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Forest cleanup Officials from the Belarussian Emergency Ministry worked Monday at a burial site for pesticides thought to date from the Soviet era. About 950 tons of pesticide were extracted at the site, in a forest some 160 kilometers, or 100 miles, south of Minsk. The pesticides were loaded into plastic barrels for transportation to Germany.

Tiny Qatar expands sphere of influence

DOHA, QATAR

Emir's intentions murky as country reflects a shift in rocky Arab politics

BY ANTHONY SHADID

Qatar is a thumb-shaped spit of sand on the Gulf, and its native population, at 225,000, would not fill one of Cairo's

biggest neighborhoods. But for a country that inspires equal parts irritation and admiration, here is its résumé, so far, in the Arab revolts: It helped topple Libya's leader, proved decisive in isolating Syria's, offered itself as a mediator in Yemen and counts Tunisia's most powerful figure as a friend.

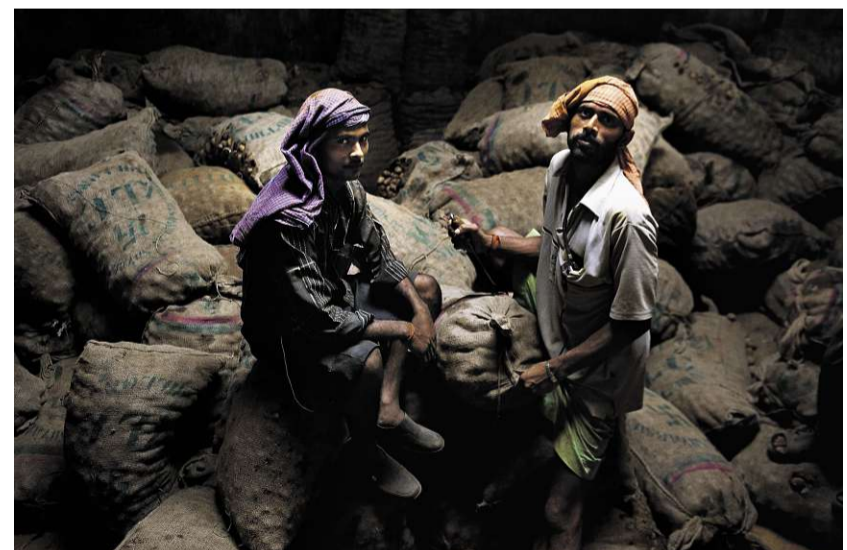
Qatar has emerged as the most dynamic Arab country in the tumult realigning the region. Its intentions remain murky even to some of its neighbors and allies: Some say Qatar

NEWS ANALYSIS

has a Napoleon complex; others say it has an Islamist agenda. But its influence is a lesson in what can be had with some of the world's largest gas reserves, the region's most influential news channel in Al Jazeera, an array of contacts — many with an Islamist bent — and policymaking vested in the hands of a single, admittedly ambitious man, its emir, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, 59.

Qatar has become a vital counterpoint in an Arab world where traditional powers are roiled by revolution, ossified by aging leaderships, or still reeling from civil war, and where the United States is increasingly viewed as a power in decline.

"Do they fill a void? Yes," said Bassma Koudmani, a Syrian opposition leader in Paris, who credited Qatar with a key role in the Arab League's startling decision Saturday to suspend Syria and QATAR, PAGE 5



A 'mini-India' always boiling Indian workers resting on sacks of potatoes in the state of Manipur. The state's 36 fractious tribes find protesting a way of life. PAGE 2

Google, looking far ahead, chases its wildest dreams

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA

BY CLAIRE CAIN MILLER AND NICK BILTON

In a top-secret laboratory in an undisclosed San Francisco Bay Area location where robots run free, the future is being imagined.

It is a place where your refrigerator could be connected to the Internet, so it could order groceries when they ran low. Your dinner plate could post to a social network what you are eating. Your robot could go to the office while you stay home in your pajamas. And you could, perhaps, take an elevator to outer space. These are just a few of the dreams be-

ing chased at Google X, the clandestine lab where Google is tackling a list of 100 shoot-for-the-stars ideas. In interviews, a dozen people discussed the list; some work at the lab or elsewhere at Google, and some have been briefed on the project. But none would speak for attribution because Google is so secretive about the effort that many of its employees do not even know the lab exists.

Although most of the ideas on the list are in the conceptual stage, nowhere near reality, two people briefed on the project said one product would be released by the end of the year, although they would not say what it was.

