

S P O R T S Iran has announced a 20-strong team that will represent the country at the World Para Athletics Championships.

The prestigious competition will be held from 14-23 July in London.

The 2017 World Para Athletics Championships and the IAAF World Championships (August 4-13) will bring together 3000 athletes from more than 200 countries.

It will be the first time the two events will be hosted by the same city in the same summer.

Iran Athletics Team:

- Mohsen Kaedi – shot put and javelin F34
- Siamak Saleh Farajzadeh – shot put and discus F34
- Javad Hardani – shot put F38
- Mohsen Majidi – discus F37
- Mehdi Alizadeh – shot put F33
- Jalil Bagheri – discus F56 and shot put F55
- Ali Mohammadyari – discus F56
- Aliasghar Javanmardi – shot put F35
- Mehran Nekouei – shot put F35
- Mohammad Khalvandi – javelin F57
- Abdollah Heydari – javelin F57
- Amrollah Papi – javelin F57
- Sajjad Nikparast – javelin F13
- Hamed Amiri – shot put F55 and javelin F54
- Asadollah Azimi – shot put F53
- Alireza Mokhtari Homami – shot put F53
- Saman Pakbaz – shot put F12
- Sajjad Mohammadian – shot put F42
- Hashemeh Mottaghian – javelin F56
- Fatemeh Montazeri – shot put F57

Italy's Lazio want Sardar Azmoun

Iran international striker Sardar Azmoun has caught the eye of Italian top flight team Lazio.

According to Sky Sport Italia, the 22-year-old is under contract until June 2018 and has been in Russia since January 2013 for Rubin Kazan and then Rostov.

The Italian team wants to sign Azmoun as a replacement for Fabio Borini.

Borini is going to join Milan.

Azmoun scored 12 goals with three assists in 41 competitive games for Rostov this season, while he has 19 goals in 26 senior caps for Iran.

The Iranian forward had been already linked with Liverpool, Celtic and Sunderland.

(Source: Sky Sports)

Taremi free to open talks with interested clubs

Persepolis and Iran national football team striker Mehdi Taremi has been granted permission to negotiate with interested clubs.

Iran international striker had been already linked with move to Greek giants, namely Olympiakos, Panathinaikos, PAOK, AEK and Panionios.

The best goalscorer of the Iranian football league in the previous two seasons, has been also linked with a move to Croatia's GNK Dinamo Zagreb and Urawa Reds of Japan.

Taremi has one year left remaining on his current contract at Persepolis.

He has scored three vital goals in Iran's last three matches in the 2018 World Cup qualification.

(Source: Tasnim)

Mojtaba Jabbari joins Iran's Esteghlal

Mojtaba Jabbari has returned to Esteghlal of Tehran football team after four years.

The 35-year-old midfielder has penned a two-year contract with the Iranian giant.

Jabbari started his playing career at Rah Ahan in 1995. He joined Esteghlal youth team after four years.

Jabbari was transferred to Abomoslem in 2002 and returned to his former club Esteghlal in 2005.

The attacking midfielder moved to Al-Ahli of Qatar in 2013 and rejoined Esteghlal after four years.

He will wear his No. 8 shirt in Esteghlal.

Jabbari has also played for Iran national football team 31 times and scored three goals.

(Source: Tasnim)

Giti Pasand completes signing of Brazilian Vitor Hugo

Iranian futsal club Giti Pasand has completed the signing of Brazilian Vitor Hugo.

The 28-year-old has joined Giti Pasand on a seven-month contract for an undisclosed fee.

He has joined the Isfahan based team from Joaçaba futsal team.

"This is a new experience in my futsal life. I am confident and I believe I can succeed. I would like to thank Joaçaba coaching staff and fans," Hugo said.

Sanaye Giti Pasand Isfahan Football Club is an Iranian football club based in Isfahan, Iran. The team currently competes in the Azadegan League. The club is known for its Futsal team, which is one of the best in Asia.

