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Support for Iraq a 'long-term strategy': Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Judiciary chief said on Sunday that judicial relations between Iran and Iraq could contribute to the development of political ties, noting that Tehran's support for Iraq is a "long-term strategy."

Sadeq Amoli Larjani left Tehran for Iraq on Saturday to hold talks with his Iraqi counterpart as well as other Iraqi judiciary officials.

He met on Sunday with Medhat al-Mahmoud, the head of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council, to discuss relations between Tehran and Baghdad.

During a press conference following the meeting, Larjani said, "The aim of the trip is to bring the Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Iraq closer together."

Larjani pointed out that the two sides discussed the agreements reached between the two countries to contribute to more cooperation in human rights issues and the fight against terrorism.

"The agreements reached between the two countries are very important. The two sides stressed the need for the implementation of the agreements," he said.

The Iranian judiciary chief further said that the two neighboring countries exchanged views on the characteristics of their judicial systems. → 2

Iran sees politics behind election of S. Arabia to UN rights panel

See page 2



Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi (standing), Iran's head of the Department of Environment Masoumeh Ebtekar (2nd R) and UN resident coordinator in Iran Gary Lewis (3rd R) attend a ceremony in Tehran on Sunday to mark the 71st anniversary of the United Nations.

Austrian bank plans to open branch in Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI), as one of the major banks in Austria, plans to open a branch in Iran, Austrian Ambassador to Iran Friedrich Stift announced on Saturday.

He made the remarks in Tehran on the sidelines of a meeting between the director of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, Mojtaba Khosrotaj, and the second president of the Austrian National Council, Karlheinz Kopf, Tasnim news agency reported.

Stift underscored that Austria Import-Export Bank will secure trade with the Islamic Republic, adding that the bank increased its line of credit up to \$1 billion from its previous level of \$230 million following the recent visit paid by the governor of the Central Bank of Iran to Austria.

During this meeting, Khosrotaj admitted that Iran is decisive to improve its trade balance with Austria and provide suitable business environment for further cooperation. The Iranian official, elsewhere, called on Austrian companies to collaborate with Iran in development of its technological know-how.

"Technological and academic cooperation between Iran and Austria is on the course of being expanded and hopes are high for further cooperation in tourism," he added.

Kopf, for his part, asserted that the post-sanction era has provided good chances for both sides to boost their bilateral ties.

Bank of China inclined to commence activity in Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The CEO of Bank of China, Chen Siqing, has expressed his bank's tendency to open branches in Iran, IRIB news reported on Sunday.



In a meeting in Tehran with the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Valiollah Seif, the Chinese official said that Bank of China is aimed at primarily launching a representative office in Iran which would lead into opening branches in the Islamic Republic.

"Launching brokerage relations meeting international standards can pave the way for Bank of China to open its branches in Iran," he said.

CBI governor, in his turn, confirmed that establishing a representative office in Iran can provide the Chinese side with transparent data about potential risks in the Iranian market and economy.

Seif, in addition, highlighted the role of launching brokerage relations between the two countries and suggested that Iranian banks can open brokerage accounts in Bank of China.

Foreign powers must accept Aoun as Lebanon president

Free Patriotic Movement (FPM/also known as the Aounist party) Member of Parliament Ibrahim Kanaan on Sunday called on foreign powers to accept Lebanon's agreement over the presidency, saying that Michel Aoun will be the first truly Lebanese head of state in decades.

In an interview with Voice of Lebanon radio, Kanaan said that Lebanon was on the verge of "collapse and disintegration" if political factions did not reach an understanding on the president.

His comments come one day before Lebanese lawmakers are set to head to Parli-

ment to elect a new head of state, ending the more than two-year presidential vacuum. FPM founder, Aoun, is expected to be voted president, as he has secured the support of the country's main factions including the resistance movement of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Forces and most recently, the Future Movement.

"The election of Aoun is the only solution to preserve the state and constitution by reactivating the work of the institutions," Kanaan said.

He added that as president, Aoun will work to build good ties with everyone and not get

involved in the affairs of regional states and their conflicts.

"He will try to find a middle ground in the disputes between different sides and political factions concerning many issues," he noted.

Kanaan said that following the elections, Aoun will immediately begin consultations with politicians on the formation of a new government.

"The Cabinet is the right place for the development and applications of the (country's) future visions," Kanaan said.

(Source: Daily Star)

71st UN anniversary marked in Iran

By Marjan Golpira

TEHRAN — On Sunday, the United Nations Office in Tehran marked the 71st anniversary of the biggest international body with some high ranking officials such as Iran's head of Department of Environment Masoumeh Ebtekar, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, UN resident coordinator in Iran Gary Lewis, and a number of diplomatic corps and ambassadors in attendance in Tehran.

Annually, the United Nations celebrates October 24 as UN Day.

Gary Lewis, the first speaker of the event, opened his speech by reading Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon's statement on the occasion.

Lewis then read the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, adopted by all UN member states, calling the 17 goals "a meaningful set of objectives which represents the fullest, most complete plan yet to sustain our future on this fragile, endangered planet."

The goals, to be met by 2030, are aimed at eradicating poverty, fighting inequality, building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies, and securing the future of the planet and the well-being of future generations, he noted.

Lewis also announced that Iran has decided to deliver a report on its SDG performance in New York during the 2017 UN High Level Political Forum, which is a central platform for following up and reviewing implementation of the SDGs.

Through the UN Development Assistance Framework — or UNDAF, United Nations will work on implementation of SDGs in Iran, Lewis said, adding that UNDAF was signed in the presence of Abbas Araqchi and will start its mission at the beginning of 2017.

"In the next five years, from 2017 to 2021, the UNDAF will work on four areas in Iran: environment, health, a resilient economy and drug control."

The UN resident coordinator in Iran also expressed his gratitude to his 400 working team members in the country, out of whom, he said, "90 percent are Iranians."

Lewis reinstated the goals of his UN team in Iran as peace, justice, human rights and development. → 13

Kolkata festival to pay tribute to Abbas Kiarostami

ART TEHRAN

The Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) will join other numerous world events showing respect to Abbas Kiarostami by paying tribute to the renowned Iranian master of cinema.

The festival, which will be held from November 11 to 18, will host a screening of his acclaimed film "The Wind Will Carry Us", the Times of India reported on Sunday.

The film is about irreverent city engineer Behzad who comes to a rural village in Iran to keep vigil for a dying relative. In the meanwhile the film follows his efforts to fit in with the local community and how he changes his own attitudes as a result.

Many international events, including the Venice festival, paid tribute to Kiarostami who died in July.

The KIFF also plans to com-

memorate Polish director Andrej Wazda who passed away in early October.

The festival will also remember the 400th anniversary of the passing of William Shakespeare by screening some of the major film adaptations of the Bard's works.

At least three important Shakespeare adaptations, including Orson Welles' 1951 film based on "Othello", will be screened at the KIFF.



Ebtekar urges public to campaign against food waste

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The chief of Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) has urged the public to join the campaign against food waste.

Masoumeh Ebtekar has asked the public to participate in the campaign to fight food waste by changing their daily habits and throwing less food away, DOE official website reported.

Iran is among the countries with great annual food waste and as revealed by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) everyday some 134 kilo calories of food is being dumped per person in Iran.

Meanwhile, DOE has quoted unofficial statistics indicating that some 35 percent of agricultural products per annum are discarded in

Iran. In other words, out of 100 million tons of agricultural products some 35 million tons go to waste.

Throwing away food stuff means wasting hundreds of liters of water used for cultivating and in general producing food stuff as well as the energy used for preparing it.

Moreover, burying these waste in landfill are also extremely detrimental to the environment.

This also implies that not only we are wasting food while millions of people are suffering from famine in the world but also we are contributing to the soil erosion, greenhouse gas emission, dryness of wetlands, long periods of drought, etc.

It is probably best to reconsider and even



break old routines of being extravagant with food stuff and try to be more careful with how much we eat and throw away.

Iran Male Team Kumite wins World Championships

SPORT Iran's Male Team Kumite defeated Japan to win the 2016 edition of the Karate World Championships on Sunday.

The Iranian team beat its powerhouse opponent 3-2 and won the title for the second time



in a row.

Iran claimed the title in the previous edition beating host Germany in the final match.

Iranian team was formed by Sajad Ganjzadeh as main representative, Saeid Ahmadikaryani, Bahman Asgari Ghonheh, Ali

Fadakar, Mahdi Khodabakhshi, Zabiollah Poorshab and Iman Sanchooli.

Ryutarou Araga, Rikiya Iimura, Masaya Ishizuka, Hideyoshi Kagawa, Ken Nishimura, Hiroto Shinohara and Daisuke Watanabe were in Japanese team.

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



UAE analyst: Arab lobbyists in West losing ground to Iranians

POLITICS TEHRAN — A political analyst from the UAE has said Arab lobbyists in Western countries are losing ground to Iranians.

"Iran is actively spreading its lobby network in the West, the U.S. in particular," Khalaf Ahmad al-Hebtoor wrote on Saturday, Tabnak reported.

Arabs should take quick action to save themselves from this situation, he wrote, adding that the National Iranian American Council is one of the greatest forces behind Iran's moves in the U.S.



Kiev calls for closer cooperation with Tehran

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ukraine's first vice prime minister and minister of economic development and trade has voiced his country's willingness to boost cooperation with Iran in all spheres, including energy, agriculture and industry.

Speaking at a meeting with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Pacific Affairs Ebrahim Rahimpour in Kiev on Saturday, Stepan Kubiv emphasized that his country is ready to promote relations with the Islamic Republic in all areas, Tasnim reported.



IRGC forms provincial 'development and prosperity' bases

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps is establishing provincial divisions that it calls "development and prosperity bases".

IRGC spokesman Ramazan Sharif said on Sunday the bases will serve construction, civil development, fight poverty, establish security through public cooperation, and facilitate public services.

He added that besides organizing public human resources to achieve their goals, the bases will engage in close cooperation with other state and private organizations.

The move addresses the Leader's guidelines on resistance economy, he underlined.



'U.S. no more capable of keeping soldiers' foot in region'

POLITICS TEHRAN — The U.S. has lost the ability to directly get militarily involved in the Middle East developments, according to the deputy commander of the IRGC.

"Such a role has been given to Washington's proxies," Hossein Salami told a conference of Iranian military attachés in foreign countries in Tehran on Sunday, Mashreq reported.

Unfortunately, a number of misguided so-called Muslims have turned into U.S. proxies in the region, he regretted.



Iranian MP denies interview with Israeli media

POLITICS TEHRAN — An Iranian parliamentarian has denied that he has spoken to an Israeli newspaper.

Jewish representative in Majlis Siamak Maresdq told Fars on Sunday that the Israeli Time's claim of having conducted an interview with him is false.

"They are not creatures to whose questions we would want to answer," the MP said.

"The Israeli regime's media are known to all as dishonorable. I think their news are not even worthy of denial," he added.



Aref: Hope group looks at proposed ministers positively

POLITICS TEHRAN — The head of Hope parliamentary faction said on Sunday the members have a positive opinion of the three ministers proposed by President Hassan Rouhani.

Speaking reporters, Mohammad Reza Aref said the group will announce its view of the proposed ministers officially on Monday, ISNA reported.

He hoped the three get enough votes by MPs to qualify as ministers. "I know all three of them for being very outstanding people."

Zarif calls Iran major regional power

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran has turned into a major power in the Middle East by relying on the Islamic Revolution's "discourse" and "causes".

"The international situation has put the Islamic Republic of Iran in a remarkable status that has undeniable effect on the recent regional developments and the world as a major power in the region and by relying on the Islamic Revolution's causes and discourse," Zarif noted.

Speaking in a joint forum of the Iranian military attaches to foreign states as well as defense and police officials, Zarif said Iran even has the potential to turn into a global power.

He added that Iran has entered a "sen-



sitive" and "dangerous" phase in the history in which "awareness" is required.

Foreign Minister Zarif held talks EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini in Tehran on Saturday. His negotiations with Mogherini came immediately after he returned home from a joint meeting with the Russian and Syrian foreign ministers in Moscow.

Zarif said his talks with the EU chief diplomat focused on the Syrian conflict and the implementation of the nuclear deal.

He added the Syrian crisis can only be settled politically.

Mogherini also held talks with President Hassan Rouhani on Iran-EU relations, the nuclear deal, and the regional crises including the civil war in Syria.

Border guards planning more border patrol drones

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's border guards are preparing to launch more unmanned aircraft patrols across the country's vast borders, expressing satisfaction with the previous experience.

"At some border points we use different technologies such as drones for monitoring purposes, as the need may arise," said Brigadier General Qassem Rezaie.

The use of drones can help Iran minimize increasing security costs related to drug traffickers and terrorist intrusions.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, only in 2008, Iran, coupled with Turkey, accounted for more than half of global heroin seizures and registered, for the third consecutive year, the highest seizures worldwide.

The country has the technology for such surveillance mission, and unmanned air vehicles are being used by Iran's military quite extensively already.

"Most of the equipment are domestically manu-

factured, and good achievements have been made," the commander remarked, referring to the country's capacity.

Over the past years, the country has unveiled a number of homegrown drones, indicating surprise advances in the field.

In September, commander of Iran's General Staff of Armed Forces Major general Mohammad Baqeri said his country has long-range drones which can target positions with one-square-meter surface.

Iran sees politics behind election of S. Arabia to UN rights panel

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran said on Sunday election of Saudi Arabia to serve on the United Nations Human Rights Council is politically motivated, citing crimes committed by the regime on, inter alia, women and children.

"Election of certain countries such as Saudi Arabia is the best proof to believe that international tools of human rights are merely at the service of political interests..." said Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araghchi on Sunday.

He was making the comments on the sidelines of a ceremony held in Tehran on Sunday to mark UN Day (October 24), the 71st anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter.

Saudi Arabia, and thirteen more countries, were elected on October 28 as new

members to the 47-member body for three-year terms beginning on January 1, 2017.

Created in 2006, the Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the UN system responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.

Riyadh's election to the board is ironical, Tehran says, considering its notorious crackdown on women's rights inside

the country, and killing of thousands of Yemeni children, on since March 2015 when it launched an invasion on Yemen.

"Election of a regime that is known to all as a child-killer and deprives women of their least rights indicates that decisions made at the Human Rights Council, and all other international mechanisms related to human rights are politically motivated," Araghchi noted.

According to a 2016 report by the Human Rights Watch on Saudi

Arabia, the country's "discriminatory male guardianship system remains intact despite government pledges to abolish it."

Under such discriminatory system, Saudi women are banned from obtaining a passport, marrying, travelling, or accessing higher education without the approval of a male guardian.

Yet, the election is objectionable from another aspect. As recently as June, Riyadh ratcheted up pressure on UN chief Ban Ki-moon over the black-listing of a Saudi-led coalition for killing children in Yemen, threatening to cut Palestinian aid and funds to other UN programs.

It remains to be seen whether the election will influence the already strained ties between Tehran and Riyadh now that the Arab country can lobby human rights resolutions against Iran.



Election of certain countries such as Saudi Arabia is the best proof to believe that international tools of human rights are merely at the service of political interests, Araghchi says.

Support for Iraq a 'long-term strategy': Iran

Larijani announced that a very important memorandum of understanding (MOU) was reached during the meeting that guarantees to bring the two countries' judicial systems closer together.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq share many religious similarities and can establish their own proposed human rights which would be based on Islamic teachings," he added.

Larijani also criticized the Western view of human rights, saying the Islamic Republic would not accept it.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Larijani expressed the Islamic Republic's support for the Iraqi nation and government in

their fight against terrorism.

"We hope that Iraq, as an independent country, would be able to play a greater role in the region," he noted.

He also said that Iran considers Iraq as a very important and strategic neighbor, and described Iran's support for Iraq as a "long-term strategy of the Islamic Republic."

Medhat al-Mahmoud, for his part, expressed hope for expansion of judicial relations between Iran and Iraq.

He also stressed that the two neighboring countries have no disagreements on the issue of terrorism and enjoy common views to counter the phenomenon.

EU is aware of Iran's regional role, official says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has said that the European Union is aware of Iran's role in the Middle East region.

"Iran's regional role and its potential to establish peace and stability in the region have become more obvious to the European Union. They are well aware of the fact that Iran makes efforts to establish peace and stability in the region and attaches great importance to the issue without adopting double standards," he told in an interview with ISNA published on Sunday.

His comments came upon EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini's visit to Iran and her meetings with President Hassan Rouhani and Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Iranian foreign minister, on Saturday on the issue of the Syrian crisis.

"It seems that the European Union pays more attention to the Middle East region and makes more efforts to play more active role through using its relations with the regional countries which is an important issue for Syria," Qassemi remarked.

He said that Iran is ready to cooperate with the countries that seek to fight terrorism seriously.

Intelligence minister says military diplomacy is important

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian intelligence minister on Sunday said military diplomacy is important in international calculations.

Mahmoud Alavi made the remarks while addressing a conference featuring Iran's military attachés and defense and police representatives of the armed forces.

"Military attachés, as well as defense and police representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, play an important role in preserving the achievements and national interests of the country," Alavi noted.

He added, "They also use every opportunity and seek to reduce regional threats against our country."

Alavi underlined that it is necessary to put extra effort,



empathy and synergy to ward off the threats imposed against the country.

He also praised the armed forces for establishing coordination and interaction among the security agencies, the military, the police, and the government officials in order to promote Iran's political and military diplomacy in the region and across the world.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Alavi said religious values and "the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom" is the basis of the Islamic Republic's "power" and "pride" in the arena of diplomacy. "This conference represents a valuable move towards more empathy and synergy, and we hope it produces the desired results," he noted.

Rafsanjani sees no restriction in expanding ties with Senegal

POLITICS TEHRAN — Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the chairman of the Expediency Council, said on Sunday that Iran has no restriction in expanding comprehensive relations with Senegal.

During a meeting with Senegalese Ambassador to Iran Babakar ba, Rafsanjani said the level of relations between the two countries has not reached the favorable level yet.

He added that Iran and Senegal can expand cooperation in academic area.

He urged the two countries' public and private sectors to be more actively involved in investment projects.

Elsewhere, Rafsanjani expressed concern over terrorist acts in some African countries.

For his part, Ambassador Babakar ba said that Senegal is determined to expand relations with Iran.

He said Senegal has discovered oil and gas fields and seeks to expand cooperation with Iran in order to exploit them.

Larijani proposes provincial ministers

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani proposed on Sunday to work on plans to appoint provincial ministers.

Larijani did not elaborate on his proposal.

During a meeting with the chiefs of the parliamentary committees, Larijani also said it is essential to facilitate flow of foreign investment.

"Given Iran's low status in attracting investment in the region, it is es-

sential to use foreign investment in order to reach favorable economic growth," he added.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran should use the other countries' experiences to solve the problem of water shortage.

He added the environmental challenges should be prioritized to be responded to.

Larijani also said it is very important to tackle air pollution which affects the people's health.

Iraqi forces liberate over 60 villages near ISIL-held Mosul

Iraqi commander: Mosul battle "no picnic" as troops advance

A high-ranking Iraqi security figure says government forces have taken back more than 60 villages from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists since the beginning of the massive and multi-pronged offensive to free the northern city of Mosul started nearly a fortnight ago.

Commander of Federal Police Forces Lieutenant General Raed Shaker Jawdat announced on Sunday that Iraqi forces have managed to establish control over 61 villages, purge 1,400 square kilometers of ISIL terrorists and evacuate 1,396 displaced families to safety zones since October 17, Arabic-language al-Sumaria satellite television network reported.

He added that 747 ISIL terrorists have also been killed and 88 others captured during the mentioned period.

Jawdat went on to say that 164 cars rigged with explosives, 42 armored vehicles, 61 explosive belts and 47 motorcycle bombs were also destroyed.