"They're pretty far out in front right GOOGLE, PAGE 19

Imperiled, Italy ready for super effort by technocrat

ROME

If anointed, Mario Monti has shining E.U. credits, but lacks political tools

BY ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

In the news media he is known simply as Super Mario.

But Mario Monti, most likely the next leader of the Italian government, which is being formed amid a crisis that threatens the European monetary union itself, will face a strong challenge in living up to his nickname as he tries to steer his country from economic turmoil and through the machinations of Italian politics.

The consensus in Italy is that President Giorgio Napolitano, who nominated Mr. Monti on Sunday to replace the departing prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, chose judiciously, picking an economist with strong European credentials and longstanding familiarity with European power brokers.

It remains to be seen, however, whether Mr. Monti — who has no hands-on political experience at home — can convince the financial markets that he can overcome Italy's snarled politics and implement the cost-saving measures that the country needs to whittle down a mountain of debt and to bolster growth.

On Monday, Mr. Monti began talks to form the new government, likely of technocrats, consulting with party leaders during a day of back-to-back meetings. He is set to speak with business and trade union leaders on Tuesday, before finalizing his cabinet.

"Mr. Monti brings credibility and legitimacy, but also the notion that if he fails and his efforts fail, everyone will be worse off," said Moisés Naim, a senior associate in the international economics program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington who knows Mr. Monti. "The bottom line is that Italians have lost their alibi once Berlusconi is gone and the hard work starts; there are no excuses any more."

Mr. Monti, 68, is as much an outsider to the political palazzi in Rome as he is at home in Milan, where he taught political economy and is president of Bocconi University. He is also at home in Brussels, where he spent more than a MONTI, PAGE 4

Will E.C.B. help nations as much as it helps banks?

FRANKFURT

Borrowing costs spike on fears that it won't act as lender of last resort

BY JACK EWING

Is it time for the European Central Bank to be as generous to countries as it is to banks?

Since the beginning of the financial crisis, the E.C.B. has been lending euro area banks as much money as they want, trying to maintain the liquidity — or continual flow of money — that is the lifeblood of the global financial system.

But because the bank has refused to offer the same easy lending service to countries like Italy and Spain, it is not confronting the euro area's most fundamental problem. And so, the governments saddled with debt are having to pay high prices to borrow money on the open market.

Investors pushed up interest rates on Italy's debt to record-high levels last week during the political crisis there. And even Monday, after the supposedly calming effect of a new, technocratic prime minister in Rome, lenders were demanding that Italy pay interest rates at levels high enough to eventually bankrupt the country.

In an auction of five-year bonds, Italy had to pay a rate of 6.29 percent, compared with 5.32 percent at a similar auction a month ago.

And Italy's 10-year bonds, which crested well above 7 percent last week in the secondary market, were still dangerously high Monday, at 6.77 percent — more than three times what Germany must pay on comparable bonds. In a further sign of investor anxiety about the weaker links in the euro chain, Spanish 10-year bond yields rose above 6 percent for the first time since August.

It is an atmosphere of mistrust reminiscent of the aftermath of the Lehman Brothers collapse in 2008. European banks are demanding higher interest rates for the overnight lending to one another that is essential to keep money circulating.

Some, fearing other banks' vulnerability to the debt of Italy, Spain and other beleaguered countries, are refusing to make such loans at all. That is why the E.C.B. has been willing to lend to the banks as needed.

But the biggest fear — the one implicit in all the talk of "contagion" and a potential "Lehman moment" — is not that any one bank will succumb to a liquidity crisis. It is that an entire country might do so, if it can no longer obtain the credit it requires to stay in business.

And at least so far, the E.C.B. has not done the one thing that could help calm EURO, PAGE 18

BUILT-IN WEAKNESSES OF THE EURO

In a new book, an economist calls for sweeping change in "the union of the euro," Paul Taylor writes. PAGE 21

UNICREDIT TO SLIM DOWN WITH JOB CUTS

The Italian bank said the trims would run to 2015 and save it 8 percent in personnel costs in 2012. PAGE 16

WORLD NEWS

Wider net cast in hacking cases

Records of illicit intercepts of phone messages presented to a judge's inquiry on Monday appear to show that the practice was widespread at other newspapers besides The News of the World, the tabloid that Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. empire shut down in July over the scandal. PAGE 4

Justices to rule on health act

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear a challenge to the 2010 health care overhaul law, President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement. The development set the stage for oral arguments by March and a decision in June. PAGE 7

