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Iran's exports to Iraq rise 30% in 7 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's exports to Iraq rose 30 percent during the first seven months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22), compared to that of the same time span in the past year, according to the Chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-e Es'haq.

He put the value of Iran's exports to the neighboring country at \$6 billion in

the seven-month period of this year, IRIB reported on Sunday.

Iran's exports to Iraq were mainly foodstuffs and construction materials, Al-e Es'haq stated.

The chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce further mentioned economic and political ties between the two countries as strategic and long-term and noted that preserving these ties is very important for the both sides. →4

Sanctions have affected import of food, medicine

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — It has been repeatedly claimed by Trump administration's officials that sanctions against Iran do not include food and medicine, however, the sanctions have restricted transfer of money which affects importation of food and medicine.

Adnan Mousapour, the head of Iran-Qatar chamber of commerce, has told ISNA that the U.S. sanctions has targeted the people's living conditions.

The sanctions target both the private and state sectors, and items which are related to the people's living, Mousapour lamented. →2

Theresa May: Brexit won't be easier if I'm ousted

Theresa May has told her critics that getting rid of her as PM would not make delivering Brexit any easier.

May defended last week's draft agreement for leaving the EU and said there was a "critical" week ahead.

She suggested agreeing more details of UK's future relationship with the EU, ahead of an expected summit next week,

could satisfy the concerns of some of the Tory MPs opposed to her plans.

Jeremy Corbyn said Labor could get a better deal in time for Brexit.

There has been widespread criticism of the draft withdrawal agreement reached between the UK and the EU, which is set to be signed off at a special summit next week. →13

Today's Europe is not in position to implement joint army: Entessar

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Nader Entessar, Professor Emeritus of Political Science from university of South Alabama says that there is a growing sentiment among some European leaders to chart a more independent defense and foreign policy posture vis-a-vis the United States, but I don't think today's Europe is in a position to implement a genuine independent course from Washington's diktat.

He adds that "I do think that there is a growing sentiment among some European leaders to chart a more independent defense and foreign policy posture vis-a-vis the United States, but I don't think today's Europe is in a position to implement a genuine independent course from

Washington's diktat."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The idea of forming a joint European army is not a new idea, but in recent days, with the comments of Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel and the reaction of Trump has taken a new dimension. What are the reasons for the progress of this project by countries such as France and Germany?

A: This idea was first proposed in the early 1950s and in the aftermath of World War II. But, for a variety of reasons, it never came to fruition but was never forgotten. But the victory of Donald Trump and his periodic strident criticism of NATO has now given the notion of creating a joint European army a new lease on life. Without Trump, this idea would have most

likely remained in the back burner.

■ Speaking to the "Europe 1" radio, French President Emmanuel Macron called for the formation of a real European military to counter Russia's threats and also independence from the USA. In the interview, the French president said: "We have to defend ourselves against Russia, China and even the USA." Why does France now name the United States alongside China and Russia as a threat?

A: Notwithstanding the French president's inclusion of the United States in the category of potential threats to Europe, I think Macron's statements were more of a reaction to his frustration with Trump's erratic behavior towards Washington's major European allies than anything else. →7

Syrian forces liberate last Daesh holdout in south

Syrian government forces have managed to wrest control over the last holdout of the ISIL (Daesh) Takfiri terrorist group in the country's south, a UK-based monitoring group says.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported the liberation of the Tulul al-Safa hilly region, situated between Damascus and Suwayda provinces.

The fresh territorial gain came after Daesh elements "withdrew from it (Tulul al-Safa) and headed east into the Badia desert," it added.

Syria's official SANA news agency confirmed that the army units had made "a significant advance against Daesh terrorists' depots in Tulul al-Safa" and killed many extremists during their counter-terrorism operations.

The Syrian army units are clearing the lib-

erated areas from what has been left behind by Daesh terrorists, the report said.

It also noted that Abu Hajar al-Shishani, a Daesh ringleader, had been killed east of the Qaber al-Sheikh Hussein region near Tulul al-Safa.

Some reports said Shishani's deputy had been injured in Saturday's anti-terror operation.

The Syrian army soldiers have been fighting Daesh in Suwayda since July, when the Takfiri terrorists launched their deadliest attack on the Druze minority community in the province.