Additionally, Iraqi forces confiscated 25 vehicles and 170 rounds of ammunition, defused 1,066 explosive devices and destroyed 13 workshops for booby-trapping vehicles and manufacturing bombs.

Iraq's Joint Operations Command (JOC) also stated that Iraqi security forces have managed to retake the village of Ali Rash, located southeast of Mosul, and raise the national Iraqi flag above several buildings in the area.

The statement added that scores of ISIL terrorists have been killed and a large amount of their munitions destroyed in the process.

Separately, fighters from pro-government Popular Mobilization Units (al-Hashd al-Sha'abi) retook the villages of Amerini, Ayn Baydha and Shik southwest of Mosul.

The volunteer forces also advanced on Zaeziyah region, forcing ISIL terrorists to



flee en masse to the nearby Ajya region.

Also on Sunday, Popular Mobilization Units entered Mostantaq al-Oula and Mostantaq al-Thaniyah villages and laid a siege to Moshirfah village.

In another development, pro-government volunteer forces marched into al-Jern and al-Salmani regions in pursuit of ISIL terrorists.

The International Organization for Migration said on Saturday that more than 17,500 people have fled their homes toward government-held areas since the Mosul liberation operation began, warning that the number is expected to rise drastically as Iraqi army soldiers, volunteer forces and Kurdish peshmerga fighters close in.

The United Nations has also pointed to the sufferings that civilians are enduring in terrorist-held territories, stating that there are credible reports that ISIL terrorists are carrying out mass executions and seizing tens of thousands of people for use as human shields.

ISIL's "depraved, cowardly strategy

is to attempt to use the presence of civilians to render certain points, areas or military forces immune from military operations", UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein said in a statement on Friday.

He said the terrorists are "effectively using tens of thousands of women, men and children as human shields."

■ Iraq denies U.S. claim of 'pause' in Mosul operations

Elsewhere, Iraq has denied a recent claim made by the United States-led coalition supposedly targeting ISIL in the country that there was going to be a "pause" in Iraqi military operations to liberate the northern city of Mosul.

Coalition spokesman Colonel John Dorian had alleged on Saturday that the suspension was aimed at helping the forces to "regroup."

"We believe that [regrouping] will take two days before continuing the advance towards Mosul," he had said in Baghdad.

Later in the day, however, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said via the

country's al-Iraqiya television network that, "Since the beginning of the operation to date, Iraqi forces have liberated a large number of districts, villages, and towns [in Nineveh Province, of which Mosul is the capital], and this trend is to continue as scheduled."

The operation, he said, would last until the liberation of the province in its entirety.

The Iraqi premier said obstructive efforts by infiltrators and ill-wishers would not hamper the efforts to liberate Mosul.

Lieutenant General Abdul Wahhab al-Saadi and General Abdul Ghani al-Asadi, commanders with Iraq's elite counter-terror force, have also rejected the remarks by the U.S.-led coalition spokesman.

■ No picnic

Meanwhile, Iraqi troops and security forces edged closer to Mosul on two southern fronts on Sunday but a leader of the Shia volunteers newly participating in the offensive warned that the battle for ISIL's Iraq stronghold would be long and grueling.

A military statement said the army's Ninth Armored Division raised the Iraqi flag in the village of Ali Rash, about 7 km (4 miles) southeast of Mosul, after recapturing it from the ultra-hardline militants.

Further south, an Interior Ministry officer said security forces were advancing from the town of al-Shura, recaptured from ISIL on Saturday, along the Tigris river valley towards Mosul 30 km (20 miles) to the north.

The army and security forces, along with Kurdish peshmerga fighters, have been backed by U.S.-led air and ground support in their two-week-old campaign to crush ISIL in the largest city of its self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

Their battle for Mosul, still home to 1.5 million residents, could be one of the toughest battles in a decade of turmoil since the 2003 overthrow of then-President Saddam Hussein. (Source: agencies)

Strong earthquake hits Italy, buildings collapse

A strong earthquake measuring 6.6 magnitude struck central Italy on Sunday, causing the collapse of more buildings in small cities and towns already shaken by tremors in the past two months, although there no immediate reports of casualties.

It was a bigger quake than one which hit central Italy on Aug. 24, killing almost 300 people. There have been thousands of aftershocks in the weeks since then, including two particularly strong tremors last Wednesday.

Italy's emergency services said there was serious damage in multiple locations in the central regions of Marche and Umbria on Sunday. State broadcaster RAI said three people were rescued from rubble in the town of Ussita, but there were no reports of deaths.

The ancient Basilica of St. Benedict in the walled town of Norcia, almost 100 kilometers from Perugia, was devastated by the quake, the monks said. Images on television showed one side of the church reduced to rubble, and another church in the town center also collapsed.

Local authorities said many towns and villages already battered by the 6.2 quake in August had seen further significant damage.

"This morning's quake has hit the few things that were left standing. We will have to start from scratch," Michele Franchi, the deputy mayor of Arquata del Tronto, told Rai television.

Many of these places were evacuated after the August disaster and were largely deserted on Sunday morning when the quake hit at around 7.40 a.m. (0640 GMT). (Source: Reuters)

South Korea's presidency 'on the brink of collapse' as scandal grows

South Korea's president is engulfed in a political scandal with plotlines straight out of a soap opera: rumors of secret advisers, nepotism and ill-gotten gains, plus a whiff of sex. There's even a Korean Rasputin and talk of a mysterious clique called the "eight fairies."



Park Geun-hye, South Korea's first female president and daughter of the military dictator who turned the country into an industrial powerhouse, is facing the biggest challenge of her turbulent tenure.

The essence of the scandal is this: It has emerged that Park, notoriously aloof even to her top aides, has been taking private counsel from Choi Soon-sil, a woman she's known for four decades. Despite having no official position and no security clearance, Choi seems to have advised Park on everything from her wardrobe to speeches about the dream of reunification with North Korea.

Calls for her resignation — and even impeachment — are resonating from across the political spectrum, and her approval ratings have dropped to a record low of 17 percent, according to two polls released on Friday.

On Friday, Park directed all of her top advisers to resign en masse, with her spokesman saying a reshuffle would take place, the Yonhap news agency reported. Kim Jae-won, senior presidential secretary for political affairs, told a parliamentary session that Park's chief of staff had already stepped down.

Choi is the daughter of the late Choi Tae-min, who was a kind of shaman-fortune teller described in a 2007 cable from the United States Embassy in Seoul as "a charismatic pastor." Locally, he's seen as a "Korean Rasputin" who once held sway over Park after her mother was assassinated in 1974.

"Rumors are rife that the late pastor had complete control over Park's body and soul during her formative years and that his children accumulated enormous wealth as a result," read the cable, released by WikiLeaks.

Park has strongly denied any improper relationship. JTBC, a television network, said it had found a tablet computer that contained files of speeches the president had yet to give, among other documents. The younger Choi is said to have edited the landmark speech that Park gave in Germany in 2014, laying out her vision for unification with the North. The Hankyoreh newspaper wrote that actual presidential aides "were just mice to Choi's cat."

She is also rumored to have created a secret group called "the eight fairies" to advise the president behind the scenes. TV Chosun, the channel belonging to the Chosun Ilbo newspaper, aired a clip showing Choi overseeing the making of an outfit for Park, "raising doubt whether Park made any decision at all without Choi," the paper said.

Meanwhile, investigators are looking into allegations that Choi siphoned off money from two recently established foundations that collected about \$70 million from the Federation of Korean Industries, the big business lobby with members including Samsung and Hyundai. Prosecutors raided Choi's home in Seoul this week looking for evidence.

At the same time, there are allegations that the daughter of Choi Soon-sil was given special treatment when she applied for Ewha Womans University, one of South Korea's top colleges.

(Source: The Washington Post)

International Public Pre-Qualification Tender

Notice (two-stages)

Tender No: 9530

Construction of initial phase of Parsian port as BOT or EPCF

(Second Notice)



Lamerd & Parsian Industrial and Mining Endeavors Co. (TALASHGARAN) on behalf of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), intends to recognize and invite local, international or a joint venture of qualified companies for Construction of initial phase development of Parsian port located in Parsian Special Economic Energy Zone, Parsian City, Hormozgan province of IRAN, on a two stage international tender through below basis:

1- Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) of Initial phase of Parsian port (including breakwater, quay walls and berths, dredging and reclamation, buildings, landscaping, utilities and Equipment supply)

2- Design, Material Supply and procurement, Construction and Financing (EPCF) of Initial phase (excluding equipment).

All qualified and experienced local and international companies are invited to communicate their Expression of Interest and introduction of their representative to obtain the prequalification documents starting from 29 Oct. 2016 up to 7 Nov. 2016 from port consulting company (Sazeh Pardazi Iran) through below address or from National Database Portal of Iran Tender's Information website: [WWW.HTT://IETS.MPORG.IR](http://www.HTT://IETS.MPORG.IR)

Priority of proposals is BOT at first place and then EPCF. Client reserve the rights to reject all EPCF proposals. Consortium or Joint Ventures forming of International companies with local companies are preferable, and all of joined companies have to issue one joint proposal which is signed and stamped by all parties.

Employer's name: Lamerd & Parsian Industrial and Mining Endeavors Co.: No. 1713, Northern Tower, 3rd Floor, Iran National Steel Company, above Vali-e Asr Sq., Tehran, Iran. Tel: +98 21 86035621

Project Consultant and address of obtaining P-Q documents: Sazehpardazi Iran Consulting Eng. Co.:

No 6, Shahid Abtahi St. (20th St.), Kordestan Highway, Tehran, IRAN. Fax (+9821 88632423) Tel(+982188632199), www.sazehpardazi.ir

Bidders shall submit all completed P-Q documents and other required items to Sazeh Pardazi Iran Office to above address by 14:30 21 Nov. 2016.

Pakistan police arrest more than 100 opposition activists

Pakistani police on Sunday arrested more than 100 supporters of opposition politician Imran Khan who entered Islamabad days before a planned protest shutdown of the capital, the interior minister said.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is under growing pressure from opposition parties, mainly Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), over his children's offshore bank accounts which were revealed in the Panama Papers leak.

Khan, a former cricketing hero, has threatened to "lock down" Islamabad on Wednesday to force Sharif to accept an inquiry into the affair.

The new protest plan comes at a sensitive time for Sharif, with the Supreme Court due to start hearing a case about the Panama Papers revelations on Monday.

"About 450 people entered Islamabad today," Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan told a press conference.

"Police intercepted them but most of them ran away, many leaving their cars behind. Police arrested more than 100 of them."

Officers seized seven Kalashnikov rifles, 21 rifle magazines, tear gas and seven bulletproof jackets, the minister said.

He said Khan's PTI planned to occupy the Pakistan Secretariat, an office complex housing government ministries.

"They want to occupy the Pakistan Secretariat and the plan is not to allow government employees to enter," he said.

The minister said that on Saturday night some 1,200 PTI activists tried to drive in convoy to Islamabad from the northwestern city of Peshawar. When police stopped them on the motorway they beat up officers but had to retreat when reinforcements arrived.

"The lockdown of the capital is not a crime against government, but a crime against the state. We are a nuclear power and what impression will it make before the world if a mob comes to the capital of the country to shut it down?" the minister said.

Imran Khan denied his activists had possessed weapons.

Police have cordoned off his residence and fired tear gas during clashes there with his supporters on Sunday, an AFP photographer said.

In summer 2014 Khan led a mass protest that lasted four months. He allied himself with populist cleric Tahir-ul-Qadri to stage a sit-in outside parliament calling for the government to resign over vote-rigging allegations.

Khan called off the protest in December 2014 after Taliban militants stormed an army-run school in Peshawar and killed 154 people, most of them children.

(Source: AFP)

Iran's 6-month copper concentrate production up 18% yr/yr

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's copper concentrate production in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21) reached 528,768 tons, registering an 18 percent rise compared to the same period last year, IRIB news reported on Sunday.



According to the report, the country has produced 447,409 tons of copper concentrate in the first half of the previous year.

According to Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), in the first half of the current year, copper chain products witnessed the most significant exports increase among minerals.

Jordan's Arab Bank nine-month net profit flat

Oct 30 Jordan's largest lender, Arab Bank Group, said on Sunday its January-September net profit came to \$617.9 million, barely changed from the same period last year.

One of the Middle East's major financial institutions, Arab Bank Group's total loans rose 3 percent to \$24.4 billion as of the end of September, while deposits increased 2 percent to \$35.5 billion compared with the same period last year.

The bank, with a balance sheet of \$46.4 billion, gave no figure for net profit in the third quarter alone.

Arab Bank is one of the Arab world's largest privately owned banks and operates in 30 countries. It owns 40 percent of Saudi Arabia's Arab National Bank ANB.

Chairman Sabih al Masri said the bank continued to maintain a strong financial position by "effectively managing risk" and despite exchange rate fluctuations.

"The bank continued its steady progress in implementing its prudent business strategy and its ability to deal with the challenging circumstances," Masri said in a statement.

Arab Bank CEO Neme Sabbagh said liquidity continued to be robust with a loan-to-deposit ratio of 68.8 percent. The bank's provisions coverage ratio for non-performing loans stood in excess of 100 percent.

In January-September last year the bank made a net profit of \$615 million. (Source: Reuters)

Shadow banks are taking over the mortgage market again

Shadow banks are on the cusp of taking the lead from their commercial counterparts in the mortgage market, new data suggests, a phenomenon that hasn't been seen since the 2008 financial crisis.

Non-bank lenders, which inhabit the comparatively lightly regulated industry, accounted for 48 percent of mortgage activity in 2015 — and there's reason to believe that when all is said and done for 2016 that number will grow.

The implications, while good for an industry that is believed to hold about \$80 trillion in assets, carry some dark undertones.

"The last time nonbanks accounted for that much mortgage activity was 2006, the year before the subprime crisis began," a report from SNL Financial said this week. (NOTE: The post is behind SNL's pay wall.)

Shadow banks accounted for 55 percent of mortgage activity in 2006; the number was 45 percent in 2014 before growing to 48 percent in 2015, according to SNL, citing data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act.

"We know from separate, non-HMDA data that it has continued into 2016. I think when the dust has settled on 2016, you'll see nonbanks with close to a 50 percent market share," Guy Cecala, publisher of Inside Mortgage Finance, told SNL.

While shadow banks could eclipse 50 percent of share this year, they overall hold about 24 percent of all mortgages, according to a report published earlier this year from the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

The SNL report notes that big banks have pulled back from mortgages, in the face of billions in legal penalties for conduct that led to the 2008 financial crisis. While shadow institutions have come under greater scrutiny in recent years, they still don't face the same regulatory burdens as commercial banks.

For instance, the so-called non-doc or "ninja" loans — no income, no job mortgages that were widespread in the pre-crisis days — are no more. Large banks, according to SNL, are focusing more of their attention toward the jumbo market, or loans of more than \$417,000 that are not underwritten by government-sponsored enterprises like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The biggest lenders in the shadow market are Quicken Loans, LoanDepot.com and Freedom Mortgage.

(Source: CNBC)

Iran's deals with Airbus, Boeing to be finalized soon: official

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Asghar Fakhrieh-Kashan announced that the deal with the world leading aircraft manufacturers Airbus and Boeing will be finalized soon, Mehr news agency reported on Sunday.

The official also anticipated that a number of the 111 aircrafts ordered to Airbus and 108 ones ordered to Boeing will be delivered to Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017).

Following the implementation of the last year's nuclear accord, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between Iran and six world powers, Airbus and Boeing received permission from the U.S. gov-



ernment to sell aircraft to Iran.

European airplane manufacturer Airbus announced the license from the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control on September 21, followed by Boeing's announcement later in the day.

Iran has announced its need for about 400 passenger planes in the next decade to modernize its ageing fleet.

Iranian airlines are not interested in buying any more Russian planes. Their performance was unsatisfactory when flown in the country's aviation market during the sanctions period. Iran hopes to improve the relations with the world in the wake of the nuclear deal to renovate its fleet with western aircraft.

China's only 15% of the global economy but contributes 25 - 30% of global growth

By Tim Worstall

It's entirely possible to become a little over-enthusiastic about the size of China's economy. Yes, assuming that we don't count the European Union as one economy, it's the second largest economy on the planet. If we do agglomerate Europe then it's the third. But it's also true that it's around 15 percent or so of the global economy. That's massively up from where it was in recent decades, entirely true, but it's not that it is anything like the majority of what is going on out there.

We should be careful with these numbers of course, they're not going to be accurate. We simply don't measure the global economy in any particularly accurate manner. We could well be out by a few percentage points either way here. So keep that in mind.

However, there's another way of looking at that Chinese economy and that's to think of its contribution to global growth. There it's more like 25-30 percent of total growth as the Chinese themselves are saying:

On the other hand, as the second largest economy, China's economic transition and growth is increasingly influencing the world economy. "It is estimated that the contribution of China's economic growth to the world economy is expected to maintain at 25 to 30 percent, he said.

That the global economy is growing is of course a

good thing. It means that more people can have more of what they desire—rather the point of our having an economy in the first place of course. And this greater contribution to global growth from that one, Chinese, economy is obviously because China is growing faster than the other similarly large economies. Yes, we can say that India is growing faster than China at present but that's from a lower base. That extra size of the Indian economy each year is still very much smaller than the extra size of the Chinese.

BEIJING: The contribution of China to the world economy will remain around 30 percent for the next five years, an expert said in remarks published on Sunday.

No, that's not really what is being said. It is that the growth in China will be up to 30 percent of global growth, not that China is 30 percent of the global economy.

As to how much this matters to the rest of us the correct answer is not a lot. Most of this growth is within China and benefits Chinese people. Yes, a larger Chinese economy will mean more value being created which human beings can enjoy. But the vast majority of that increase in value is going to be enjoyed by the people in China. This isn't a problem, it's obviously good for the Chinese, but it doesn't change our living standards all that much.

We will all gain, yes we will, but only at the margin. Greater Chinese exports, higher value exports, will



mean that we can consume more and better products. Chinese consumption of what we make will produce more jobs and so on. But as with any economy the vast majority of what is going on is going on within the economy, not spilling out of it via trade. Thus this very conception of the global economy isn't all that important. It's interesting to note and of course we should all be happy that other people are getting richer. But the important economic point will be, as it always has been, how much are we producing and how well are we producing it? Because that's what is going to determine what we can consume, our consumption being rather the point of the exercise as far as we are concerned.

(Source: Forbes)

PICTURE OF THE DAY © IRIB/Behzad Abdolbaghi



Iran, Belgium ink MOU on technology, infrastructure co-op

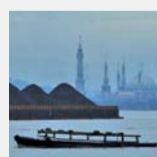
ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with three economic zones of Belgium on cooperation in scientific, technological and infrastructural projects, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Iran-Belgium current annual trade of near \$200 million is anticipated to double by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), TPO Head Mojtaba Khosrotaj announced on the sidelines of the MOU signing ceremony in Tehran.

A Belgian trade delegation including 200 representatives from 140 companies arrived in Tehran on Sunday to explore avenues of enhancing mutual economic cooperation with their Iranian counterparts during their two-day stay in Iran.

The delegates are active in various fields such as oil and gas equipment and services, commercial vehicles and auto parts, construction, interior decoration and architecture, flooring and textiles, forwarding and transport, new energies, food industry, information technology and etc.

Indonesia to resume some coal shipments to Philippines amid piracy concerns



Indonesia will resume some shipments of coal to the Philippines, a government official said on Sunday, after a months-long halt due to concerns about piracy in seas between the two archipelagos.

Indonesia earlier this year slapped a moratorium on coal shipments to its neighbor after a string of hijackings by militants based in the southern Philippines, in which several Indonesian sailors were taken hostage.

Only ships with a capacity of over 500 tonnes will be allowed to resume sailing while smaller vessels and tugboats are still banned.