(Source: Radiocatarinense)

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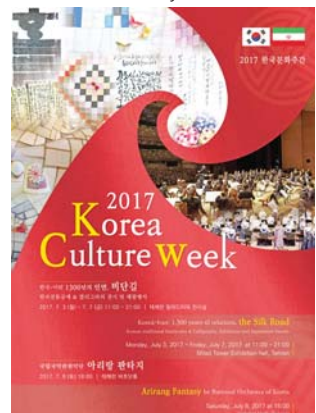
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Tehran to host Korean cultural festival

TEHRAN — South Korea will organize a cultural festival at Tehran's Milad Tower on July 3, the embassy of the country announced in a press release on Friday.



festival A poster for S. Korea cultural festival

Korean calligraphy works and handicrafts will be showcased during the five-day festival that aims to promote years of cultural exchange between Iran and Korea.

Artisans and calligraphers from the country will attend the festival to create handicrafts and calligraphy works at the workshops that are scheduled to be arranged at the festival.

In addition, the National Orchestra of Korea is scheduled to perform Arirang Fantasy, a Korean folk song often considered as the unofficial national anthem of Korea, at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on July 8.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian still photographers showcase works at Tehran exhibit

TEHRAN — Iranian still photographers are displaying their latest works in an exhibition that opened at Tehran's Qasr Garden Museum on Friday.

The exhibition is part of the 3rd Celebration of Iranian Society of Still Photographers.

Works by Ali Nikraftar, Mohammad Foqani, Nazanin Salamian, Zahra Mosafa, Habib Majidi, Ehsan Jaber and several other photographers are on display at the exhibit.

The exhibition will be running until July 6 at the museum located on Motahhari St. near Police Square.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

Hepta Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by 9-year-old artists, including Mahzari Safavi, Mohammad Taheri, Sajjad Afshari and Moein Hassani.

The exhibit titled "From Air, Fire, Earth and Water" is showcasing paintings of mythological figures from the Shahnameh, the masterpiece of Persian poet Ferdowsi.

The exhibition will run until July 12 at the gallery located at 3 Nikushahr Dead End, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

A collection of paintings by Farshin Tahmasb is on display in an exhibition at Shokuh Gallery.

The exhibit named "Fragile" will be running until July 5 at the gallery located at 19 Amir Nuri Alley, North Salimi St. near Andarzgu Blvd.

An exhibition of paintings by Adel Yunesi is currently underway at Iranshahr Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until July 11 at the gallery that can be found at 69 Sepand St., off Karim Khan Ave.

Paintings by Farah Soltani are on display in an exhibition at Saleh Gallery.

The exhibit titled "After a Long Night" runs until July 12 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

An exhibition of paintings by Ebrahim Ganjian is underway at Atbin Gallery.

The exhibit named "Among the Yews" will run until July 11 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Ave., off Vali-e Asr St.

Academy invites eight Iranian cineastes for 2017 membership

TEHRAN — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has picked eight Iranian cineastes to join its membership this year.

The academy released the list of invitees with 774 new members from 57 countries this year, a new record for invitees in a single year, the organization has announced via an official release.

Filmmakers Rakhshan Bani-Etemad and Bahman Qobadi are seen in the writers' branch, while Leila Hatami and Golshifteh Farahani are listed in the actors' branch.

Other Iranian invitees include director Mohammad Rasoulif, film editor Hayedeh Safiyari, sound engineer Mohammadreza Delpak and producer Hengameh Panahi.

Legendary filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami was among the list of the invitees last year.

The list reveals the academy's effort to continue to diversify,



Left to right, this combination photo features Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Leila Hatami, Hayedeh Safiyari and Mohammadreza Delpak.

illustrating the big push to add women and people of color to its organization.

The academy has been under pressure to diversify its membership for several years.

This year's class, 39 percent

of which is comprised of women, reflects a 359 percent jump, from 2015 to 2017, in the number of women invited to join the Academy.

