

Storm damage to cost Germany 500m euros

Berlin

German insurers estimated yesterday that ferocious gales that battered Germany caused 500 million euros (\$614 million) in damages, as the number of dead across the country rose to eight. The Netherlands bore the initial brunt of Thursday's severe storms which slammed in with winds of up to 140 kilometres an hour off the North Sea before barrelling across northern Europe



Al Assaf to lead Saudi Davos delegation

Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's delegation to the World Economic Forum in Davos next week will be led by state minister Ibrahim al-Assaf, who was released from detention related to an anti-corruption purge. Assaf, who was also a former finance minister and a board member of Saudi Aramco, was among people detained by a new anti-corruption body.



Germany is a key player and it must demonstrate leadership in Europe and the world,"

Christine Lagarde,
IMF Managing director



Blood test detects common cancers

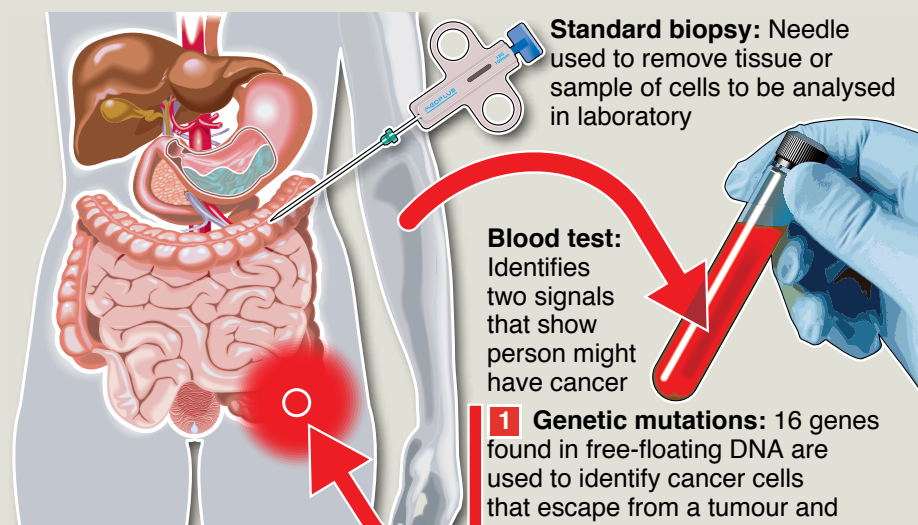
A blood test can detect the presence of eight common cancer types, long before symptoms of the disease arise. CancerSEEK detects tiny amounts of DNA and proteins released into the blood-stream from tumours.

The work, reported in the journal Science, could one day lead to a tool for routinely screening people and catching tumours when chances are best for a cure.

Researchers, led by Nickolas Papadopoulos, Bert Vogelstein, and others at Johns Hopkins University in

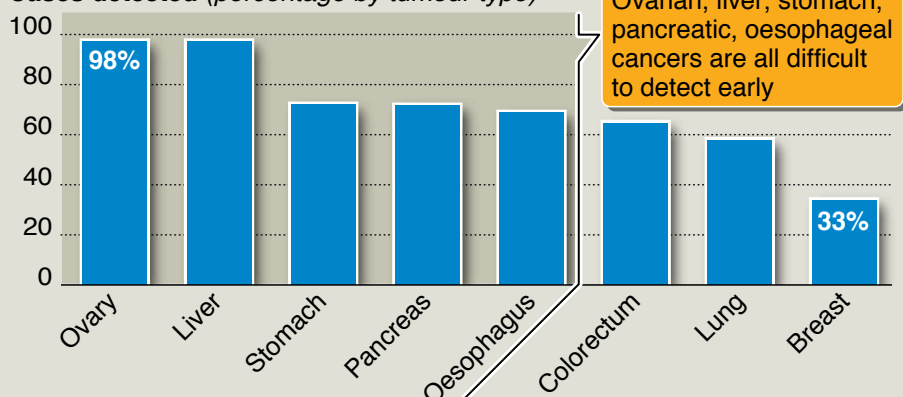
Baltimore, Maryland, sequenced parts of just 16 genes often mutated in different types of cancer. They then added eight known protein biomarkers characteristic of specific kinds of cancer.

In blood samples from 1,005 patients with eight types of tumours that had evidently not yet metastasised, the test detected between 33% and 98% of cases, depending on the tumour type. The sensitivity was 69% or higher for ovarian, liver, stomach, pancreatic, and oesophageal cancers -- all types that are difficult to detect early.



3 Results: In blood samples from 1,005 patients with eight types of tumours, test detected between 33% and 98% of cases

Cases detected (percentage by tumour type)



Sources: Nickolas Papadopoulos et al., Science, Medscape

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Sunken tanker may be leaking heavy oil

Flames and smoke from the Iranian oil tanker Sanchi is seen in the East China Sea

Beijing

A sunken Iranian oil tanker may be leaking heavy bunker fuel as well as light oil off the east coast of China and the best remedy was to recover the vessel, officials said yesterday.

It was unclear how much bunker fuel was left aboard the tanker when it sank on Sunday after being ablaze for days but experts estimated it may have been carrying about 1,000 tonnes at the time of collision.

"There have been multiple appearances of oil slicks of different sizes and types at the sinking spot and nearby... the slicks exceeded 200 sq kilometers (77 sq miles) on Thursday," Huo Chuanlin, of the State Oceanic Administration's Ecological

Protection Department, told reporters.

It was not immediately clear where the oil could wash up or the extent of the damage it could cause.

The large tanker Sanchi (IMO:9356608) sank in the world's worst oil ship disaster in decades. The crew of 30 Iranians and two Bangladeshis are all believed to have been killed.

The tanker had been adrift and ablaze after crashing into the freighter CF Crystal (IMO:9497050) on Jan. 6. Strong winds pushed it away from the Chinese coast, where the collision happened, and into Japan's exclusive economic zone.

Huo said no oil spills had been detected near the coast,

though it was hard to predict the impact on ocean life.

The SOA on Thursday reported three slicks covering a combined area of just 20.7 square km.

Bunker fuel is the heavy oil used in ships' engines and is difficult to remove from the sea once spilled, unlike condensate fuel - an extremely light form of oil - that was being shipped at the time of the collision.

Officials on Friday said the ship was carrying 111,300 tonnes of condensate before the accident. Most of the fuel evaporated after the ship caught fire.

They said recovering the vessel was risky and challenging, as the remaining condensate could catch fire again. (Reuters)

France says no to idea of giant Channel bridge



Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson

London/Paris

France yesterday politely rejected Boris Johnson's idea of building a giant bridge across the English Channel after Brexit, saying that, while far-fetched ideas were worth considering,

there were plenty of major European projects to finish first.

Foreign Secretary Johnson, who led the campaign to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum, broached the idea of

building a 22-mile Channel Bridge during a visit to Britain by French President Emmanuel Macron, the Daily Telegraph newspaper reported.

Britain's most prominent Brexiteer even explained

some of his ideas on Channel crossings to Macron, who the newspaper reported gave a short but positive reply.

France's finance minister, though, gave the idea short shrift. (Reuters)