Britain wants to secure tariff-free trade for auto industry after Brexit

Britain will aim to achieve tariff-free trade with Europe for the auto industry and other manufacturers after the country leaves the European Union, Business Secretary Greg Clark said on Sunday.

Clark said he had outlined the government's negotiating position to Nissan (7201.T) to help persuade the Japanese company to make a major new investment in Britain's biggest car plant last week. "Our intention, our negotiating remit, when it comes to the discussions with our European partners is to have a constructive dialogue and look for the common interest here," he told BBC television. "Our objective would be ensure we have continued access to the markets in Europe and vice versa without tariffs and bureaucratic impediments, and that is how we will approach those negotiations."



Novo Nordisk's share implosion sends shock waves through Denmark

As Novo Nordisk A/S plunged on Friday, there was more at stake than just the fortunes of the shareholders in the world's biggest maker of insulin.

Denmark's biggest company by market capitalization lost more than \$20 billion of its value at one point, marking its worst selloff in 14 years. The shock drove Denmark's all-share index down as much as 5.2 percent, setting it up to underperform most global indexes this year.

"This huge move can make Denmark's shares look bad as the Danish indexes are going to suffer," Jacob Pedersen, chief of equity analysis at Sydbank A/S, said in a phone interview. "Over many years, the Danish stock market has been driven by Novo," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran's oil, gas condensate exports to rise to 3m bpd by Mar. 2017

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's crude oil and gas condensate exports will increase to three million barrels per day (bpd) by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), IRNA reported on Sunday quoting a senior oil official.

According to Ali Kardor, the managing director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), the country's exports of crude oil will reach 2.5 million bpd by the year-end.

"We are also sending about 500,000 barrels of gas condensate abroad on a daily basis", he added.

In early October, Mohsen Qamsari, the NIOC director of international affairs, had said that the country is exporting 2.2 million bpd of crude oil and NIOC has it on the agenda to increase the figure in near future.

According to Qamsari, some 600,000 to 650,000 barrels of Iranian crude are being sent to the European market and the rest is for Asia.

"Nearly 62 percent of the total exports figure goes to Asia and the rest is exported to Europe, as for the increase in oil exports, this ratio will be preserved," Qamsari said.

Iran, OPEC's third-biggest member, plans to boost its present 3.85 million bpd of oil output to a level of 4 million barrels a day this year.

According to National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) Iran holds 13 percent of the total share of oil products exports from the Middle East.



OPEC splits prevent deal with other producers to curb supply

OPEC's internal disagreements over how to implement oil-supply cuts agreed last month prevented a deal to secure the co-operation of other major suppliers.

More than 18 hours of talks over two days in Vienna yielded little more than a promise that the world's largest oil producers would keep on talking. Discussions will continue in late November, just days before the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is supposed to finalize the accord that lifted oil prices to one-year highs.

Non-OPEC nations ended talks with the group on Saturday without making any supply commitments, Brazil's Oil and Gas Secretary Marcio Felix said after the meeting. The outcome of the process hinges on Iran and Iraq, two nations that are more interested in increasing production than reducing it, said Azerbaijan's Energy Minister Natiq Aliyev.

A deal wasn't possible because internal OPEC talks on Friday reached an impasse over the role of Iran and Iraq, both of which want to be exempt from any cuts. While non-member Oman said Saturday it was willing to cooperate in a supply deal, it couldn't commit to a specific output cut until OPEC had its own agreement.

Risk of failure

OPEC's surprise agreement in Algiers to make the first supply cuts in eight years will only make a serious dent in a record oil surplus if producers outside the group join in. While the accord helped push oil prices to a 15-month high above \$50 a barrel earlier this month, they have subsequently fallen as several members disputed the production estimates that would determine the size of cuts. Failure to implement last month's accord will hurt oil producers, the organization's top of-

ficial warned.

None of the countries that attended Friday's meeting specified how much they are willing to cut, said one delegate, who asked not to be identified because the meeting was private. Progress was made on the methodology to be used for allocating individual production curbs, the delegate said.

As the meeting opened in Vienna, OPEC Secretary-General Mohammed Barkindo warned of the consequences if producers don't follow through on the Algiers agreement. The price recovery has already taken far too long and producers can't risk delaying it further, he said.

Representatives of Azerbaijan, Brazil, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Oman and Russia attended Saturday's meeting with officials from OPEC member states. Those countries collectively produced about 19.6 million barrels a day of oil last year, about 21

percent of global supply and equivalent to half of OPEC's output, according to BP Plc's Statistical Review of World Energy.

No cuts

Brazil attended the talks only as an observer, Felix said before the meeting. The Latin American country will boost output by 290,000 barrels a day next year to 2.9 million a day, the biggest increase of any non-OPEC nation, according to the International Energy Agency. Production will keep growing for the next few years, said Felix.

Kazakhstan also plans to boost output next year following the restart this month of the \$50 billion Kashagan oil field after 16 years of development. The field is currently pumping about 100,000 barrels day, which should rise to 200,000 by year-end and 370,000 by the end of 2017, Italian oil company Eni SpA said Friday.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Russia tells OPEC it still willing to freeze oil output: sources

Russian energy officials have told a technical meeting between OPEC and non-OPEC officials on Saturday that Moscow was still willing to freeze its output levels if OPEC agreed to cap its production, two OPEC sources said.

On Friday, OPEC officials were unable to agree on how to implement a deal to limit output amid objections by Iran which has been reluctant to even freeze its output, OPEC sources said.

"Russia is ready but they want to see in detail figures agreed yesterday," one of the sources said. Another source said Russia would freeze if OPEC agreed to reduce output.

(Source: Reuters)

PICTURE OF THE DAY SHANA/Mojtaba Mohammadgholi



With a daily refining capacity of 250,000 barrels of crude oil, Iran's Imam Khomeini Oil Refining complex in Shazand, Markazi province, is the most modern refinery in the country and among the up to date refineries in the Middle East.

Expect oil to head higher even without an OPEC deal: analyst

Oil prices have been under pressure this week as investors raised doubts over whether an agreement on a production cut between OPEC and non-OPEC members would soon materialize.

However, even if a deal over an output cut doesn't emerge soon, one analyst believes prices are still going to climb.

"We think even without an OPEC deal, prices are headed higher and that's purely because of fundamentals," Miswin Mahesh, oil analyst at Barclays, told CNBC.

"Demand, supply — when we do the numbers, we're getting a deficit as early as Q1 to Q2."

When looking at the first to second

quarter, Mahesh said it was possible prices could head towards the \$50 to \$55 per barrel range.

Meanwhile, Chantico Global's CEO Gina Sanchez argued on CNBC's Street Signs Europe, that unless the market sees some significant news out of the OPEC meeting—which she said she didn't anticipate—oil is likely to trade back down to around \$40 per barrel.

Representatives from OPEC and non-OPEC countries are expected to begin two-day negotiations on Friday to hash out plans over a possible output-capping deal, which is expected to be presented to the OPEC meeting by the end of November,

Reuters reported. However doubts over the discussions pushed crude prices into the red on Friday, with U.S. crude at \$49.20 and Brent at \$50.04 at 2:00 p.m. UK time.

What this technical meeting suggests is that OPEC wants to convey to the market that it's taking this output discussion very seriously; however on the face of it, it appears the "market is actually losing hope now", Mahesh told CNBC.

"Besides the Saudis, no other country has actually come out and said we will also cut. The other PGCC members might. Iran has said they don't want a fixed number; they need a percentage number which is a moving target as well. So it's a very, very

complex and it's just getting harder by the day," said Mahesh.

The uncertainty over what OPEC will do to fix the current state of the energy market raises questions over what the outcome of the November talks will be.

"Looks like what we're headed to is a namesake deal — we probably get a three to six month deal where the Saudis do something just to sort of 'save face'," Mahesh said.

"And their credibility's also on the line here, as much as OPEC's is, and the market has put a lot of faith in the Saudi word, more so than the OPEC word."

(Source: CNBC)

Low oil prices eat into Petrochina, profit drops 77%

Some dismal news for China's Oil Patch came on Friday as one of its oil majors announced a massive profit drop for last quarter.

Beijing-based PetroChina, the country's largest oil and gas producer, posted a dismal 76.9 percent decline in third quarter profit year-on-year, due to low global oil prices. Oil markets are awash in supply while prices have dropped from \$115 per barrel in mid-summer 2014 to currently hovering in the high \$50s to low \$40s range. PetroChina's profits also dropped due to lower natural gas prices.

PetroChina's profit fell to 1.2 billion Yuan (\$177 million) for Q3, the company announced in a statement to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange on Friday. It did post higher earnings from its refining and chemicals sectors but those earnings were overwhelmed by production losses and weaker performance from its natural gas and pipelines units. Consequently, revenue dropped 3.8 percent to 411.4 billion Yuan.

Other oil majors also posted profits losses on Friday. U.S.-based Exxon Mobil extended its longest streak of profit declines in almost three decades, with profits dropping 38 percent but still beating estimates; while France's Total SA posted a 25 percent drop in third-quarter profit.

PetroChina's crude output fell to 696.6 million barrels in the first three quarters from 722.9 million barrels for the same period last year. The company produces more crude than its domestic rivals, state-owned Sinopec, and CNOOC (also state-owned) — the country's second biggest refiner.

In August, PetroChina cut its domestic crude output target for the year to 103 million tons (about 755 million barrels), from 106 million tons set at the beginning of the year, as it shut some high-cost fields.

(Source: Forbes)

Russia sees Gazprom 2016 dividend payout ratio up to 50 percent

Russia expects natural gas producer Gazprom to pay 50 percent of its earnings in 2016 dividends, more than doubling the payout from the previous year, according to the draft federal budget.

The government earlier ordered a 50-percent threshold for state companies but Gazprom gained a waiver from the rule and set 2015 dividends at around 23.5 percent of net profit under International Financial Reporting Standards.

Gazprom is expected to make an 893 billion rouble (11.65 billion pounds) net profit in 2016 and return half of it to shareholders, of which around 171 billion roubles should go to the state budget in 2017, the document showed.

That means a dividend of around 18.8 roubles per share, according to Reuters calculations, up from 7.89 roubles per share paid on 2015 results.

Gazprom's net profit is seen falling seven percent to 828 billion roubles in 2017, from which the budget should receive up to 159 billion roubles in the form of dividends in 2018.

In 2018, the firm's earnings are seen at 837 billion roubles, implying 2019 budget revenues from its dividends of around 161 billion roubles.

(Source: Reuters)

Eni sticks to targets after worse than forecast loss

Italian oil major Eni reported a bigger-than-expected net loss in the third quarter but stuck to its growth targets encouraged by production prospects and disposals.

The group's adjusted net loss in the quarter widened to 484 million euros (\$528 million) from a previous 127 million euro loss as low oil prices and production shutdowns in Italy and Norway took their toll.

The result fell short of a forecast from analysts, provided by the company, for a loss of 70 million euros.

Commitments by OPEC last month to restrain output to boost prices have helped buoy sentiment in the industry but oil companies are still feeling the impact of a fall in crude prices of more than 50 percent since mid-2014.

At 1233 GMT Eni shares were down 3.13 percent while the European sector was down one percent.

Despite the loss, Eni said it expected new fields and ramp ups, including the giant Kashagan oilfield in Kazakhstan, to add another 280,000 barrels per day this year.

Confirming it would cut investments this year by 20 percent, the group said it expected oil and gas output for the year to be substantially in line with 2015.

Analysts said the final quarter of the year would also be helped by resumption of production at the key fields of Val d'Agri in Italy and Goliat in Norway.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia sees oil output slightly up in 2017-18: draft budget

Russia expects to increase its oil output by 0.7 percent next year and a further 0.9 percent in 2018, the draft federal budget showed.

Crude production is seen at a record-high 548 million tons in 2017 and 553 million tons in both 2018 and 2019, up from an estimated 544 million tons this year, the document showed.

Russia, one of the world's top oil producers, has said it was willing to freeze output as part of a global deal between OPEC and non-OPEC nations aimed to support oil prices.

(Source: Reuters)

Polls aside, the U.S. presidential election is far from a blowout

By Chris Jackson and Julia Clark

Two weeks out from Election Day and it looks like the race for the White House is all but over. However, if it looks like pollsters are increasingly on the wrong side of history (Colombia's referendum, Brexit, the 2015 British election and the Scottish referendum) it could be because they need to triple and quadruple check their assumptions before making blithe pronouncements. This is that type of thought exercise.

Regardless of who won the nomination, Campaign 2016 was always going to be close. After eight years of a Democratic administration, any successor candidate to Barack Obama – in this case Hillary Clinton – would have been at a disadvantage with a public ready for change.



However, Obama's more than 50 percent approval rating gives Republicans only a narrow, but not insurmountable, advantage. Models like this, which look to fundamentals, have a very good predictive value – about 80 percent – when it comes to election outcomes. But they're not infallible. Perhaps most importantly in this case, they don't take into account the individual candidates.

Republican nominee Donald Trump has run a unique campaign and has apparently altered many of the models. Over the past few months, Hillary Clinton has maintained a relatively steady 4-6 point lead in the polling, reversing what our "fundamentals model" would lead us to expect (a Republican victory). But will this remain the case – especially if voters are influenced by Friday's announcement that the FBI is investigating additional emails relating to Clinton's use of a private email server.

In short, what the fundamentals point to and what the polling currently suggests are materially at odds. One will be wrong, and our job is to validate and verify all our data-driven predictions.

■ Bloc of voters

Are polls accurately depicting the electorate, or are we systematically missing some bloc of voters that may sway the election? There are two main areas for investigation. First, are our surveys systematically under-representing Trump voters in our samples, leading us to have more Clinton voters than we should? This "shy Trumpers" thesis assumes Trump supporters are just not responding to our surveys. Second, we could have a good sample, but some Trump voters could be reluctant to volunteer their true support when asked. We'll call this the "social desirability" thesis.

Pollsters overseas have pointed to non-response (meaning that certain groups – like Brexit voters – are less likely to respond to surveys) as a contributing factor to poll inaccuracy. The "shy Trumpers" thesis asks if we are seeing that in the 2016 White House race. This potential problem is compounded by relatively low turnout in American elections. We need not only to get a correct representation of the U.S. population, but we also need to accurately anticipate which half of the population will be voters. A number of approaches have tried to answer this question, but we undertake a relatively simple one. For this "shy Trumpers" thesis to be true, the electorate in our 2016 polls should be different from what we saw in previous election in a way that suggests Donald Trump supporters are being left out.

That's not the case. Our Reuters/Ipsos polling in the 2012 presidential election was very accurate in predicting the final election results and therefore serves as a useful benchmark of the likely voter population. Using this polling, we compare the composition of our electorate (i.e. likely voters) in October 2012 to what we see in October 2016 across several demographic categories that have strong correlations to voter support.

This data indicates that the poll electorate is largely unchanged from 2012. The composition by race/ethnicity is stable; education level is mostly consistent; and age correlates well across the two election polls. Taken together, this suggests that our current polling is substantially capturing the same population we saw in our accurate 2012 polls. If anything, the population favors Trump slightly with older voters this year. Non-response does not appear to be playing a major factor in Trump's current poll deficit.

Is Trump the victim of political correctness?

■ Political correctness

Trump and his supporters, in addition to several election observers, say that political correctness or "social desirability bias" play a part in Trump's poll deficit. This is the notion that some people are unwilling to admit their true support for Trump because they are embarrassed or otherwise unwilling to disclose it in polls. Several studies have looked at this with mixed results from "yes, online polls show Trump stronger because there are no live interviewers" to "no, when asked in different ways, people still exhibit the same level of support for Trump." Our sense is that social desirability is a minor factor, if one at all, particularly as Reuters/Ipsos polling is conducted online and therefore does not suffer from interviewer effects.

It seems more likely that there is a base of voters who ordinarily would vote Republican but cannot bring themselves to support Trump. After all, Trump's favorability rating is the lowest in modern presidential polling and hostility towards him is not confined solely to Democrats.

If we take the "If the 2016 presidential election were held today, would you vote for Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton?" question at face value as our starting point, Clinton has a 6 percentage point lead among likely voters in the October Reuters/Ipsos poll.

→13

Narcissistic guilt in the West is creating the lawless chaos of the migration crisis

By Janet Daley

Let's stop accusing each other of lack of compassion, shall we? If we are sincerely interested in finding a solution to this horrendous migration crisis, then hurling insults is not going to help. Compassion is the beginning of this discussion, not the end. We all start from there. The next question should be: what would constitute a humane and just outcome?

Can I establish my credentials at the start, in the hopes of avoiding just the sort of incendiary fulmination that is wasting so much time and energy? I am the grandchild of refugees who fled from persecution and genocide in the last century. As such, I have pretty much limitless sympathy for those who are doing so today. I also believe that human progress is largely a story of the migration of peoples.

I am particularly favorable to the idea of economic migration: it is a testimony to individual courage, fortitude and endeavor and almost inevitably results in greater prosperity for the countries and populations which accept it. None of what follows should be seen in any way as a repudiation of those views. On the contrary, what I am asking for is a proper argument rather than a phony one.

In the midst of all the shrill noise, there is scarcely any useful conversation taking place about what is happening and how we might deal with it. This is quite extraordinary considering that there has never been a time in human history when there were more agencies and organizations dedicated to the cause of international cooperation and the welfare of the world's peoples. The idea of moral responsibility, not just to those closest to us, but to the human race at large, has never had a more prominent place in political discourse.

And yet, somehow, we are managing to make an absolute mess of this. The august bodies in which so much hope and idealism were invested, the United Nations and the European Union, with their high-flown rhetoric about global accord and delivering the populations of the world from war and want, have been almost entirely useless. Nothing has slowed, or even adequately dealt with, the millions displaced by war, and the further millions who are, as they say, just "seeking a better life".

■ Moral debate

Any proper moral debate must establish some basic premises. Otherwise we end up where we are: talking at cross purposes. It would be useful to get right down to the most fundamental questions.

What is the desirable end result? Do we believe that it is an unalloyed good thing to encourage huge tranches of poor or endangered people to abandon their own countries and settle, almost certainly permanently, in the rich parts of the world? Given that these migrants are likely to be among the strongest, healthiest, most highly motivated individuals in their unfortunate home countries, wouldn't it be plausible to describe the diaspora



Any proper moral debate must establish some basic premises. Otherwise we end up where we are: talking at cross purposes. It would be useful to get right down to the most fundamental questions.

as an abandonment of those who are most disadvantaged? Because the truth is that the men – and there is a great preponderance of young men – who arrive on Europe's shores with smartphones having had enough cash to pay the people traffickers are not generally the most deprived or the most deserving of compassion.

In the Calais Jungle evacuation, it became clear that children had been left behind in the scum, and the voluntary workers who had real knowledge of who was most needy were scarcely being consulted. It is a fairly sound assumption that men between the ages of 18 and 30 are in less potential danger than women and children under most circumstances – and that girls are in the greatest danger. It is surely those left behind in the hellholes created by civil war and despotism, who do not have the wherewithal or the insane willingness to risk their lives and those of their families, who should be the first in line for generosity.

■ Western nations

It is precisely because the rich Western nations, awash in their narcissistic guilt about the visible crisis, have had no rational plan or discussion that those hapless people have been left out of the equation almost entirely. When Britain proposed taking families from the refugee camps on the Syrian border rather than illegally trafficked migrants from Greece and Italy, this was roundly condemned in the European Union as pure cynicism and a refusal to meet our obligations.

What they meant was that it was unhelpful to the EU, whose chaotic handling of uncontrolled mass migration had got completely out of hand. In all the breast-beating and mutual recrimination, there has been almost no consideration

of the consequences of this movement of the able-bodied and relatively affluent (with enough money to pay for their transport) out of what used to be called the Third World. What will become of those left to their fate among marauding warlords? It might be argued that we in the West have a greater responsibility for them since it was often our interventions that destabilized their countries.