People of color make up 30 percent of the 744 members added, a group that includes Barry Jenkins,

whose film "Moonlight" won Best Picture at the 2017 ceremony, Janelle Monáe, who appeared in "Moonlight" and the Oscar-nominated "Hidden Figures", and Jordan Peele, whose film "Get Out" has been one of 2017's biggest commercial and critical hits.

Children's film festival opens in Isfahan

TEHRAN — The 30th International Film Festival for Children and Youth opened in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on Thursday night.

A large number of children came together at Nur Garden to attend the opening ceremony of the event, which had been organized in Hamedan in western Iran in its few previous editions.

"It gives me great pleasure to be with you children and young adults tonight," the secretary of the festival, Alireza Rezadad, said at the ceremony.

"This week provides an opportunity for children and their parents to watch 35 films in the official competition and share their views with filmmakers participating in

the event," he added.

Groups of Iranian voice actors are attending the festival to dub foreign-language films competing in the event.

"I congratulate children for the return of the festival to Isfahan and hope it will be organized in the city forever," Isfahan Mayor Mehdi Jamalnejad said in a brief speech.

The organizers plan to honor Marzieh Borumand, the director of the popular puppet series "Grandmother's Home" and "School of Mice", and Rasul Sadr-Ameli, the director of the acclaimed movies "I'm Taraneh, 15", "Waiting for a Miracle" and "The Girl in Sneakers", for their lifetime achievements during the festival.



A girl holds balloons among a huge crowd attending the opening ceremony of the 30th International Film Festival for Children and Youth at Nur Garden in Isfahan on June 29, 2017. (IFFCY)

Halle Berry, Michelle Rodriguez speak out on diversity and Hollywood

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Halle Berry, the only black woman to ever win a best actress Oscar, said her 2002 win turned out to be meaningless, and "Fast and Furious" star Michelle Rodriguez warned she may quit the action movie franchise unless filmmakers "show some love for women."

Their comments proved a reality check for women in Hollywood on Wednesday even as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said it invited 298 more women to join its ranks in a bid to improve diversity at the organization behind the Oscars.

Berry in 2002 won the best actress Oscar for "Monster's Ball" becoming the first black woman to do so. Fifteen years on, she remains the only woman of color to get the honor.

"Wow, that moment really meant nothing. It meant nothing. I thought it meant something, but I think it meant nothing," she told Teen Vogue editor Elaine Welteroth in a video interview at the Cannes Lion festival released late Tuesday.

Berry said she reached that troubling conclusion in 2016 when all 20 of the Oscar acting nominees were white, sparking the #OscarsSoWhite backlash.

"I was profoundly hurt by that, and saddened by that," Berry said, adding that it had prompted her to want to start directing and producing to make more opportunities for actors of color.

Elsewhere, Rodriguez, who plays Vin Diesel's love interest in five of the eight "Fast and Furious" box office hits, suggested she was prepared to



Actress Halle Berry poses at the opening of the photographic exhibition "Beauty Culture" at the Annenberg Space for Photography in Los Angeles, California May 19, 2011. (Reuters/Fred Prouser)

quit her role as tough street racer Letty Ortiz over the portrayal of women.

"F8 (the 8th film) is out digitally today," she wrote on her Instagram account on Tuesday above a montage of photos from the film.

"I hope they decide to show some love to the women of the franchise on the next one or I just might have to say goodbye to a loved franchise," she continued.

It's not the first time Rodriguez has spoken out.

In an interview in May with Entertainment Weekly, she said women in action films should have "more female camaraderie, (and have) women do things independently outside of what the boys are doing - now that is truly the voice of female independence."

The "Fast and Furious" franchise has taken in more than \$5 billion at the box office worldwide since 2001 and two more films are planned for release in 2019 and 2021.

Paddington Bear creator Michael Bond dies aged 91

LONDON (Reuters) — Michael Bond, the British creator of Paddington Bear, a marmalade sandwich-loving refugee from Peru who entertained generations of children with his exploits in London, died on Tuesday aged 91 after a short illness.