Jordan's king urges Assad to go

Pressure against Syria grew Monday as King Abdullah II of Jordan said that President Bashar al-Assad should step aside and European officials increased sanctions against some of the country's citizens and moved to further restrict investment in Syria. PAGE 6

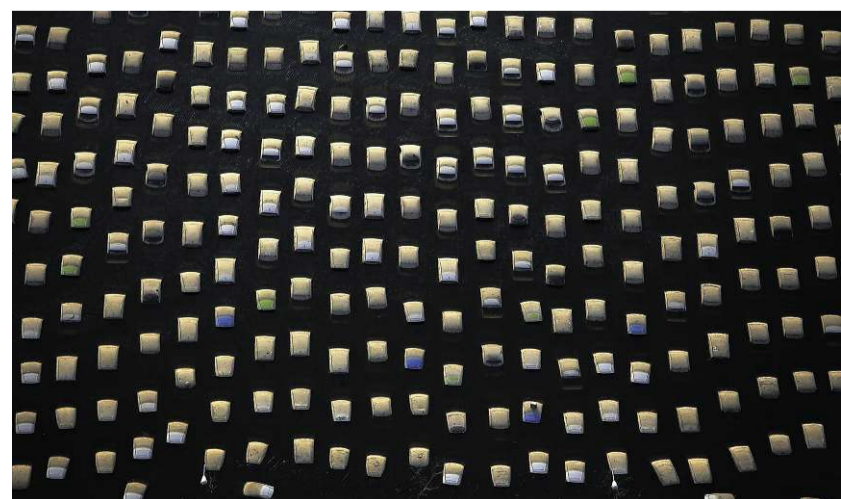
BUSINESS

Deutsche Bank chief to leave

Josef Ackermann said he would not seek the chairmanship after he retires as chief executive in May. PAGE 16

Achilles' heel of fast networks

The Internet's great promise — constant access to huge amounts of data — is also fraught with risks. PAGE 16



In over their heads Submerged cars at a Honda plant in Ayutthaya Province in central Thailand, where flood cleanup had begun Monday in four industrial areas.

VIEWS

James Carroll

As upward mobility has stalled, ranking has crept into more and more aspects of American life — at a time when America's pre-eminence in the world looks increasingly hollow. PAGE 8

Afghans in transition

Most Afghans see progress in the quality of their lives. Will that survive the transition? Karl F. Inderfurth and Theodore L. Eliot Jr. assess the results of an Asia Foundation survey. PAGE 8

ONLINE

Veterans as college recruits

In an effort to attract more veterans to Columbia University, Curtis Rodgers, a dean of admissions, began recruiting at military bases. Almost immediately he noticed some stark and pleasant differences between the Marines and the typical applicants. Marines were less aggressive, more open about academic weaknesses and more understated. nytimes.com/education

NEWSSTAND PRICES

Algeria D175	Brazil R\$ 10.00	Czech Rep. CZK 200	Germany € 1.00
Andorra € 3.00	Bulgaria € 1.55	Denmark DKK 20	Ghana G 1.15
Armenia € 1.00	Canada C\$ 1.20	Ecuador \$ 1.00	Hong Kong HK\$ 1.00
Azerbaijan AZN 10.00	Canada C\$ 1.20	Egypt E£ 1.00	Hong Kong HK\$ 1.00
Bahamas B\$ 1.2	Chile P\$ 1.50	France € 1.00	India ₹ 1.00
Bahrain B\$ 1.2	China R\$ 1.00	France € 1.00	India ₹ 1.00
Bhutan Nu\$ 1.00	Costa Rica ₡ 1.00	France € 1.00	India ₹ 1.00
Bolivia Bs\$ 2.75	Croatia HRK 1.00	France € 1.00	India ₹ 1.00
Bosnia & Herzegovina KM 1.00	Cyprus € 1.00	France € 1.00	India ₹ 1.00

IN THIS ISSUE

No. 40,023	Business 16
Crossword 15	Culture 12
Style 10	Sports 14
Views 8	

CURRENCIES NEW YORK, MONDAY 1:30PM

	NEW YORK, MONDAY 1:30PM	PREVIOUS
▼ Euro	€1= \$1.3620	\$1.3750
▼ Pound	£1= \$1.5900	\$1.6070
▲ Yen	¥1= ¥77.020	¥77.110
▲ S. Franc	₣1= ₣0.9070	₣0.9010

STOCK INDEXES MONDAY

▼ The Dow 1:30pm	12,072.55	-0.67%
▼ FTSE 100 close	5,519.04	-0.47%
▲ Nikkei 225 close	8,603.70	+1.05%

Full currency rates Page 20