There has not even been the universally agreed global action on the people-smuggling industry that should, by rights, be comparable to the slave trade in international ignominy.

In fact, dreadful as it is to have to say this, the charities whose ships wait just off the coast of Libya to pick up the smugglers' desperate passengers could be described as aiding and abetting the crime. Stamping out this wicked trafficking in human life should be among the top priorities in the migrant crisis. At the very least, one would have expected the UN and the EU to have agreed on an effective program of action for eliminating it, rather than simply "condemning" it and then picking up the detritus left in its wake.

So where does this leave us? Unfortunately, history is not much help. The United States, famously a "nation of immigrants", is not a useful model. When my grandparents arrived at the turn of the twentieth century, there was an established and rigorous procedure at Ellis Island – and it was not the unbounded open door that sentimental Europeans might think.

No one could be admitted to the U.S. mainland from the island reception center who might prove to be, as the rules put it, a "charge upon the state" either through mental unfitness or ill health. (Because my

grandmother's cousin had measles, the whole family was held in the quarantine center until she was deemed non-infectious.) Perhaps more surprisingly, prospective migrants were not permitted to have pre-arranged jobs. This was to prevent the importation of cheap labor gangs into the country: if you wanted to come in, you had to take your chances for survival with the indigenous population. There would be no state support and no employment stitch-up.

The system was designed to stress independence and resourcefulness. Modern European societies with their extensive welfare provision and employment protection laws are a world away from this mentality. And, of course, those European entrants had paid for legal sea passages in steerage: they were not fodder for smuggling gangs. This was a well-supervised operation with rules and regulations, not lawless chaos. Now the U.S. is deeply troubled by the sort of migration that is much harder to control: from Mexico and points south, the border with which (no matter what Donald Trump claims) is impossible to police. The lesson is, unsurprisingly, that there may not be easy solutions to this great mass movement of peoples but there are worse and better ways of dealing with the political pressures that it raises.

It is imperative that decisions are made -- and stuck to -- about what "dealing with migration" should mean: about what we want the end result to be. Otherwise it will remain a brutal fight to the front of the queue for those who may not be most deserving, and a collapse of trust in government and the rule of law which could undermine the most compassionate intentions.

(Source: *The Telegraph*)

Africa's challenge to universal justice

South Africa, Gambia, and Burundi plan to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC). While disappointing, their move cannot end the steady progress to establish universal ideals and norms of justice

Three countries in Africa, most notably South Africa, have signaled they plan to withdraw from the International Criminal Court.

That tribunal, set up only in 2002 by the United Nations to prosecute perpetrators of genocide and other mass atrocities, has achieved only a handful of convictions. Yet most have been against Africans.

Many leaders on the continent either resent this apparent bias or, more likely, fear being next for ICC prosecution.

If more countries withdraw from the court's jurisdiction, human rights activists worry that its mission of bringing justice for victims of mass violence could be slowed.

■ Universal ideals

On a large scale, a weaker ICC might set back decades of progress in showing that universal ideals, such as international law, can transcend the narrow interests of tribes and nations.

In other words, if justice is a common desire of humanity, so must be its global application.

The ICC's role is to prosecute the worst of crimes whenever a country fails to do so within its borders.

While the court has 124 members, it is still a new experiment in bringing universal justice.

From the start, it was less than universal by the refusal of China, Russia, and the United States to join it



for various reasons.

And while the court has lately started to probe atrocities in the Middle East, Ukraine, and elsewhere, the extent of violence in Africa has allowed it to focus more easily on the worst despots in that region. Its chief prosecutor is an African, which further argues against the court being biased.

The ICC faces similar headwinds as does another recent UN invention: the idea that countries can be given permission to militarily intervene across borders to prevent mass killings.

Known as the "responsibility to protect," this principle

endorsed in 2005 has been abused as much as it has been used to save lives, such in Libya in 2011. Yet such efforts represent humanity's interest since World War II and the Holocaust to establish norms based on ideals such as human rights and democratic liberty.

■ The ICC's setback

The setback for the ICC should be seen in its larger context of the steady if fitful progress in persuading most of the world that certain ideals, such as justice, are indeed universal and can further the recent reduction in war violence.

Many other efforts, such as treaties against weapons of mass destruction, are working well in setting higher norms.

The world is also more tightly bound by economic concerns, which helps drive global rules to prevent violence.

The ICC was created in hopes of avoiding the kind of ad hoc courts set up to deal with mass violence, such as in the former Yugoslavia. Such a need still exists.

A noble purpose like universal justice, once let loose, is difficult to end. At its creation, Kofi Annan, an African and at the time the UN secretary-general, described the ICC as a "giant step forward in the march towards universal human rights and the rule of law." The withdrawal of few nations cannot stop that march.

(Source: *The CSM*)

By Hamid Reza Gholamzaeh

"On Tuesday, July 26, 2016, the US Army Corps of Engineers ("USACE") approved the water crossing permits for the Dakota Access Pipeline, proposed to carry fracked oil from the Bakken fields in North Dakota 1, 172 miles to Patoka, Illinois. We are a grassroots coalition of tribal members, landowners, and environmental organizations who stand united in opposition to these permits and the process by which the USACE granted them. This rubber stamp approval undermines the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, as well as federal trust responsibilities guaranteed in the 1851 and 1868 United States treaties with the L/D/Nakota tribes, which

All violations of DAPL project

remain the supreme law of the land. We support the subsequent legal filings by the Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Rosebud Sioux, and Yankton Sioux Tribes, whose human rights, treaty rights, and sovereignty are violated by these permits. We join them in calling for a full halt to all construction activities and repeal of all USACE permits until formal tribal consultation and environmental review are properly and adequately conducted." This is how a coalition support of tribal lawsuits against us army corps permits for the Dakota access pipeline dated early this month opens and protests the controversial project.

Amid mainstream media blackout on the protests in Dakota and

the Sacred Stones Camp, hundreds of Native American protesters and their supporters have been arrested on various charges. The objections against the Dakota pipeline have been going on for months now and after many arrests, the media seems to be shedding more light on the incident. On Thursday, more than 100 officers in riot gear with automatic rifles lined up across a highway, flanked by multiple MRAPs, an LRAD sound cannon, Humvees driven by National Guardsmen, an armored police truck and a bulldozer. Water protectors say police deployed tear gas, mace, pepper spray and flash-bang grenades and bean bag rounds against the Native Americans and shot rubber bullets at their horses. "We learned a lot about the relationship of North Dakota to Native people," says Tara Houska, national campaigns director for Honor the Earth. "I was standing next to a group of teenagers that were all maced in the face... Myself, I actually was almost shot in the face by bean bag round."

What is DAPL?

The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) is owned by Houston, Texas based corporation called Energy Transfer Partners, L.P. which created the subsidiary Dakota Access LLC. The DAPL, also known as the Bakken Pipeline, is proposed to transport 450,000 barrels of crude oil per day (which is fracked and highly volatile) from the Bakken fields of North Dakota to Patoka, Illinois. In August 2016, the final finances were secured when Enbridge and the Marathon Petroleum Company bought a 2 billion dollar share.

Despite pressure from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preserva-

tion, Dakota Access has failed to consult tribes and conduct a full environmental impact statement. The proposed route crosses the Missouri River at the confluence with the Cannon Ball River, and area that is of utmost cultural and spiritual, and environmental significance. The confluence an important location for the Mandan origin story as the place where they came into the world after the great flood. Where the two waters meet once created Inyari Wakhagagapi Othi, spherical Sacred Stones (thus the colonizers' term 'Cannon Ball'), but after the Army Corp of Engineers dredged and flooded the rivers in the 50s, the flow has changed and Sacred Stones are no longer produced. There are historic burial grounds, village grounds and Sundance sites that would be directly impacted. The water of the Missouri River is essential to life on the Standing Rock Reservation as well as all of the nations and states downstream.

The threats this pipeline poses to the environment, human health and human rights are the same as those that were posed by the Keystone XL. The current route of the DAPL will cross over the Ogallala Aquifer (one of the largest aquifers in the world) and under the Missouri River twice (the longest river in the United States). The possible contamination of these water sources makes the Dakota Access pipeline a national threat.

Violations of Federal Law

Camp of the Sacred Stones accuses the project of being against federal law where they enumerate following cases as instances of the breach.

Fort Laramie Treaty of April 29, 1868

The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) violates Article 2 of the



1868 Fort Laramie Treaty which guarantees that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe shall enjoy the "undisturbed use and occupation" of our permanent homeland, the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The U.S. Constitution states that treaties are the supreme law of the land.

Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice

All agencies must determine if proposed project disproportionately impacts Tribal community or other minority community. The DAPL was original routed to cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck. The crossing was moved to "avoid populated areas", so instead of crossing upriver of the state's capital, it crosses the aquifer of the Great Sioux Reservation.

Pipeline Safety Act and Clean Water Act

DAPL has not publicly identified the Missouri River crossing as high consequence. The Ogallala Aquifer must be considered a "high consequence area", since the pipeline would cross critical drinking water and intakes for those water systems. The emergency plan must estimate the maximum possible spill (49 CFR§195.452(h)

(iv)(i)). DAPL refuses to release this information to the tribe.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

A detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be completed for major actions that affect the environment. Also, the Army Corps of Engineers must comply w/ NEPA for the permit for the Missouri River crossing. The way agencies get around this is to provide a lesser study, a brief Environmental Assessment (which Dakota Access has done). A full EIS would be an interdisciplinary approach for the integrated use of natural and social sciences to determine direct and indirect effects of the project and "possible conflicts... with Indian land use plans and policies...(and) cultural resources" 40 CFR §1502.16

Executive Order 13007 on Protection of Sacred Sites

"In managing federal lands, each executive branch agency shall avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sites." There are historical ceremony sites and burial grounds in the immediate vicinity of the Missouri River crossing. The Corps must deny the DAPL permit to protect these sites in compliance with EO 13007.

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Babies should share bedroom with parents - but in their own bed

Babies should sleep in the same rooms as their parents for the first year of their lives - but never in the same bed - as it reduces cot death by 50 percent.

Child health experts warn never to put infants to sleep on sofas, armchairs or soft surfaces to lower the risks of thousands of sleep-related deaths.

Parents are urged to let infants share their bedrooms for at least the first six months, preferably for a year, according to the latest research.

Dr. Rachel Moon, lead author into the report announcing the new recommendations, said: "We know that parents may be overwhelmed with a new baby in the home, and we want to provide them with clear and simple guidance on how and where to put their infant to sleep.

"Parents should never place the baby on a sofa, couch, or cushioned chair, either alone or sleeping with another person.

"We know that these surfaces are extremely hazardous."

While infant cot deaths are at heightened risk between one and four months, new evidence shows that soft bedding continues to pose hazards to babies who are four months and older.

Experts instead suggest placing the



baby, on his or her back, on a firm sleep surface such as a crib or bassinet with a tight-fitting sheet.

They also warn against using soft bedding, including crib bumpers, blankets, pillows and soft toys - the crib should be completely bare.

Doctors have renewed the warnings as the number of infant deaths decreased in the 1990s after a national safe sleep cam-

paigned, but has plateaued in recent years.

Around 3,500 infants die every year from sleep-related deaths in the United States, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), ill-defined deaths, and accidental suffocation and strangulation.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), who will present the report, recommend mothers and babies have at least an hour of skin-to-skin contact after birth,

and remind mothers that breastfeeding adds protect against SIDS.

After feeding, the AAP encourages parents to move the baby to his or her separate sleeping space, preferably a crib or bassinet in the parents' bedroom.

Dr. Lori Feldman-Winter, member of the Task Force on SIDS and co-author of the report, said: "If you are feeding your baby and think that there's even the slightest possibility that you may fall asleep, feed your baby on your bed, rather than a sofa or cushioned chair.

"As soon as you wake up, be sure to move the baby to his or her own bed.

"There should be no pillows, sheets, blankets or other items that could obstruct the infant's breathing or cause overheating."

The AAP recommends that doctors will open and nonjudgmental conversations with families about their sleep practices.

Dr. Moon added: "We want to share this information in a way that doesn't scare parents but helps to explain the real risks posed by an unsafe sleep environment.

"We know that we can keep a baby safer without spending a lot of money on home monitoring gadgets but through simple precautionary measures."

(Source: northamptonchron.co.uk)

Eight healthy eating goals

Small changes can make a big difference to your health. Try incorporating at least six of the eight goals below into your diet. Commit to incorporating one new healthy eating goal each week over the next six weeks.

■ Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert. The more colorful you make your plate, the more likely you are to get the vitamins, minerals, and fiber your body needs to be healthy.

■ Make half the grains you eat whole grains

An easy way to eat more whole grains is to switch from a refined-grain food to a whole-grain food. For example, eat whole-wheat bread instead of white bread. Read the ingredients list and choose products that list a whole-grain ingredients first. Look for things like: "whole wheat," "brown rice," "bulgur," "buckwheat," "oatmeal,"

"rolled oats," quinoa," or "wild rice."

■ Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

Both have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

■ Choose a variety of lean protein foods

Meat, poultry, seafood, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the protein foods group. Select leaner cuts of ground beef (where the label says 90% lean or higher), turkey breast, or chicken breast.

■ Compare sodium in foods

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," or "no salt added."

■ Drink water instead of sugary drinks

Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages.

Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar and calories in American diets. Try adding a slice of lemon, lime, or watermelon or a splash of 100% juice to your glass of water if you want some flavor.

■ Eat some seafood

Seafood includes fish (such as salmon, tuna, and trout) and shellfish (such as crab, mussels, and oysters). Seafood has protein, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids (heart-healthy fat). Adults should try to eat at least eight ounces a week of a variety of seafood. Children can eat smaller amounts of seafood, too.

■ Cut back on solid fats

Eat fewer foods that contain solid fats. The major sources for Americans are cakes, cookies, and other desserts (often made with butter, margarine, or shortening); pizza; processed and fatty meats (e.g., sausages, hot dogs, ribs); and ice cream.

(Source: fitness.gov)

How to use your crockpot

By Natalie Monson

The crockpot is undeniably the hero of weeknight dinners. "Fix it and forget it" is a great way to describe the magical powers of this common household appliance. Instead of heading through the drive-through in a meal-time crunch, be prepared with a crockpot full of healthy, family-friendly food.

The benefits of using a slow cooker to help with meal time are plentiful. Slow cookers are masters at transforming tougher meats into tender, flavorful dishes.

They are also masters at saving time, allowing the prep time to be finished hours before the crunch time that so often happens right before dinner.

When preparing a balanced meal for your family, it's often the protein portion of the meal that is time-consuming. Using the crockpot to complete this step, is a huge time saver. Adding in a few fresh vegetables and whole grains is the quick part.

Cooking with a crockpot might seem intimidating if you haven't used it often. But with a few tips and some experience, you'll be an expert in no time. Other recipes can also be converted to the slow cooker if you want to experiment further.

Often we think of using the slow cooker during the cooler months, for stews and warm comfort food. But the slow cooker can save dinner all year round. Let's take a look at some different ideas through the different seasons.

■ Summer

Summer time is one of the best times to use the slow cooker. You can get a nice hot meal without heating up the entire house. Just throw a few simple ingredients in the crockpot in the mid-morning and by dinner time you'll be ready to serve your family a healthy dinner with a few simple preparations. One example of a simple slow cooker meal that can be served in just minutes is tacos. Combining a few south of the border spices with your protein of choice creates tender taco meat that can be added to some healthy tortillas and plenty of veggies for a flavorful meal in minutes.

■ Fall

As school starts up again and schedules get busier, the crockpot is truly a lifesaver. Quick, simple dinners can be ready in no time, leaving you time to get adjust to new routines and schedules. Dinner isn't the only thing to be saved by the crockpot. With the bounty of fall apples, try making your own applesauce by combining fresh, fall apples with a little lemon juice, nutmeg, and cinnamon for an insanely tasty after school snack.

■ Winter

Winter is all about being cozy, warm, and spending time with the people you love. The crockpot is a great way to get the food ready much earlier in the day and then enjoy loved ones the rest of the day. A simple beef stew can be made with plenty of veggies to create a balanced meal. Simply combine stew meat, carrots, potatoes, onions in the slow cooker. Add a little salt, pepper, paprika, garlic, and beef stock. Give it a few hours to cook and the result is tender, flavorful comfort food with almost no work.

So no matter the time of year, dust off that crockpot and master dinner! Save time, and feed your family healthy, flavorful meals.

(Source: verywell.com)

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10 hot titles of IT world

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

1 IDC survey Base on 1,082 U.S. customers of the Note7 showed 12 out of 24 Note7 owners switched to iPhone.

The most of the surveyed consumers said the recall wouldn't affect future buying decisions

2 Oppo has dethroned Huawei to become the top smartphone player in China in Q3.

Phone maker sold 22 million smartphone units in the third quarter. another maker, Vivo also surpassed Huawei with 19 million phones.

3 New version of Skype 6.27.1 lets you to send messages using Siri.

You can now view your Skype recent messages and Favorites on the Apple Watch again.

4 Microsoft Allows You To Play Windows Store Games Offline.

That's going to be real special when the power gets knocked out and your ISP is delayed when it comes to getting your service back up.

5 Elephone S7 released as copy of S7 samsung with an explosion-proof membrane by chinese company.

The phone is to be sold cheaply, starting at \$139.99 for the base 2GB RAM model.

6 In 2017, a whopping 75% of all Internet traffic will come from mobile devices, regarding to new report from Zenith. This year of 2016 showed that mobile devices accounted for 68% of Internet traffic, and that number is expected to grow up to as much as 79% two years from now in 2018.

7 Maven, General Motors' car-sharing service, is finally coming to the City of Angels.

To start, you'll need to register and then use the app to reserve a vehicle of your choice.

8 Google's AI created its own form of encryption. Researchers from the Google Brain deep learning project moving on to something potentially darker: AI-generated, human-independent encryption.

Neural networks named Alice, Bob and Eve to pass each other notes using an encryption method they created themselves.

9 FBI reviewing Hillary Clinton's use of private server after new emails found.

Emails are thought to have been found on devices owned by a top Clinton aide in an unrelated case.

10 White House plan will train coal workers for a drone-pilot workforce by funding training programs at the Mountain Empire Community College by investing \$2.2 million.

There's also a \$1.4 million grant that aims to bolster training for jobs in cybersecurity in southwest Virginia.

VR industry hasn't bothered to do safety research

By Amir-Esmoail Bozorgzadeh

I don't want to be a party pooper, but it appears the VR industry is treating safety as an afterthought rather than addressing it proactively. There is not enough publicly-accessible research in our hands on how VR content definitively affects the brain or body except for the mostly anecdotal comments about cases of nausea and, of course, the spectacle of people falling over wires.

About two years ago, UCLA released research that found our brains do not react to virtual reality in the same way we had thought. "The pattern of activity in a brain region involved in spatial learning in the virtual world is completely different than when it processes activity in the real world," said Mayank Mehta, the research lead for the study at the UCLA. One of the main takeaways was that these findings should prompt the industry to further investigate and research the effect of VR on neurons.

Fast forward almost two years, and the Guardian publishes an article on the same topic showing that not much seems to have changed. "We haven't really yet got to the stage where people have been using virtual reality for prolonged periods of time — over, for example, periods of weeks or months — to identify with any clear certainty any long-term effects of virtual reality," Sarah Sharples, professor of human factors at the University of Nottingham and president of the Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors, told the Guardian.

In an article published earlier this month on Live Science about the safe use of VR by children, Marientina Gotsis, director of the Creative Media & Behavioral Health Center at the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, said this: "We do not have enough data on the safety of current VR technology for children, so the sparsity of research data and what we know about neuroplasticity [the brain's ability to reorganize itself] and children does not make me comfortable to recommend what is available now as is."