Wearing a tag round his neck that read "Please look after this bear", Paddington was named after the London railway station of the same name where he was found after a boat journey from "darkest Peru", according to Bond's 1958 story "A Bear called Paddington".

Bond said the inspiration for the character came when he spotted a teddy bear in his flat, and wondered what would happen if a real bear arrived at Paddington Station like a World War Two refugee with a label around his neck.

"Glancing round in search of inspiration my gaze came to rest on Paddington, who gave me a hard stare from the mantelpiece, and the muse struck," Bond wrote in the Radio Times magazine in 2014.

"I knew exactly how my own parents would react if they saw it, particularly if it had a label round its neck, like a refugee in the last war. There are few things sadder in life than a refugee," Bond said.

Paddington was taken in by the Brown family and his adventures and mishaps were detailed in more than 20 books, the last of which, "Paddington's Finest Hour", was published in April.

The stories invariably saw Paddington, fueled by marmalade sandwiches, caught up in accidental



Books are for sale at the Paddington Bear shop in Paddington station, London, Britain, June 28, 2017. (Reuters/Toby Melville)

but well-intentioned scrapes, while examples of rudeness were met with one of his "hard stares".

Ann-Janine Murtagh, executive publisher of children's books at HarperCollins, which sold more than 35 million Paddington books, said Bond was a true gentleman and the most enchanting of writers.

Actor Hugh Bonneville, who played Mr Brown in the 2014 film "Paddington", said it seemed particularly poignant to learn about Bond's death on the last day of filming of a sequel. The new film is due out later this year.

"He leaves a special legacy: long live the bear from darkest Peru," he said.

Bond, who was born in Newbury, a town west of London, in 1926, wrote another series of children's books about a guinea pig called Olga da Polga and adult detective stores featuring Monsieur Pamplemousse.

He started writing while serving in the British army in Egypt and once said that he could have papered his walls with rejection slips.

Spider-Man swings into Marvel Universe for latest film

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Fans were crawling up the walls with excitement as the stars of "Spider-Man: Homecoming" swung into the wider Marvel Cinematic Universe series of films, which have dominated the global box office for years.

British actor Tom Holland, who plays the web-slinging hero, showed up at the premiere accompanied by an actor in full Spider-Man costume who was lying on the

bonnet of a car and performing back flips for the crowd.

"I think for me I've realized the responsibility of being a role model for young kids everywhere," Holland told reporters, adding that the character's motto that "with great power comes great responsibility", resonated with him.

The film is the first time that Spider-Man, one of Disney-owned Marvel's most

popular characters, is the lead in a film set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Kevin Feige, the president of Marvel Studios, championed the cause of getting Spider-Man into the Disney-run sphere.

"Now we have the first time Spider-Man in the Marvel Universe where he belongs," he stated at the premiere, adding "I sort of am still pinching myself. I can't believe it. I can't believe we're premiering the movie

tonight and I can't wait for people to see it."

The film sees "Iron Man" actor Robert Downey Jr, another staple of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, who has featured in several of the series' films, taking a co-starring role alongside Holland.

The film is released in European cinemas on July 5, and July 7 in the United States.

London's V&A goes underground for new gallery

LONDON (Reuters) — London's Victoria and Albert Museum has built a vast, underground exhibition space as part of a 55 million pound (\$70 million) refurbishment.

The three-year project saw the equivalent of 10 Olympic-sized swimming pools of earth removed from the site of the art and design museum to accommodate the new Sainsbury gallery, 18 metres below ground.

The new facilities, dubbed the Exhibition Road Quarter, are the biggest building project at the museum in a century.

They also include the new Sackler Courtyard open space and the Blavatnik Hall, which will provide a new entrance to the popular tourist attraction.

In a nod to the museum's championing of ceramics,

the courtyard is paved with 11,000 handmade porcelain tiles, arranged in 15 different patterns.

"What we've done ... is create this living room for London which blends the street and the museum," said Tristram Hunt, the director of the museum.

The museum will open the new facilities to the public on June 30.