There is a regular stream of news bulletins about how VR can help in the case of phobias, mental illnesses like depression, and even as sex therapy. But what about the potential flipside where specific experimental content, prolonged use, or usage of certain technology, actually adversely affect us psychologically?

The recurrent advice I keep coming across is to follow our common sense, be sensible about our own behavior, and to take note of the side effect guidelines posted by hardware makers, such as the one provided for the Oculus Rift. For the most part, the industry appears to be placing the onus of responsibility on the user by putting precautionary notes into product descriptions such as disclaimers warning pregnant women not to use the device.

VR Bound has published some guidelines for parents who may be understandably concerned about exposing their children to this immersive technology. "Until the industry conducts more research into the effects of VR on children, you'll need to mostly rely on your common sense and maternal instincts," reads the page. It also mentions a report that warns about prolonged use in 3D environments causing "strabismus, the abnormal alignment of the eyes or the condition of having a squint."

I find the situation troubling because I expect the big hardware and software players to be responsible for making this research more readily available before hundreds of thousands of headsets are brought into living rooms around the world.

(Source: venturebeat)

Horrible hacks, death robots, and kamikaze phones: Meet the scariest tech of the year

The internet is under attack

Scary? I'll tell you what's scary. The Internet is under attack by Russians, criminals, and Joe Random Hacker like never before. The internet -- yes the whole blasted thing -- is in danger of going down.

Can't happen you say? Oh my friend, you're living in a dream world.

PandaLabs just reported the first terabit per second distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks; the Russians are literally attacking our networks; and security expert Bruce Schneier reports that, "over the past year or two, someone has been probing the defenses of the companies that run critical pieces of the internet."

So what you say? There have always been attacks on the Internet? Why yes there has been, but never before have we so many unpatched, insecure devices, thanks to the Internet of Things. These are the launch pads for hacker rocket attacks on the very foundations of the Internet.

So, you can watch "The Ring" and be scared or you can shiver in bed while reading the latest Stephen King novel, but for me, the real frights lay in watching the Internet Traffic Report and Akamai's Real Time Internet Monitor and waiting for them to go all red.

Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols

Shodan, for some, is the stuff of nightmares

Launched in 2013, Shodan is a search engine and tool to find vulnerable Internet of Things (IoT) devices including webcams, routers and security systems. While this can help researchers and vendors track down poorly-secured products, there is a dark side -- the public engine can also be used by our inner peeping tom to spy on other people.

Shodan, available on a free or subscription basis, can be used to scan vulnerable cameras feeds, for example, which carve a path for you to secretly watch everything from living rooms to garages, children's bedrooms to the back of banks.

Thankfully, the operators of Shodan choose to only take a snapshot of these feeds rather than permit full-on spying. However, the vulnerabilities in these devices, used worldwide, are still a scary thought.

Charlie Osborne

Intelligence assistants will make your life easy for now

Whether it's Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant, Cortana, or your TV, we're enamored by our intelligent assistants. They listen to us and when asked, can often be very helpful.

Right now, they're limited in power as to sometimes be helpful and sometimes be annoying. But what if they're hacked? What if the government starts to demand full audio streams coming from our homes be saved and archived? Will conversations had in your own home be used against you in a court of law? Will conversations be filtered and scanned and if certain keywords are uttered, trigger a police invasion? It sounds far fetched, but unless we're careful, it's possible.

We sometimes seem like we're plung-

ing headfirst into a police state, and that's scary.

David Gewirtz



ing headfirst into a police state, and that's scary.

Cars that drive -and crash- themselves

You've seen them in almost every dystopian near-future Science Fiction movie going back 30 years -- from "Demolition Man" to "Minority Report" -- cars that can drive themselves, relieving the pilot of the mundane task of high-speed highway and inner city stoplight travel. Point to point navigation while you sit back, drink your morning coffee, and read the news on your ultra-thin tablet computer -- and the car does all the work.

The potential benefits of such vehicles are obvious. By removing the human from the equation, cars can drive faster, are able to drive closer to each other, and are not prone to human error and distractions. Today, only a few cars such as the Tesla have such capabilities -- but within five or ten years most new models will be fully autonomous-capable.

Your car of the future will be more computer than it is vehicle, with the amount of technology that it will be armed with. This is both an advantage and disadvantage.

Besides the obvious security concerns of having so much connectivity in a vehicle, with the potential for remote hacks, there is the concern that removing the human element could result in increased accidents in situations the software and sensors are not designed to anticipate. But if things don't work or fail spectacularly, who's to say a driver can take over in an emergency?

At 85 miles per hour on a highway of the future populated almost entirely by self-driving vehicles that's a very scary proposition.

Jason Perlow

Police robots go from helping to killing

This year killer robots walked straight out of sci-fi and into real life.

In July 2016, for the first time in US history, police used a robot to kill a suspect. The situation was terrifying: at a peaceful Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas, Texas, a sniper shot police officers, killing five officers and injuring several more. Police cornered the suspect and attempted to negotiate, but according to Dallas police chief David Brown, the suspect lied, laughed, sung, and bragged about his plans to kill even more officers.

Finally, after hours of failed negotiations, the police decided to end the standoff by using a robot to deliver explosives that killed the suspect.

This case was unique: police were sure they had the right guy, and the shooter made it crystal clear that additional lives were in danger -- so Brown said it wasn't an ethical dilemma. However, now that a new precedent has been set, law enforcement (and other institutions, for that matter) may start to use more killer robots in the future.

Each year, robots continue to become cheaper, more user-friendly, and therefore, more widely adopted. The Dallas police robot was controlled wirelessly by humans, which is scary enough already, but robotic technology is becoming more autonomous every day.

And autonomous lethal robots are downright frightening.

Kelly McSweeney

Samsung phones that go "boom" in your pocket

It's hard to imagine a scarier piece of technology in 2016 than Samsung's Note 7 smartphone.

The Note 7 quickly went from a phone praised as setting the bar for smartphones

heading into 2017, to exploding in cars, homes, and even caused the evacuation of a Southwest plane shortly before take off. Samsung recalled the Note 7, issued replacement devices the South Korean company deemed safe. Then the replacement devices started exploding, prompting Samsung to cease production, and issue a second recall of the device.

The thought of carrying around a smartphone that at any time could begin emitting fire and shooting toxic smoke into the air is about as spooky as it gets. Even scarier?

Samsung still has no idea what's caused the Note 7 to explode.

Jason Cipriani

Data breach today, data breach tomorrow

What's more scary: finding out that a company you use has been hacked, or thinking it has but not knowing?

We might be coming to the end of the year, but the near-constant stream of hacks yesterday today are still in full swing -- not least the historical hacks that were left dormant for many years.

How did we get here? For every tech giant out here, the outbreak of recent confirmed data breaches served up a brutal reminder that more than ever, security really matters. The hacks have taken over like a fever, fueled by the reasonable expectation -- given the hackers' apparently high level of access -- that more breaches would emerge.

Who knows which site will be breached next -- or when? It may be a forum site you've been to twice in as many decades, or a major social network.

Zack Whittaker

Drones: a force for good and terror

The US government has been successfully using drone aircraft for reconnaissance and attack missions for well over a decade. The pilot, thousands of miles away, sits at an interface not much different than what you'd find on a games console.

It used to be this sort of technology cost millions of dollars. But with the rise of miniaturization tech, a very sophisticated helicopter-style drone no larger than a model aircraft that could be used by private individuals, state actors or even terrorist organizations to perform sophisticated visual and cyber surveillance as well as attacks is well within reach for only a few thousand dollars.

These drones -- which could be operated from miles away from their intended target -- could be equipped with high-quality 4K video cameras, using night vision, as well as high-end microphones for recording audio.

Depending on the mission they could also be given a host of other sensors for electromagnetic surveillance, including the obvious transceivers for breaking into Wi-Fi networks. And explosives, poison darts and firearms? If your intention is to kill someone, that's definitely an option.

Once released and sent to the target, it wouldn't necessarily have to be piloted or in range of a transmitter -- its programming could allow it to be autonomous, where it could perform its job over a matter of hours before returning to its owner.

It could land outside the window of your office complex, siphoning passwords and data and you wouldn't even know it.

Jason Perlow (Source: zdnet)

Comma.ai cancels self-driving car device after warning from U.S. regulators

San Francisco entrepreneur George Hotz was so confident in his self-driving startup Comma.ai that he had T-shirts made that boldly proclaimed: "We are gonna be so rich."

But U.S. federal highway safety officials this week forced Hotz to slam on the brakes, veering into a sudden detour, on the road to those promised riches.

In a letter and order on Thursday, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) demanded that Comma.ai provide proof to regulators that its proposed device for self-driving cars would be safe, or risk having its sale blocked.

The action, disclosed on Friday, is a decisive signal to the rest of Silicon Valley that the days when regulators took a hands-off approach to self-driving car technology are over.

Hotz, in a tweet sent Friday from China, said Com-

ma.ai was redirecting its efforts to "other products and markets."

NHTSA and state regulators have been escalating their scrutiny of self-driving car systems and the way they are being tested and used since the death in May of the driver of a Tesla Model S sedan that was operating in so-called "Autopilot" mode.

NHTSA administrator Mark Rosekind has said he wants to encourage innovation in autonomous driving because cars that avoid human mistakes could prevent thousands of deaths each year. But the agency recently released guidelines for self-driving vehicles and systems, indicating its intent to provide more oversight before such systems reach the market.

Hotz did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the order from NHTSA. But in one of his postings on Twitter he said plans for the plug-in driver-

less car device called Comma One had been "canceled."

On a test drive with two Reuters reporters in September, the device lost connection with the vehicle sensors that locate other cars on the road, prompting Hotz to pull off at an exit to restart the car and reboot the device.

The test car also had difficulty steering itself onto freeway on-ramps, forcing Hotz to grab the wheel. Hotz repeatedly attributed the various technical glitches to an "alpha build," referring to the use of an early prototype.

Comma.ai is one of more than 50 startups working on automating such human driving tasks as steering and braking, in effort to reduce vehicle-related injuries and deaths.

Venture and corporate investors, including General Motors and Uber, have poured more than \$2 billion into self-driving startups in the past five years, according to a Reuters analysis. (Source: Reuters)

General Atomics breakthrough enables greater control of fusion energy

Researchers working at the DIII-D National Fusion Facility at General Atomics (GA) have created an important new tool for controlling fusion plasmas that are hotter than the sun.

Energy and momentum in DIII-D's magnetically contained plasma is delivered by large neutral-particle beams systems, and GA's recent demonstration of precise control of injected power and torque is a first.

Scientists are now able to pre-program these inputs over the duration of plasma discharges (called "shots"). GA led the development effort in collaboration with scientists from the University of California-Irvine and Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory.

Previously, these inputs were tailored using on/off modulation of neutral beams, resulting in large perturbations, i.e. power swings. The new method allows separate and continuous specification of power and torque, including the important capability of maintaining a fixed injected power level while varying torque.

■ Beam system

Changing the way this system operates is a significant effort, considering the size and complexity of each beam system; there are four truck-sized housings for eight total beams at DIII-D (Figure 1). The neutral beam system injects up to 20



megawatts of power, approximately the power used by 15,000 homes.

In the past, neutral beams have operated by accelerating ions through a high voltage (approximately 90,000 volts, compared to the 120 volts of a

typical household power outlet) that is fixed in time, and then passing them through a chamber of dense gas where they neutralize and fly into the magnetized plasma. High acceleration voltage is necessary to maximize the velocity of

the resulting neutral atom and beam heating power.

■ Electromagnetic plasma

Experiments in recent years have shown that the velocity of the beam particles can produce or amplify electromagnetic plasma waves that kick those beam particles out of the plasma and into the walls of the tokamak.

The solution is to vary the beam's high voltage over time, thereby reducing beam particle losses due to plasma waves while maximizing input beam power. As the plasma is heated, the behavior of the plasma waves changes such that beam particles of different velocities interact with the waves. Now, the DIII-D neutral beams can be given pre-programmed voltage profiles that minimize wave-particle interactions. This keeps the beam particles in the plasma and allows the beam voltage to increase to higher levels that maximize the input heating power.

"This project involved two years of engineers and physicists working hard to create something new, and it's wonderful to see it working successfully on DIII-D," said Dr. David Pace, a physicist who led the project for the GA Energy Group, "Now we get to focus on the next exciting step, which is demonstrating all the ways these variable voltage beams can improve magnetic fusion in machines across the world."

(Source: EurekAlert)

Energy and momentum in DIII-D's magnetically contained plasma is delivered by large neutral-particle beams systems, and GA's recent demonstration of precise control of injected power and torque is a first.

How did New Horizon mission change our view of Pluto?

While Pluto may not have full planet status anymore, it has captivated scientists for over a year, as a steady stream of new data has allowed scientists to piece together a more complete portrait.

Fifteen months after NASA's New Horizon mission flew through the Pluto system, the final images and bits of data have finally finished transferring back to Earth, revealing previously unknown insights into the distant dwarf planet and its moons.

"This is what we came for — these images, spectra, and other data types that are going to help us understand the origin and the evolution of the Pluto system for the first time," New Horizons principal investigator Alan Stern said told Universe Today. "We're seeing that Pluto is a scientific wonderland. The images have been just magical. It's breathtaking."

The 50 gigabytes of data from the Pluto mission have been trickling back to Earth since September 2015. With only one chance to fly by the planet, New Horizon mission collected as much data as it could, selecting the highest quality images to send back to Earth, according to the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL).

Three billion miles from Earth, with minimal power to spare on a journey that began 10 years ago, the New Horizon mission can only transmit between one and

four kilobits of data per second. But scientists agree that the results have been worth the wait.

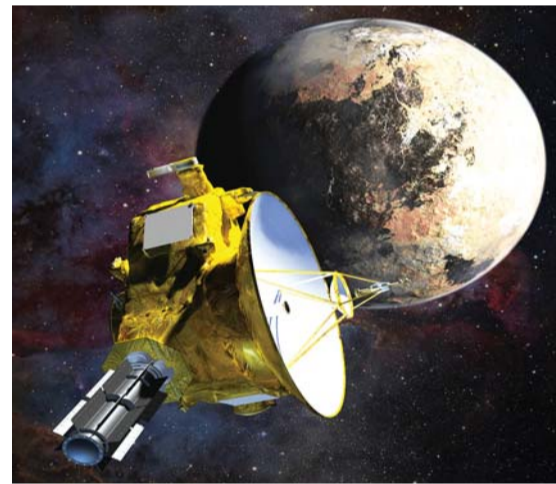
■ Mission's findings

The New Horizons operations manager, Alice Bowman, described the data as a pot of gold, while project scientist Hal Weaver marveled at how far forward the mission's findings will take the study of Pluto.

"It's strange to think that only a year ago, we still had no real idea of what the Pluto system was like," Dr. Weaver said in a NASA press release. "But it didn't take long for us to realize Pluto was something special, and like nothing we ever could have expected. We've been astounded by the beauty and complexity of Pluto and its moons and we're excited about the discoveries still to come."

Among many startling discoveries, the New Horizons revealed that much of what scientists thought they knew about the dwarf planet was inaccurate. For one thing, Pluto's atmosphere is blue and its atmospheric escape rate was much lower than expected. With a heightened ability to hold onto its atmosphere, the potential for standing liquids to exist on the surface increases.

Previously, liquid-friendly conditions were only known to exist on Earth, Mars, and Titan (Saturn's largest moon). Much of the data that New Horizons collected came



from Pluto's five moons. By analyzing the surface craters on each moon, scientists determined that all of the moons are the same age, which gives credence to the theory that they formed when Pluto collided with another large object in the Kuiper Belt.

(Source: The CSM)

Why overfishing whales and sharks is affecting the pace of climate change

Our oceans are under serious threat. For years, many commercially important fish have been unsustainably caught, and today many of the world's commercial fisheries are on the verge of collapse.

In addition, over the past 20 years, the demand in the Far East for shark fins to make soup, has annihilated shark populations — although recent work suggested that demand for fins has finally begun to fall.

Predictions for the future health of the oceans are alarming. Several studies foresee that the majority of the ocean will be occupied by little more than a combination of jellyfish and plastic waste.

While scientists have long been aware

of the decline of marine ecological communities, little work has been done on how fishing or shark finning can affect ecosystem level processes, including climate change. Our new study shows how large-scale ecosystem effects can occur as a result of predator removal, including increased production of biological carbon dioxide in the ocean.

Since most commercially caught fish are predators, fishing and shark finning are resulting in a rapidly decreasing number of predators in the marine ecosystem. Our research suggests that this removal of predators is likely to lead to an increase in ocean ecosystems' CO₂ production,

and ultimately that fishing and shark finning are contributing to climate change.

■ Carbon dioxide production

The reason for this increase in carbon dioxide production is based on a simple and well-founded ecological principle taught to biology students in schools, that energy and biomass are not efficiently transferred through the food chain. Typically, a predator population will only gain 10 percent of the biomass of the prey it consumes.

Predators have the potential to reduce the biomass of prey species such as small fish and zooplankton (small animals in the water column). Removing the predators, therefore, can result in a large

increase in these low level populations — in fact, due to inefficient energy transfer, this increase could be up to 90 percent more in terms of biomass than the weight of the predators removed. This results in more respiration occurring, and therefore more carbon dioxide production.

While our study is based on a theoretical model, studies on the role of predators in carbon production have been conducted before, in simple systems consisting of only a few species. They also showed that carbon production can be increased by removing top predators from the system.

(Source: NewsWeek)

Iran's Ambassador to UK Hails Lifting Sanctions on BSI

Baedeinejad: British lifting of sanctions on Bank Saderat cause for optimism

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to England Hamid Baedeinejad expressed his satisfaction in the field of lifting sanctions imposed on Bank Saderat Iran (BSI).

With the negotiations made with EU authorities in different levels, fortunately, sanctions imposed on the

bank have been lifted, the issue of which will be promising, he maintained.

Speaking in front of correspondents in London, he said: "Removal of blocking assets and properties belonging to Bank Saderat Iran (BSI) by the EU Executive Council, which had not been materialized in the course of nuclear talks, was put into effect at last."

Days after the UK Treasury's Office of Financial Sanc-

tions Implementation announced the removal of sanctions on Iran-based Bank Saderat and London-based Bank Saderat PLC., Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baedeinejad saw it as a cause for further optimism.

With due observance to the said issue, major concern of country in the field of removal of sanctions imposed against one of the major Iranian banks was alleviated, the ambassador ended.

CII Chief Appreciates RIC for Winning Credit Rating

Chief Executive of Central Insurance of Iran (CII) Dr. Abdol-Nasser Hemmati hailed Razi Insurance Company (RIC) for winning credit rating from International Capital Intelligence Institute.

Razi Insurance Company is the first and sole insurance firm in Iran that has managed to win credit rating from this prestigious institute.

Speaking among chief executives of

insurance companies across the country, senior official of Central Insurance of Iran (CII) hailed Razi Insurance Company for receiving credit rating from Capital Intelligence Institute.

In the end, Chief Executive of Central Insurance of Iran (CII) Dr. Abdol-Nasser Hemmati urged managing directors of other insurance companies to take similar measures in relevant field.

MIC Chief Wins "Brian Tracy Award of Excellence"

"Brian Trace Award of Excellence" was awarded to the Chief Executive of Moallem Insurance Company Mohammad Ebrahim Tahsiri.

As sponsored by Moallem Insurance Company, International Strategic Planning Conference was held at IRIB Intl. Conferences Center on Oct. 27-28 in the presence of deputies, senior advisors, directors of repre-

sentative offices of the company, Public Relations Dept. of the company announced.

In this two-day conference, "Brian Tracy" a distinguished and prominent speaker addressed the audience in the field of "Creating New Models of Business".

Dr. Seyyed Mehrdad Hashemi senior Advisor to the managing director of Moallem Insurance Company also

addressed the audience whose speech was highly welcomed by participants.

On the sidelines of this Conference, exposition booth of Moallem Insurance Company was highly welcomed by visitors and some industrialists and industrial activists held separate talks with senior directors of the company.

Ancient bird coughed up 'fishy' pellet 120m years ago

About 120 million years ago, a bird dunked its beak into the water, caught a fish and, after digesting the meal, coughed up a pellet full of fish bones. The bird died moments later, but now its fossils are the oldest evidence of a bird pellet on record, a new study reported.

The pellet — the first that is unambiguously from a bird that lived during the Mesozoic, the age of the dinosaurs — indicates that the ancient bird had a two-chambered stomach, much like birds do today, the researchers said.

Modern-day birds, including many birds of prey, produce pellets made up of indigestible material, such as bones, hair and feathers.

The stunning specimen was found in 2014 in the Jiufutang Formation, located in northeastern China's Liaoning Province. After examining the animal's anatomy, Wang and his colleagues determined that the bird belonged to the enantiornithes, the most diverse group of Mesozoic birds, Wang said.

The "very presence of the gastric pellet in the new specimen indicates that some key features of the modern birds' digestive system had already appeared in these early Cretaceous birds over 120 million years [ago]," said the study's lead author, Min Wang, an associate professor at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. (The Cretaceous Period was the last part of the Mesozoic Era and spanned from 145 million years ago to about 66 million years ago.)

Despite the number of enantiornithes fossils that researchers have uncovered over the past three decades, "only this new specimen provides the direct evidence that some enantiornithine birds were piscivorous (ate fish)," Wang wrote. He noted that another enantiornithine bird dating to the Cretaceous period in modern-day Spain has crustacean exoskeletons in its digestive tract, providing more evidence that some of these ancient birds dined on marine animals.

(Source: Live Science)

Is this tiny transparent ocean animal wearing an invisibility cloak?

Out in the open ocean there is no place to hide from a hungry predator. Marine animals must devise novel ways of going undetected in plain sight.

Being translucent, like most of the little crustaceans that belong to the suborder Hyperidea, can help. Still, savvy predators can glimpse the tasty morsels floating around when light glints off of their bodies.

But the shrimp-like animals have a trick up their sleeves for just that scenario, according to new research published Thursday in the journal *Current Biology*. The crustaceans are covered in a thin antireflective layer, making the animal's bodies and legs as much as 250 times less reflective.

"These animals are famous for being hard to see" with their highly transparent bodies, Tom Cronin, a biologist at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County who was not part of the research, tells *The Christian Science Monitor* in a phone interview.

But even see-through, it's still difficult to be invisible, he says. And this study "shows that animals actually can address other aspects of invisibility, ones that are less obvious than just being transparent."

When Laura Bagge, a Ph.D. candidate at Duke University, and colleagues looked at seven species of Hyperiid amphipods under an electron microscope, they found that the crustaceans were covered in a film of tiny spheres that were all uniform in size.

It's a lot like the technology used on anti-glare eyeglasses, Ms. Bagge explains in a phone interview with the *Monitor*. These small beads reduce the amount of light reflected off the surface, instead allowing more light to pass through it.

The result is anywhere from a fourfold to a 250-fold decrease in light reflected off the animal, according to modeling Bagge and her colleagues conducted in the lab.

(Source: The CSM)

Dark energy may not exist, new supernova analysis says

One of the most baffling results in modern physics was the discovery that the universe is tearing itself apart. In the late 1990s, astronomers realized the universe was expanding at an ever accelerating rate.

This led to the idea that the universe is dominated by mysterious "dark energy", making up 68% of the universe.

Now, new research says that this idea, which has become a pillar of modern physics, may be built on shaky foundations.

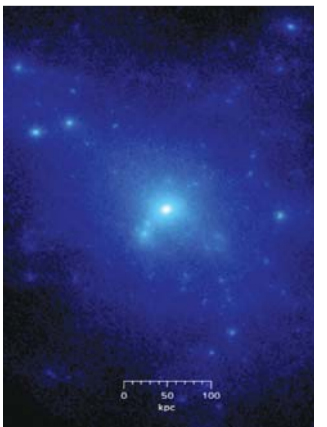
An analysis of 740 exploding stars published in the journal *Scientific Reports* last week concluded the expansion of the universe may be constant after all.

The "evidence for accelerated expansion is marginal," says Subir Sarkar at the University of Oxford in the UK, who led the study. If that's the case, dark energy may not exist.

So should the winners of the 2011 physics Nobel — Adam Riess, Brian Schmidt and Saul Perlmutter — hand it back?

For most of the 20th century, we've thought the universe was expanding at a constant rate. Then in 1998, two independent teams found apparently conclusive evidence that the universe was expanding at an increasing rate.

(Source: Cosmos)



Will extinction vortex swallow the Euphrates softshell turtle?

INTERVIEW

By Farnaz Heidari

Counting how many species live on Earth is a difficult challenge. The researchers estimated that there exist possibly between five million to one trillion species out there. About 1.7 million of these have been described by taxonomists which constitutes to only 13% of the whole species.

Why is this scandalous? Let's have an example, if economists only know 13% of the economic situation in the world, what would happen? It is quite symptomatic of greater issues, many countries would be outraged. A similar situation goes onto the field of biodiversity too. World Wide Fund for nature (WWF) said if there are 100,000,000 different species on Earth and the extinction rate is just 0.01% per year, at least 10,000 species go extinct every year. We all know extinction is a natural process but as WWF illustrated the rapid loss of species we are seeing today is estimated by experts to be between 1,000 to 10,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate. There is only one word for this parade of shattered biodiversity shrinking: grim.

Starting with the increasing pace of wildlife interest in Iran and publishing a raft of surveys in scientific journals, we understand some grim issues are raising in our country too.

The Tehran Times had an interview with Dr. Hanyeh Ghaffari from University of Kurdistan in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, who has been working more than 15 years on Euphrates softshell turtle (*Rafetus euphraticus*) as an endangered species of Iran in particular.

She contributed to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) / the Species Survival Commission (SSC) Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle specialist group on a Compilation Project of Conservation Biology of Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises. Her works refers directly to the Euphrates softshell turtle status and conservation in Iran.

Below is the text of the interview.

■ Why did Euphrates softshell turtle first spark your interest?



A: The answer to this question goes back to 2001, when I was looking for a topic for my BSc. thesis. At that time, professor Theodore J. Papenfuss came from Berkeley University of California to Iran to work on reptiles of the Middle East. He suggested that I work on Euphrates softshell turtle since no definitive studies or conservation work had been done until then in Iran. It was my first step that encouraged me to take an interest in Euphrates softshell turtle as an endangered species. I first developed an interest in just Euphrates softshell turtles but my interest soon switched to the whole ecosystem that they live because you cannot save a species without knowing its environment. It is a term we considered as Ecosystem Approach, a strategy for integrated management and conservation.

■ Would you please point to some key data's of this species?

A: The Euphrates softshell turtle, *Rafetus euphraticus* belongs to the Trionychidae Family, its distribution is limited to the Euphrates and Tigris River basins in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. This species are listed as Endangered in the Red list of IUCN and it was recently (October 2016) listed on CITES Appendix II as *Rafetus* genus.

■ Why this species is important?

A: All species are important and esteemed since each species is part of the chain life and expelling each part has significant negative effects on the Earth. The particular diet of Euphrates softshell has somehow turned it into an efficient sweeper of the river. This species help to clean the river ecosystems. Since it has no natural hunter except human beings, Euphrates softshell turtle was placed in the apex of food chain. Euphrates softshell turtles bring a bounty of benefits to both our own health and river ecosystems, so the more we change their habitat, the more they become endangered.

■ What are the main treats of the last few individuals?

A: Anthropogenic fragmentation, alteration, and suitable habitat loss throughout its range are the main threats to Euphrates softshell turtle. In addition, construction of numerous dams has dramatically changed the remaining natural habitats of this endangered turtle.

■ Is there any chance that could bring the probability of extinction down?

A: There is still hope, let's try to be optimistic. Participatory conservation projects for the species are essential to its long-term survival. At country level, the Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish and Syrian governments should develop their national laws for Euphrates soft-shelled turtle. Furthermore, they should develop action plans for conservation of the turtle.



Hanyeh Ghaffari

Majlis hammering out 'clean air' bill as smog encloses Tehran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Iran's parliament (Majlis) started discussing details of the clean air bill on Sunday as it's been four days in a row that Tehran is haunted by air pollution since the beginning of autumn.

On October 23, Majlis passed general outlines of the bill which could greatly help deal with sources of air pollution once in comes into force.

Based on the bill it is so far settled that the Interior Ministry and Department of Environment (DOE) are in charge of imposing bans and limitations at the time of air pollution in the country, ISNA news agency reported.

Both aforementioned bodies are tasked with announcing temporary bans and limitations, such as traffic and driving restrictions, when air quality indices surges particularly in metropolises.

Those vehicles and polluting units



which will be banned from driving or operating in the time of air pollution will be liable to a fine levied by the DOE and Police department in case of

flouting the law.

Moreover, DOE is assigned to prepare a draft of air pollution crisis management in association with the Police department, and ministries of health, industry, mine and trade within six months and gain approval from the cabinet.

Meanwhile the bill is still being discussed and weighed up in the parliament commission for agriculture, water and natural resources to resolve some certain ambiguities.

It is pointed out that along with cars and sand storms from neighboring countries, sand mines are also playing a huge role in intensifying the suffocating air pollution.

Despite all the efforts it is still difficult to breathe in the metropolis of Tehran and the weather is likely to cause discomfort for those with lung and heart conditions.

World on track to lose two-thirds of wild animals by 2020, major report warns

Living Planet Index shows vertebrate populations are set to decline by 67% on 1970 levels unless urgent action is taken to reduce humanity's impact

The number of wild animals living on Earth is set to fall by two-thirds by 2020, according to a new report, part of a mass extinction that is destroying the natural world upon which humanity depends.

The analysis, the most comprehensive to date, indicates that animal populations plummeted by 58% between 1970 and 2012, with losses on track to reach 67% by 2020. Researchers from WWF and the Zoological Society of London compiled the report from scientific data and found that the destruction of wild habitats, hunting and pollution were to blame.

The creatures being lost range from mountains to forests to rivers and the seas and include well-known endangered species such as elephants and gorillas and lesser known creatures such as vultures and salamanders.

The collapse of wildlife is, with climate change, the most striking sign of the Anthropocene, a proposed new geological era in which humans dominate the planet. "We are no longer a small world on a big planet. We are now a big world on a small planet, where we have reached a saturation point," said Prof Johan Rockström, executive director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre, in a foreword to the report.

Marco Lambertini, director general of WWF, said: "The richness and diversity of life on Earth is fundamental to the complex life systems that underpin it. Life supports life itself and we are part of the same equation. Lose biodiversity and the natural world and the life support systems, as we know them today, will collapse."

He said humanity was completely dependent on nature for clean air and water, food and materials, as well as inspiration and happiness.

The report analyzed the changing abundance of more than 14,000 monitored populations of the 3,700 vertebrate species for which good data is available. This produced a measure akin to a stock market index that indicates the state of the world's 64,000 animal species



and is used by scientists to measure the progress of conservation efforts.

The biggest cause of tumbling animal numbers is the destruction of wild areas for farming and logging: the majority of the Earth's land area has now been impacted by humans, with just 15% protected for nature. Poaching and exploitation for food is another major factor, due to unsustainable fishing and hunting: more than 300 mammal species are being eaten into extinction, according to recent research.

Pollution is also a significant problem with, for example, killer whales and dolphins in European seas being seriously harmed by long-lived industrial pollutants. Vultures in south-east Asia have been decimated over the last 20 years, dying after eating the carcasses of cattle dosed with an anti-inflammatory drug. Amphibians have suffered one of the greatest declines of all animals due to a fungal disease thought to be spread around the world by the trade in frogs and newts.

Rivers and lakes are the hardest hit habitats, with animals' populations down by 81% since 1970, due to excessive water extraction, pollution and dams. All the pressures are magnified by global warming, which shifts the ranges in which animals are able to live, said WWF's director of science, Mike Barrett.

Some researchers have reservations about the report's approach, which summarizes many different

studies into a headline number. "It is broadly right, but the whole is less than the sum of the parts," said Prof Stuart Pimm, at Duke University in the US, adding that looking at particular groups, such as birds, is more precise.

The report warns that losses of wildlife will impact on people and could even provoke conflicts: "Increased human pressure threatens the natural resources that humanity depends upon, increasing the risk of water and food insecurity and competition over natural resources."

However, some species are starting to recover, suggesting swift action could tackle the crisis. Tiger numbers are thought to be increasing and the giant panda has recently been removed from the list of endangered species.

In Europe, protection of the habitat of the Eurasian lynx and controls on hunting have seen its population rise fivefold since the 1960s. A recent global wildlife summit also introduced new protection for pangolins, the world's most trafficked mammals, and rosewoods, the most trafficked wild product of all.

But stemming the overall losses of animals and habitats requires systemic change in how society consumes resources, said Barrett. People can choose to eat less meat, which is often fed on grain grown on deforested land, and businesses should ensure their supply chains, such as for timber, are sustainable, he said.

"You'd like to think that was a no-brainer in that if a business is consuming the raw materials for its products in a way that is not sustainable, then inevitably it will eventually put itself out of business," Barrett said. Politicians must also ensure all their policies - not just environmental ones - are sustainable, he added.

"The report is certainly a pretty shocking snapshot of where we are," said Barrett. "My hope though is that we don't throw our hands up in despair - there is no time for despair, we have to crack on and act. I do remain convinced we can find our sustainable course through the Anthropocene, but the will has to be there to do it."

(Source: The Guardian)

IN FOCUS IRNA/ Mojtaba Gorgi



Farmers in the eastern province of South Khorasan have started harvesting their barberry products. South Khorasan accounts for the lion's share of barberry production in the world.

Saudi warplanes strike Yemen's Hudaydah, kill 60

At least 60 people have been killed in airstrikes by the House of Saud regime warplanes on a Red Sea port city in Yemen's western province of Hudaydah.

The airstrikes ripped through a security complex, housing two detention centers, in the northern district of Zaydiyah in the provincial capital Hudaydah late on Saturday.

A large number of prisoners and security guards were also among the victims, Yemen's Saba news agency reported on Sunday, citing security and medical officials.

Nearly 40 people were also injured. According to Hashem al-Azizi, the governor of Hudaydah, more than 100 inmates were being held in the detention centers when they were struck three times.

Witnesses said one of the strikes directly hit the adjacent prisons and buried the inmates alive under the rubble.



The airstrikes came hours after Saudi warplanes showered bombs on residential buildings in the western city of Ta'izz, killing at least 18 civilians, including children. In another development on Saturday, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Yemen's

president who has resigned and fled the capital, turned down a United Nations peace proposal aimed at ending the conflict in Yemen. Hadi said the plan "rewards" the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement, which is widely backed by the Yemeni nation.

In support of Hadi, the House of Saud regime's military has been pounding Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to undermine Ansarullah and restore power to the former president who has fled Sana'a.

More than 10,200 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in Riyadh's deadly campaign, which lacks any international mandate.

International efforts to agree to a ceasefire has so far been unsuccessful, amid a mounting humanitarian crisis.

Peace talks held between Yemen's opposing parties in Kuwait ended in deadlock in August.

(Source: agencies)

Syrian govt. forces down spy drones in Dara'a

State media: Militants fired poisonous gas in Aleppo

Syria has shot down three spy drones operated by terrorists on the suburbs of the country's southwestern city of Dara'a.

The Syrian Defense Ministry announced the development on Sunday.

Separately, a blast rocked Aleppo's al-Assad neighborhood. No further details were available on the incident.

Militants also bombarded the area around the military college in western Aleppo, using poisonous gas. The attack left one person dead and 36 others injured.

Abu Ahmad Badi, a militant commander, was killed in the government-held western Aleppo.

A commander of the so-called Free Syrian Army (FSA), Ashraf Hamud, also known as Abu Omar, was also slain by government forces in the same area.

Additionally, militant artillery attacks left two people dead and six others wounded in Aleppo's Hamdaniyeh district.

At least 10 citizens, mostly women and children, were also injured in militant mortar attacks on western Aleppo.

Meanwhile, Syria's official SANA news agency reported clashes between the Syrian army soldiers and the Fatah Halab (Aleppo Conquest) militant group in Aleppo's Salah al-Din and Maniyan districts. A unit of the Syrian military destroyed a tank and a number of military vehicles belonging to the extremists during the clashes.

Syrian army attacks further killed 11 militants with the FSA in Aleppo's western Family House area.

The Syrian forces managed to wrest control of the areas of Tall Sousin, al-Shaer, Faqin, and Kafr Qares as well as the al-Maslamiye cement factory and in Aleppo's northern countryside, the Arabic-language Syria Now news website reported.

SANA further said that a vehicle packed with hundreds of kilos of explosives was destroyed by the army in Maniyan district of the city.

Aleppo has been a major frontline in Syria's fight against different Takfiri militant groups. Extremists have occupied the city's eastern flanks for several years.

■ Aleppo

In another event, Syrian state media said militants fired poison gas at a government-held area of Aleppo on Sunday, causing 35 people to choke, a report that a rebel official called a lie.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a Britain-based organization that reports on the war, said it had confirmed reports of suffocation among Syrian government forces in two frontline areas shelled by rebels, but it did not know if chlorine gas was the cause.

State news agency SANA said "shells containing poison gases" had been fired at the residential district of al-Hamdaniya. It did not report any deaths. State TV quoted the director of an Aleppo hospital as saying 36 people - civilians and soldiers - had choked as a result of the shelling with chlorine gas.

Since March 2011, Syria has been hit by militancy that it blames on some Western states and their regional allies. Backed by Russian air cover, the Syrian military is engaged in an operation to rid the country of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) and other terrorist outfits.

(Source: agencies)

Polls aside, the U.S. presidential election is far from a blowout

However, our presidential vote question has almost 20 percent of likely voters saying they are undecided, would vote third party or would not vote. This is a substantial block of probable voters who will most likely show up on Election Day but are not making known their presidential preference (if they have one).

We use a few different tools to understand the potential voting behavior of this group. First, we can ask them our push question, "if you had to choose, which way would you go?" This prompts about a fifth of these undecided voters to pick a side, and these people seem to break evenly between Clinton and Trump. That still leaves us with over 15 percent of likely voters' voting decision-making opaque to us.

From here, we have to start deriving their behavior. We know from other research that two main factors drive vote preference: the party identification of the respondent (Democrat, Republican, or independent) and how the respondent feels about the current office holder. Since we also ask about party ID and Obama approval in our Reuters/Ipsos polling, we have this information to hand. Combining this with our "push" question leaves less than one percent of likely voters still unknown.

Our data shows that when we this combine the results of both our basic vote question and the "push" question, Clinton's lead of about six points holds solid. A second data point shows the vote totals from the combined questions and the derived support of the remaining undecided voters. Here Clinton's lead drops to three percentage points.

Clearly, the undecideds can make a significant impact on this election. Clinton's lead is large enough that she'll win the popular vote even if - a big if - this bloc all shows up to vote and breaks toward Trump by almost 2 to 1. However, this potential vote could make a larger difference in several swing states - like Florida, Iowa or Ohio - where Trump and Clinton are polling much closer.

(Source: Reuters)

Clinton calls Comey letter 'strange' and 'deeply troubling'

The United States Democrat presidential nominee Hillary Clinton called it "strange" and "deeply troubling" that FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) Director James Comey released a letter to Congress regarding new emails under review by his agency 11 days before the Nov. 8 election, the latest in a series of aggressive responses by her campaign.

"It's pretty strange to put something like that out with such little information right before an election" because "voters deserve to get full and complete facts," Clinton said at a campaign rally in Daytona Beach, FL. "If you're like me, you probably have a few questions about it," she said, arguing the letter's lack of detail allows Republicans to politicize it.

"Donald Trump is already making up lies about this. He is doing his best to confuse, mislead and discourage the American people. I think it's time for Donald Trump to stop fear mongering, to stop disgracing himself, to stop attacking our democracy," she said. "We can't let him get away with this, can we?"

Clinton's top campaign officials said Comey's letter is so vague it has allowed Republicans to "extort and exaggerate" about her private email server. They all pressed Comey to release more information. "Put it all out on the table, right?" Clinton said.

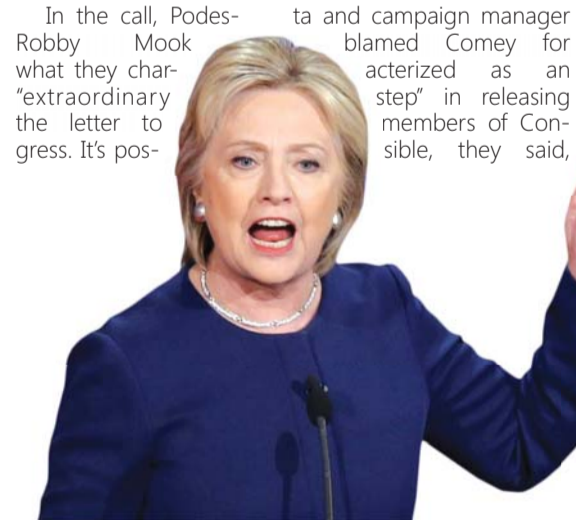
In a Friday letter to the chairmen of several congressional committees, Comey said, in the course of a separate investigation, officials uncovered more emails that "appear to be pertinent" but "may or may not be significant." Subsequent reports said the emails appear to come from a laptop used jointly by former congressman Anthony Weiner and his wife, Huma Abedin, a top Clinton aide. That raises questions about whether Clinton's emails are even at issue in the review.

"No one can separate what is true from what is not because Comey has not been forthcoming with the facts," Clinton campaign manager John Podesta said in the Saturday conference call, accusing Comey of providing "selective information."

"There's no evidence of wrongdoing, no charge of wrongdoing, no indication that this is even about Hillary," Podesta said. "It's hard to see how this amounts to anything, and we're not going to be distracted."

Podesta called the letter "long on innuendo and short on facts."

In the call, Podesta and campaign manager Robby Mook blamed Comey for what they characterized as an "extraordinary step" in releasing the letter to members of Congress. It's possible, they said,



The UN coordinator in Iran concluded his speech by reading one of Saadi's poems in Farsi, hung at the entrance of the UN Headquarters in New York.

■ To achieve sustainable development, a secure region is needed to be built first: Ebtekar

The second speaker of the event, Iran's head of the Department of Environment, called removing the terrorism and extremism from the region a prerequisite to sustainable development plans.

Pointing to UN mission in the world, Ebtekar urged greater efforts to restore peace to the Middle East.

Masoumeh Ebtekar, who is also Iran's vice president, went on to say Iran is committed to press ahead with the implementation of the SDGs in line with the Rouhani administration.

"Iran has an SDGs committee for two decades," she said, underscoring done in all different sectors of the ministry have been tasked with plans to implement.

The Iranian official also expressed hope for the ex-

change of views with the international community.

Madam Ebtekar pointed to two environmental achievements this year, 2016, the Paris agreement on climate change and the more recent agreement on Ozone layer, inviting the people to put aside avarice and selfishness to save the environment.

She voiced grave concern over the published data on the Living Planet Index on extinction of plants and water animals due to human activities and hoped the statistics act as "a wakeup call" for the people around the world to take the matter seriously and wake up to the reality that they need to "drastically change behavior patterns."

"No country is an isolated land, we live on the same ship and have common destiny and need to change trends," she said.

Pointing to unfair imposed sanctions on Iran, the official said the country was not able to enjoy environmental funds provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a global financial organization, and hoped for the issue to get resolved.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, as the last speaker of the UN Day, said although the UN has made landmark environmental achievements, other issues such as humanitarian crises, conflicts, and wars are still left for the organization to resolve.

For instance, Araqchi said, the Syrian conflict has taken many lives and displaced millions, but "the security system of the UN is yet to arrive at a solution for the country."

The crisis, the top official said, "has left the country at the mercy of Daesh", while the UN can play a major role in bringing peace back to the country and providing humanitarian aid to the desperate Syrians.

In Yemen, Araqchi noted, "the situation is equally desperate" as savage killing of the Yemeni people by the Saudi-led coalition continues nonstop. The world expects the UN to take steps to stop the bombardment of Yemen and get humanitarian aid to this "forgotten land."

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rate, Clinton email investigation. How they are relevant — or if they are significant in any respect — remains unknown.

Weiner and a lawyer for Abedin did not return messages seeking comment.

The FBI did not release any new details about what it had found on Saturday — even as it faced immense pressure to do so.

Abedin has served in a variety of roles for Clinton, starting as an intern in 1996, when Clinton was first lady. In the State Department, Abedin served as Clinton's deputy chief of staff for operations. Abedin had a State Department email account, a Yahoo account, an account on Clinton's private server and an account used to support Weiner's campaign activities.

When Abedin left the State Department, she signed a statement saying she had "surrendered to responsible officials all controlled or administratively controlled documents and materials with which I was charged or which I had in my possession." The State Department — in the process of collecting Clinton's and others for records and Freedom of Information Act purposes — later asked Abedin to turn over relevant messages, and she gave her laptop and BlackBerry for review.

Meanwhile, on Friday, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump took aim at Abedin in particular as he brought up Clinton's emails.

"I wonder is she going to keep Huma?" Trump said. "Huma has been a problem. I wonder: Is Huma going to stay there?"

■ Democrats pile pressure on Comey over eleventh-hour Clinton email letter

Developments follow as the political pressure on FBI director Comey intensified on Saturday night as four powerful Democratic senators demanded immediate answers about the bureau's announcement it is examining new material as part of its investigation about Clinton's email server.

Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Thomas Carper of Delaware and Benjamin Cardin of Maryland wrote to Comey and the attorney general, Loretta Lynch, to insist on a thorough briefing by Monday about Comey's decision to tell congressional officials about new material from an "unrelated case" — a decision that shook the campaigns with only 10 days to go.

"[N]o later than Monday 31 October 2016," the senators wrote, "we request you provide us with more detailed information about the investigative steps being taken, the number of emails involved, and what is being done to determine how many of the emails are duplicative of those already reviewed by"

(Source: agencies)



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■ UN should take action to end wars and conflicts: Araqchi

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Belloumi: Algeria have a great footballing history

On this day 35 years ago, on 30 October 1981, the Algerian national side made history by qualifying for the FIFA World Cup™ for the very first time. Getting the best out of a golden generation of players, the Algerians capped off a splendid qualifying run with a two-legged victory over Nigeria that sealed their place at Spain 1982.

After seeing off the challenge of Sierra Leone, Sudan and Niger, Les Fennecs avenged their 3-0 loss to Nigeria in the final of the 1980 CAF Africa Cup of Nations, emerging victorious from their winner-take-all tie with the Super Eagles via solid 2-0 (away) and 2-1 (home) wins.



Lakhdar Belloumi played a key role in his team's triumph, scoring four goals in the qualifying campaign, two of which came against Nigeria – one in the away match in Lagos and the other in the decisive home encounter in Constantine.

"I was in the form of my life against Nigeria away, scoring one and setting up another," Belloumi, renowned for his magical passing ability in the 1980s, told FIFA.com. "I scored again in Constantine and passed the ball to Rabah Madjer, who grabbed the second goal. With the help of my team-mates, I had a big influence on those two games. I also remember that I was the top scorer overall, getting 6 of our 16 goals."

Belloumi believes Algeria's reverse at the hands of the Nigerians in the 1980 Cup of Nations could be regarded as a blessing in disguise, as it motivated him and his team-mates to exact revenge the following year. "Losing that final affected us badly, because it was extremely difficult to win the Cup of Nations back then. But we knew we had a better team and that they wouldn't beat us again, even if the match were replayed ten times. A year and half later, we beat them home and away and made it to the World Cup."

Rogov impact

Despite developing into one of Africa's better teams between 1976 and 1980, Algeria failed to qualify for Argentina 1978, losing out to Tunisia in the final round of qualifying. It became evident that they required a coach to refine their skills and steer them to the world stage. In stepped former Lokomotiv Moscow player Evgeni Rogov.

"After Rogov's arrival in 1981, the team moved onto a different level compared to the 1980 Cup of Nations," said Belloumi. "Except for Faouzi Mansouri, Nourredine Kourichi and Mustapha Dahelb, all the other players played in the domestic league. This enabled us to train on a weekly basis and play a lot of friendly games, which created a real feeling of harmony in the squad. And we shouldn't forget how keen the team was to fly the national flag on the world's biggest stage."

"But to be fair to all concerned, I should add that the Algerian sport reforms in 1976 also contributed towards building a strong team. Players received top-notch training in their clubs, coached by former FLN [National Liberation Front] players and other veterans. That helped us to reach the World Cup, even though our resources were practically non-existent." The team made their way through the qualifying campaign in impressive fashion, and just a few months after Rogov had taken the reins, their date with destiny loomed. In order to book their berth in Spain, the North Africans only needed to avoid losing to Nigeria by more than one goal. In the end, Belloumi, Madjer and Co insisted on providing the thousands of fans present in Constantine with a deserved and historic win.

Belloumi still remembers the game as if it were yesterday. "After winning 2-0 in the away match, our morale was high going into the home leg. The fans in Constantine were our 12th man. But our fans gave us great support at all our matches, not just against Nigeria. We went into that match as if it were a replay of the Cup of Nations final. After we won, the whole country celebrated, because we'd never made it to a World Cup before."

Rivalry renewal

As often happens in football, history is on the verge of repeating itself: in the African qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup in Russia, Algeria will again face Nigeria, who make up Group B along with Cameroon and Zambia. The Algerians started off with a disappointing home draw with Cameroon in the opening match of this third and final round of qualifying, while Nigeria overcame Zambia and now top the section with three points. The Super Eagles host Les Verts in Uyo next month.

"Algeria have a great footballing history," said Belloumi. "We've defeated Nigeria more than once. We beat them on their own patch in 1981 and in Libya in 1982. My message to Riyad Mahrez and Co, therefore, is that winning on 12 November is certainly not impossible. On the contrary, I believe the Nigerians will be the ones under pressure as they're at home and playing in front of their own fans."

"I watched their game against Zambia. They're not a daunting or unbeatable team, by any means. Our team is very strong. For me, the draw against Cameroon was just a misstep. And we mustn't forget that Cameroon have a great team and a long World Cup history, and that we've never beaten them in an official match. Let's put that slip-up behind us and concentrate on picking up three points in Nigeria."

Before signing off, the ex-Algeria No10 concluded on a positive and confident note: "We will win if we impose our style of play. Our team is powerful and united, and with a little bit of desire and heart, we can return home with three points in the bag."

(Source: FIFA)



Antonio Conte 'regretted Chelsea move', had never heard of Kante before taking job

Antonio Conte fought back tears as he described the Euro 2016 "family" and reveals the moment he "regretted" signing for Chelsea.

The tactician, who also revealed that he had never heard of N'Golo Kante before arriving in England, left Juventus two days into pre-season training in 2014 and several weeks later accepted the Italy position.

"My parents pushed me to accept the Italy job, as to be the CT of the Nazionale is such an honour. Above all after three years of such intense passion with Juventus, the Nazionale was also a form of respect towards Juventus," Conte told Sky Sport Italia show 'Mister Condo'.

"The year and a half there was wonderful, but what we created in those 45 days together was extraordinary, unique. We created a family."

"The day we went out to Germany in the quarter-final, I think there were tears above all because the next day we wouldn't be together any more. That really hits me hard," said Conte while fighting back tears.

"It was such joy to live those emotions with everyone, including the kit staff and the chefs. I think if we had won that penalty shoot-out, we'd have had a great chance of winning the trophy."

Conte had already signed for Chelsea before Euro 2016 began. Once the tournament started, was there a moment when he regretted committing his future elsewhere so soon?

"Yes. Yes there was. If I hadn't already signed for

Chelsea... I don't think I could've abandoned the lads."

"I had only three days off before starting work at Chelsea, as there was a new challenge and I threw myself into it heart and soul."

"It was a completely different experience with a foreign club, a big club with totally different players, totally different habits. It was a substantial change in all ways."

"Roman Abramovich is very demanding, but also very passionate about football. He wants to know everything about the sport, he often comes to training sessions, because he wants to understand it."

"There is a remarkable structure here and the figure of the manager is totally encompassing. In Italy you are the Coach, you work with various directors of sport. Here the manager is considered a central role who has to make many decisions in many different areas."

The 47-year-old also revealed that N'Golo Kante was a complete surprise to him.

"Did I know him before I came here? The answer is no. I do now," he added.

"I think he's a complete midfielder, not only a defensive midfielder."

"I like when N'Golo goes to press the play in the system we are playing now, I like it a lot. N'Golo is very good."

"I remember before the game against Leicester, many people said that he is a different player compared to last year, when he played for them."

"But I said N'Golo is playing very well at the moment and we are very pleased to have him here in the side playing for us."

(Source: FootballItalia)

Barcelona's Lionel Messi has 'X-ray' vision - Man City boss Pep Guardiola

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says Barcelona star Lionel Messi has "X-ray" vision when it comes to picking out a teammate on the pitch.

Guardiola knows Messi well from his days as Barca coach and will come up against his former player when City face the Catalan club in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Guardiola will be hoping his City players are better prepared to deal with Messi this time around, with the forward having hit a hat trick the last time the two sides

met as Barca ran out 4-0 winners earlier this month.

"Messi spends the match making a mental X-ray of every space, every moment," Guardiola is quoted as saying by the Daily Mail.

"It looks like he's walking. It seems like he is alone -- detached. Or when he sees the defenders are watching him, he will wander off into a space of his own."

"It looks like he's just ambling around and maybe he's the guy who runs least in the Spanish league but, boy, when that ball reaches him he knows the complete time-

space X-ray of who is where. Then... pow!"

A win against the Premier League leaders would confirm Barca's place in the next round of the Champions League. They have a five-point lead at the top of Group C after winning their opening three games.

City are not in such a luxurious position. Their loss at the Camp Nou last time out followed a draw against Celtic and they find themselves in a battle to secure qualification to the knockout rounds.

(Source: ESPN)

Andy Murray closes on world No1 Novak Djokovic with Vienna title



Andy Murray took a step closer to overtaking Novak Djokovic as world No1 by winning his third successive title at the Erste Bank Open in Vienna.

The Scot defeated the Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-3, 7-6 (8/6) in the final to add to the titles he won in Beijing and Shanghai this month.

Murray can top the rankings for the first time in his career as early as 7 November if he wins the Paris Masters event next week and Djokovic fails to reach the final.

It has been a remarkable past six months for Murray, who has now won seven titles, the most in a season in his career, and lost just three matches since the French Open in June.

His 15th win in a row did not look in any doubt for a set and a half.

Tsonga, who had won only two of 15 previous matches against Murray, was broken in his opening service game and made far too many errors to trouble the world No1.

The Frenchman was staring at a heavy defeat at 1-3 and 0-40 down in the second set but played some fine points to hold serve. That proved the catalyst for a revival from the Frenchman, who recovered the break and forced a tie-break.

However, Murray prevailed, the 29-year-old clinching victory with his fifth ace on his second match point.

(Source: Guardian)

Dominika Cibulkova stuns Angelique Kerber to seal WTA Finals title



Dominika Cibulkova completed a remarkable debut at the WTA Finals in Singapore when the Slovakian world No8 stormed to victory with an unlikely 6-3, 6-4 triumph over the top seed and world No1 Angelique Kerber in the title showdown on Sunday.

Cibulkova lost her first two round-robin matches before beating Simona Halep to squeeze into the semi-finals and her victory on Sunday matches the feat of the 2015 winner Agnieszka Radwanska, who captured the title with a 1-2 pool record. Kerber beat Radwanska, the defending champion, on Saturday to reach Sunday's final against Cibulkova.

Her first defeat at this year's tournament was a tight three-set loss to Kerber, the winner of the Australian and US Opens in 2016, but she turned the tables on the German in the final to register the biggest victory of her career.

Cibulkova, the Australian Open finalist in 2014, did not wobble until the final game, when she double-faulted on her first match point and saw two others slip away. She saved two break points and then took her fourth match point when her shot dribbled over the net, with the 27-year-old subsequently collapsing to the court in tears.

(Source: Guardian)

Kyrgios accepts 'care plan', ban could be cut

World number 13 Nick Kyrgios looks set to have his two-month ban from the ATP Tour cut to three weeks after agreeing to a "care plan", Australian media reported on Sunday.

Kyrgios received the ban and a \$25,000 fine after being found guilty of "conduct contrary to the integrity of the game" after "not giving his best effort" in a match at the Shanghai Masters earlier this month.

The ATP said the ban would be cut if the Australian agreed to "a plan of care under the direction of a sports psychologist, or an equivalent plan approved by ATP".

Although largely academic because Kyrgios is not scheduled to play again this year, the governing body of men's tennis said the player had accepted help.

"Nick has taken up the care plan on offer to him from



the ATP", the ATP told the Australian Associated Press.

"The details and contents of the plan are strictly confidential."

Kyrgios was beaten 6-3 6-1 by Mischa Zverev in the second round in Shanghai after a bizarre display in which he delivered a series of half-hearted serves and walked off court before the German returned the ball to him.

The tempestuous 21-year-old also clashed with a spectator before being booed off the court.

The original ban would have ruled Kyrgios out of men's tour events until the Australian Open but he was only scheduled to play at the Jan. 1-7 Hopman Cup, which is not an ATP event, before the year's first grand slam in any case.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran to play friendly against PNG football team

S P O R T S The Iranian national football team will play Papua New Guinea as part of preparation for the match against Syria in the 2018 World Cup qualifier.

According to Iran Football Federation, Team Melli will face PNG on November 11 in Malaysia.

Carlos Queiroz's team had been scheduled to meet Thailand but the match was cancelled due to death of the country's King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Soon after, Iran Football Federation announced that Team Melli will play Iraq but the match was also called off after its counterpart changed the place of the match from Tehran to Abu Dhabi.

PNG head Coach, Flemming Serritslev, has also worked in Iran as technical director of Mes Kerman.

Team Melli, who has moved up to 27th in recently FIFA rankings, sits top of Group A with 10 points.

PNG is 159th in the rankings.

The top two in each group reach the 2018 finals with the two third-placed sides meeting over two legs for the chance to face a CONCACAF team in a final playoff for a ticket to Russia.



18 players invited to Iran national football team

S P O R T S Iran national football team Carlos Queiroz has invited 18 players to the training camp.

Team Melli is preparing for the Syria match in the 2018 World Cup qualifier which has been scheduled for November 15.

The foreign-based players have not been invited to the national team for this camp.

Iran squad:

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beyravand, Alireza Haghighi, Mohammadreza Akhbari, Rashid Mazaheri

Defenders: Vouria Gahfour, Ramin Rezaeian, Saeid Aghaei, Jalal Hosseini, Ezzatollah Pourghaz, Mohammad Ansari

Midfielders: Ehsan Haji Safi, Andranik Teymourian, Omid Ebrahimi, Kamal Kamyabinia, Soroush Rafiei

Forwards: Mehdi Torabi, Mehdi Taremi, Vahid Amiri



Iranian wrestlers get two medals in World University Wrestling Championship

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers have collected two medals in the 12th edition of the World University Wrestling Championship in Turkey.

On Saturday and the opening day of the Greco-Roman bouts of the international sporting event in the northern Turkish city of Corum, Iran's Farshad Issavand lost to his Kazakh opponent 0-2 in the final encounter of the 59-kilogram weight category, and received the silver medal.

Additionally, Boroumand Aslan

overcame a contestant from Ukraine in the third-place bout of the 71-kilogram weight division and snatched the bronze medal.

The 12th edition of the World University Wrestling Championship started in Corum, Turkey, on October 25 and will finish on October 30, 2016. The tournament has brought together dozens of young wrestlers from Belarus, Canada, Finland, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Turkey.

Earlier in the event, Iranian freestyle wrestlers won five gold medals in addition

to three bronzes and clinched the title.

Younes Sarmasti in the 57-kilogram category, Reza Afzali in the 74-kilogram, Mohammad Javad Ebrahimi in the 86-kilogram, Amir Mohammadi in the 97-kilogram, and Reza Mousavi in the 125-kilogram sections were awarded gold medals.

Mehran Nasiri, Meysam Heydari and Hamed Rashidi also pocketed bronze medals for Iran in the 61-kilogram, 65-kilogram and 70-kilogram categories respectively. (Source: PressTV)



Iran's Mehdizadeh earns gold at World Karate Championships

Amir Mehdizadeh from Iran claimed Iran's second gold medal in the 2016 Karate World Championships.

The Iranian karateka defeated Geoffrey Beren of the Netherlands 9-1 in the final match of the Men's under 60kg individual kumite on Saturday.

Bronze medal went to Azerbaijan's Firdovski Farzaliyev

and Sofiane Agoudjil from France.

This is Iran's second gold medal in competitions. Sajjad Ganjzadeh had already won a gold medal in the Men's over 84kg individual kumite

Iran's Zabiollah Poorshab in the Men's under 84kg individual kumite, Aliasghar Asiabari in the Men's under 75kg

individual kumite and Hamideh Abbasli in the Women's over 68kg individual kumite have already won three bronze medals in the competition.

The 23rd edition of the Karate World Championships is being held in the Austrian city of Linz. (Source: Tasnim)

Gareth Bale signs new Real Madrid contract until 2022



Real Madrid have announced that forward Gareth Bale has agreed to a new six-year contract with the Spanish giants.

Bale, 27, joined Real from Tottenham Hotspur in 2013 for a fee of approximately €100 million and has since won the Champions League twice in three seasons.

The Wales international follows teammates Luka Modric and Toni Kroos in committing their future to Los Blancos, with Cristiano Ronaldo expected to follow suit soon.

In an official club statement, Real said Bale will confirm the deal in a news conference to take place at 1:30 p.m. CET Monday.

It had been reported that an agreement had been reached on a deal that will include a €500 million (£452m) release clause.

Bale has been tipped to take over for Ronaldo as Real's most important player in the coming years by John Toshack, the former Real Madrid and Wales coach

who gave the player his international debut at the age of 17.

Toshack told Cadena Ser: "I see a Real Madrid enjoying Bale at the top of his game for two or three years. I believe Bale will win the Ballon d'Or in his career. In a few years, he will become the leader [of Real Madrid]."

Bale has scored 62 goals and recorded 34 assists in 135 official games for Real, forming part of the team's "BBC" strikeforce alongside Ronaldo and Karim Benzema.

Madrid have been looking to tie down their leading players as they also fight a FIFA transfer ban for breaching rules governing the transfer and registration of players aged under 18.

The club, along with city rivals Atletico, are currently banned from registering any new players in the next two transfer windows -- until January 2018 -- but have appealed against the ruling to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). (Source: ESPN)

Quinteros: Uruguay have defensive flaws



Played four, won four; scored 14, conceded zero. Those are Uruguay's home statistics in 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ qualifying. Gustavo Quinteros nevertheless believes La Celeste have defensive flaws, and that his Ecuador side can triumph in Montevideo on 10 November.

"I think we can win there," said the former Boivia defender, who did an admirable marking job on Karl-Heinz Riedle at USA 1994. "Uruguay have won every game at home, they're very solid, but they also have weaknesses. Venezuela and Peru had very clear chances against Uruguay. If they had taken them, perhaps the outcome would have been different. Venezuela spurned two clear goals in the first half, then Uruguay scored with their first attack and went on to win a game they didn't deserve to be leading at that time. Uruguay have

defensive flaws. "We will have to apply ourselves correctly, stay focused, and we must be solid defensively because if you're not, Uruguay are unforgiving. But if Ecuador play well, we can beat anyone." Uruguay are second in South American qualifying, three points above Ecuador and Colombia. Argentina are a further point back in fifth. La Tricolor beat La Celeste 2-1 in the teams' first meeting last November thanks to goals from Felipe Caicedo and Fidel Martinez.

Ecuador had never qualified for the World Cup until 2002, but have now competed in three of its last four editions. Uruguay have participated in 12 World Cups -- a figure bettered only by Brazil (20), Germany (18), Italy (18), Argentina (16), Mexico (15), England (14), France (14) and Spain (14).

(Source: FIFA)

Happy Birthday to you!

In our regular Sunday feature, FIFA.com presents you with some of the biggest names in football who will be celebrating their birthdays over the coming week.

■ **30. Diego Maradona (56)** is quite simply one of the greatest players in the history of football. At international level, the highly skilful playmaker lifted the 1979 FIFA U-20 World Cup with Argentina, earning the adidas Golden Ball for his sensational performances, prior to taking part in the 1982 FIFA World Cup Spain™ and then in Mexico 1986, where he inspired La Albiceleste to their second global crown and again won the adidas Golden Ball. At Italy 1990, the gifted Argentinian was part of the team that lost to West Germany in the Final, and four years later he enjoyed an international swansong in the United States, having scored a total of eight goals in 21 World Cup matches. Maradona began his career at Argentinos Juniors, where he topped the Argentinian scoring charts several times, and Boca Juniors, where he claimed a Primera Division title. A move to European football saw the two-time South American Footballer of the Year first star for Barcelona, with whom he landed a Spanish Cup, a Spanish Super Cup and a Spanish League Cup, and then acquire legendary status at Napoli, where he racked up two Serie A titles, a Coppa Italia, a Supercoppa Italiana, a UEFA Cup and an Italian Footballer of the Year award, and finished as top goalscorer in Serie A. After a subsequent one-year spell at Sevilla, Maradona returned to Argentina, where he played a handful of matches for Newell's Old Boys, before seeing out the remainder of his memorable career at Boca Juniors. The Buenos Aires native later moved into coaching, taking charge of Argentina at the 2010 World Cup, and of Emirati club Al Wasl.



■ **31. Inka Grings (38)** is one of Germany's greatest ever goalscorers, and she represented her country at two FIFA Women's World Cups, in 1999 and 2011, finding the net five times in a total of eight matches. In addition, the prolific striker earned a bronze medal at the 2000 Women's Olympic Football Tournament and triumphed at the 2005 and 2009 UEFA European Women's Championships, scoring 10 times in 11 continental encounters and finishing as the tournament's top goalscorer on both occasions. At club level, she started out at FCR 2001 Duisburg, where she secured a Frauen-Bundesliga title, three German Cups and a UEFA Women's Champions League crown, and was the leading scorer in Germany six times and in the Champions League twice. In 2011, Grings joined FC Zurich, with whom she clinched two Swiss League Championships and two Swiss Cups. Following a short stint with Chicago Red Stars, she signed for Cologne, the final stop-off of her career. After hanging up her boots, she became coach of Duisburg, a role she continues to fulfil.

■ **1. Bernd Cullmann (67)** was part of the golden generation of West German footballers that emerged victorious from the 1974 World Cup, during which he starred in three matches and scored one goal against Australia. The midfielder was again called up to the West Germany squad for Argentina 1978, but he remained on the bench throughout the competition. He was, however, part of the team that became European champions in 1980. A loyal servant of Cologne for the duration of his club career, Cullmann brandished four German Cups with Die Geißböcke.

■ **2. Ali Hassan Zadeh (29)** recently propelled Iran to a third-place finish at the 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup, during which he notched five goals in seven matches. The talented pivot had previously appeared at the 2008 and 2012 editions of the tournament. He has also bagged three AFC Futsal Championships and two WAFF Futsal Championships. Domestically, his greatest successes have come with Foolad Mahan and Tasisat Daryaei, as he has won both an AFC Futsal Club Championship and Iranian Super League title with each one. In 2014, Zadeh was named AFC Futsal Player of the Year.

■ **3. Guillermo Franco (40)** competed for Mexico at two consecutive World Cups, at Germany 2006 and South Africa 2010. He also held aloft the CONCACAF Gold Cup with El Tri in 2009. The Argentina-born forward turned professional at San Lorenzo, where he gained an Argentinian league-winners' medal. He later played for Monterrey, where he netted a Mexican League title and topped the national scoring charts, before trying his luck in Europe, with Villarreal and West Ham. Upon returning to Argentina, he captured another league crown, this time with Velez Sarsfield. Franco later had two brief spells with Pachuca (Mexico) and Chicago Fire (USA).

■ **4. Luis Figo (44)** is a living legend of Portuguese football, having taken part in Korea/Japan 2002 and Germany 2006, where he and his team-mates finished fourth. The graceful winger also played at three successive UEFA European Championships, losing the 2004 final to Greece. He had previously enjoyed success at youth level, winning the 1989 UEFA European U-17 Championship and the 1991 U-20 World Cup, and finishing third at the 1989 FIFA U-17 World Cup. The six-time Portuguese Footballer of the Year started off at Sporting Lisbon, where he lifted the Portuguese Cup, prior to putting pen to paper with Barcelona, with whom he amassed two Liga titles, two Spanish Cups, a Spanish Super Cup, a UEFA Cup Winners' Cup and a UEFA Super Cup. A high-profile transfer to Real Madrid saw him add two Liga crowns, two Spanish Super Cups, a UEFA Champions League title, a UEFA Super Cup, an Intercontinental Cup, a FIFA World Player of the Year award and a Ballon d'Or to his CV. In 2005, Figo committed himself to Inter Milan, where he picked up four Serie A titles, an Italian Cup and three Italian Super Cups.

■ **5. Dado Prso (42)** made three appearances for Croatia at Germany 2006, but could not prevent his nation from suffering an early exit. The bustling frontman also played three times at EURO 2004, scoring one goal against France. After earning his spurs with Pazinka and Rouen, he moved to Monaco, who sent him out on loan to Ajaccio, with whom he won the French third division. Once the three-time Croatian Player of the Year had established a place in the Monaco starting XI, silverware followed in the shape of a Ligue 1 title, a French League Cup and a Trophee des champions, although he also lost the Champions League final to Porto. Prso later joined Rangers, where he secured a Scottish League title and a Scottish League Cup. (Source: FIFA)



Poem of the day

WHAT is wrought in the forge of the living and life
All things are nought! Ho! fill me the bowl,
For nought is the gear of the world and the strife!
One passion has quickened the heart and the soul.
Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon:11:48 Evening: 17:29 Dawn: 5:02 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:27 (tomorrow)

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Turkish festival to screen Iranian shorts

T I A R T TEHRAN — Five Iranian films will be screened at the 17th Izmir International Short Film Festival, which will be held in the Turkish city from November 1 to 6.



A scene from "Ardak"

"Ardak" by Esmail Monsef will be shown in the international competition section of the festival.

The film is about a father waiting for the return of his son who left the country many years ago.

"Snowy Roofs" by Hayedeh Moradi, "Hasti" by Kamal Parnak, "Foruzan" by Mir Abbas Khosravi and "The Disease" by Sajjad and Milad Sotudeh will go on screen in the non-competitive section.

Filmmaker Nasser Taqvai honored for lifetime achievements

T I A R T TEHRAN — Filmmaker Nasser Taqvai, famous for his TV series "My Uncle Napoleon" (1976), was honored for his lifetime achievements during a ceremony held in the Film Museum of Iran on Saturday.

The ceremony was followed by screening Taqvai's short film "Greek Ship" (1998) and two documentaries "Tazieh" and "Last Rehearsal" both produced in 2004, Persian media reported on Sunday.

Taqvai directed the two documentaries, which were submitted to UNESCO along with Iran's documents about the Iranian passion play tazieh that was registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

A number of veteran cineastes and theatrical figures including Bahman Farmanara, Behzad Farahani, Habib Rezai, Atefeh Razavi and Pari Saberi attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, Taqvai said that among all arts, writing is the art most dependent on man.

"Many works might be ruined and destroyed, but there is art that will remain, and for me cinema is such an art," he said.

Taqvai, whose "Captain Khorshid" (1987) was also a big hit, continued, "The past teaches us more compared with the future, since the future has not arrived yet."

He added, "Even if we do not like one work by a filmmaker, when we see it is being threatened, we need to take action and defend that work, and nobody should decide on behalf of someone else."

Next, several music videos by famous cineastes were screened for the audience.

Asghar Farhadi's video message submitted from Spain, where he is making his new production, was shown to the participants where he talked about his interest in Taqvai and his works.



Veteran director Nasser Taqvai poses after being honored for his lifetime achievements during a ceremony at the Film Museum of Iran in Tehran on October 29, 2016. (Mehr/Mohammad Mohemani)

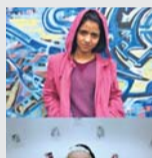
"Talking about you is both easy and hard. It is easy because one can easily name the number of films you have made and hard since you have a special character and you are like nobody else," he added.

"Among the filmmakers who are working today compared to the ones who worked over past decades, we can hardly find one who is both able to make films and is

also knowledgeable in other fields, and Mr. Taqvai is one of those few," he added.

The ceremony concluded with a presentation of a portion of the screenplay of the film "Captain Khorshid" that was written by Taqvai and apparently lost, but film producer Harun Yashayai owned part of it and had donated it to the Film Museum of Iran.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian docs win awards at Belgian festival

T I A R T TEHRAN — Acclaimed Iranian documentaries "Starless Dreams" by Mehrdad Oskui and "Sonita" by Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami won awards at the Festival des Libertés, which was held in Brussels, Belgium from October 20 to 29.

"Starless Dreams" won the SMart prize while "Sonita" received the RTBF prize, Belgian National Television prize, at the festival.

The German movie "#MyEscape" by Elke Sasse won the Grand Prix of the festival.

Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie sell their New Orleans home

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have sold their home in New Orleans' French Quarter.

Documents filed with the Land Records Division of the Orleans Parish Clerk of Court's Office show the property sold for \$4.9 million.

Pitt and Jolie purchased the home in 2007 after Hurricane Katrina for \$3.5 million. The couple, who are divorcing, bought it after Pitt established the Make It Right Foundation to fuel development of new housing in New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward neighborhood.

According to the listing, the three-story, 1830s-era mansion has 7,645 square feet, five bedrooms, three bathrooms and two half-baths.

Listing agent Nina Killeen confirmed the sale closed Friday. She says, "It sold for a very fair price. It's a good deal for both parties. They're happy with the outcome."

New York Met cancels opera after suspected cremated ashes sprinkled in orchestra pit

NEW YORK (Reuters) — New York City's Metropolitan Opera canceled its Saturday afternoon performance of "Guillaume Tell" after an audience member sprinkled an unidentified powder, which police believe was cremated ashes, into the orchestra pit.

New York City Police officials said witnesses had heard a man say he was at the opera to spread the ashes of his mentor.

"An individual from out of town ... indicated that he was here to sprinkle ashes of a friend, his mentor in opera, during the performance," John Miller, Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence and Counterterrorism told reporters at Lincoln Center.

The Met said on its Facebook page that it also canceled the Saturday evening performance of "L'italiana in Algeri", while police investigate the incident which happened in the second intermission.

There were no reports of any injuries or any bad reactions to the substance, though the theater was evacuated and the New York Police Department dispatched a special unit to investigate, Officer Tiffany Phillips said.

The suspect, a man who was not identified, had fled the scene and no arrests have been made, Phillips said.

The Metropolitan Opera has seen other bizarre episodes in the past, including one in 1988 when a patron died during a plunge from the top balcony during the intermission of a performance of "Macbeth."

Meeting of West Asian countries highlights significance of art: official

T I A R T TEHRAN — Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Ali Moradkhani has highlighted the role of theater in a message submitted to the Meeting of West Asian countries, General Directors of Performing Arts.

"We are happy that Iran is the host of such a great artistic event, and the participation of the executives of theatrical organizations in this meeting indicates the significance of art," reads

the message.

"We hope that with their consultation, we will reach useful achievements for the culture devotees of the country," the message adds.

Executives of theatrical organizations working in twelve West Asian countries including Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Syria and Oman are attending the meeting, which opened in Tehran on Sunday.

Stage director Marzieh Borumand,

who is also attending the meeting, regarded the event as a valuable movement.

She has said that the meeting would help us to learn more about the latest achievements of other Asian countries and their problems as well, while it would also help us to know what joint productions can be produced.

Borumand also expressed interest in traveling to Uzbekistan and Georgia since they are part of Persian culture and

have many commonalities with Iran.

Musical theater director Ali Qismat Lalayev from Azerbaijan, Deputy Minister of Ajara Education, Culture and Sports of Georgia Natia Sirabidze, Algerian author Ahsan Thalilani and Sami Nasri from the Center of Dramatic Arts of Tunisia are among the guests of the meeting.

Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is the organizer of the three-day meeting, which will discuss ways to expand relations among the countries.

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh



A visitor takes a selfie at an exhibition of paintings by Isa Jabbari at Tehran's Elaheh Gallery on October 29, 2016. The exhibit will run to November 7 at the gallery located at 47 Golfam St., off Africa Ave.

Iranian films line up for American festival

T I A R T TEHRAN — A lineup of three Iranian films will go on screen at the various sections of the 25th St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF), which will be held in the U.S. from November 3 to 13.

"The Half" by Bahman Kamyar, "Two" by Soheila Golestani and "Sonita" Rokhsareh Qaem-Maqami are scheduled to be screened during the festival.

"The Half" is about Azar, a young girl whose mother was killed by her step-father. Now, she is looking for justice.

"Two" tells the story of Bahman, a man who comes back to Iran years after living in Europe to sell his father's house. A 40-year-old woman helps him pack the furniture and equipment. This collaboration changes their destiny but not in a good way.

"Sonita" is about an Afghan refugee living in Iran who fights to keep her dream of becoming a rap star alive, while her family attempts to sell her as a bride.

Jennifer Lawrence hails 'my vote for president' Jodie Foster

LOS ANGELES (The Guardian) — Jennifer Lawrence tipped Jodie Foster to run for U.S. president as the "Silence of the Lambs" star was honored by BAFTA Los Angeles at the Britannia Awards.

The ceremony, which celebrates British talent and Hollywood stars with a "strong connection" to the UK film industry, recognized a host of A-list stars, including Ewan McGregor, Samuel L Jackson, Ricky Gervais, Felicity Jones and director Ang Lee.

Lawrence presented fellow Oscar-winner Foster with the Stanley Kubrick Britannia award for excellence in film and praised the 53-year-old for breaking down barriers in Hollywood.

The Hunger Games actor said: "Jodie once said to me: 'One day you'll look back at the choices you made as an actor and it will reflect something that was going on in your personal life.' Well, I did, and the consistent theme in all of my characters was they were all white trash with too

much responsibility. When you think about it, it's completely true.

"Whereas Jodie's ... I see a brave woman in a scary place. It reminded me of a woman who went behind the lines and started directing when it was not trendy for women to do such a thing."

Introducing Foster to the stage, Lawrence added: "Please welcome my vote for the next president of the United States."

Gervais joked that his award—the Charlie

Chaplin Britannia award for excellence in comedy—showed the industry recognized him as a greater talent than Hollywood's most famous silent comedian.

The Office co-creator said: "What I'm taking from this is you, and everyone in showbusiness, is saying to me that I'm better than Charlie Chaplin. I humbly accept this award."

McGregor, 45, received the Britannia humanitarian award to honor his work with the charity UNICEF.