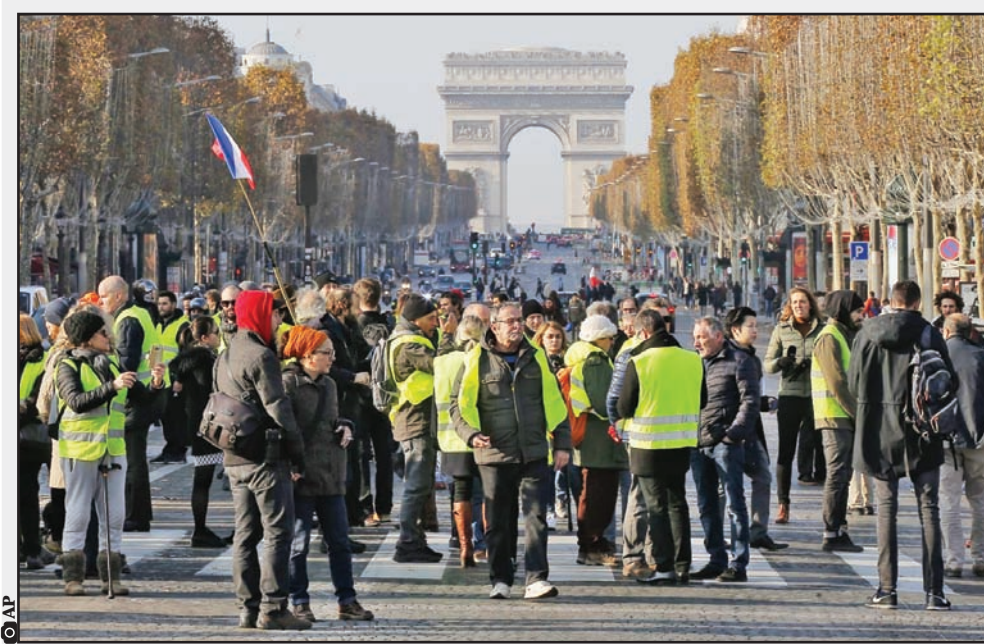
The terror outfit killed over 250 Syrians and kidnapped around 30 in its July 25 assault. Most of the hostages have been released, but the remainder appear to have died or been executed.

■ U.S.-made missiles found in Rif Dimashq

Separately on Saturday, Syrian forces discovered weapons and ammunition, including U.S.-made missiles, left behind by terrorists between the town of Babbila and the village of Beit Sahem in the southern Rif Dimashq Province.

A field commander said US-made TAO missiles, launchers, RPGs, machineguns and hand grenades were among the weapons seized.

On Friday, media reports said Jabhat al-Nusra and groups affiliated to the terrorist outfit were preparing to use chemical weapons against civilians and blame the attack on the government of President Bashar al-Assad in a bid to justify a new Western military aggression. (Source: Press TV)



One dead, over 400 injured in French protests over fuel prices

Tens of thousands of people across France have protested against high fuel prices, in mass rallies that turned violent when clashes erupted in parts of the country and a protester was accidentally run over and killed by a car.

An estimated 240,000 people gathered on Saturday at 2,000 locations, blocking roundabouts and motorway exits as part of what has been dubbed the "yellow vests" protest.

The movement, named for the high-visibility jackets worn by protesters, erupted on social media last month with calls for mass blockades of roads and highways. →13



REPORT
Roohullah Ghasemian
Journalist

The missiles that brought Tel Aviv to its knees

The situation in Gaza on Sunday, November 11, 2018, was in crisis when a group of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) infiltrated the Gaza Strip but faced the reaction of the Palestinian resistance forces.

Israeli Special Forces assassinated a top Hamas commander, while subsequent Israeli airstrikes to cover the retreat of this force killed five others, including another commander with the Palestinian resistance movement. Although in retaliation an Israeli trooper was seized during the fire exchange, but the Israeli military denied any such incident had taken place.

The high resistance force has caused Zionist authorities not to dare to attack the Gaza Strip. Soon after the incident, Avigdor Lieberman, Israeli Defense minister resigns. Netanyahu, the prime minister of the Zionist regime, has always expressed concern and fear of a comprehensive war in Gaza. Tzipi Livni, former foreign minister of the Zionist regime also acknowledged the failure of the regime against Gaza.

After the incursion in Gaza, the Palestinian resistance group fired more than 400 missiles at Zionist settlements around Gaza, and at the last hour of the ceasefire, the resistance group announced that the range of resistance missiles will continue beyond 40 kilometers if the Zionist airstrike continues.

The latest strike in Gaza by the Zionists was a failed demonstration, and the Palestinian resistance was very united and responsive to the attack.

■ **Fragility of the iron dome has become more obvious**

The collapse of the Israeli Iron Dome missile defense system has also made the Zionists more concerned than ever before.

Some analysts believe that the IDF attacked Gaza to kidnap the prominent Hamas figure, and therefore, to pressure Hamas to negotiate, gather information, or, if possible, free two Israeli prisoners detained by Hamas, as well as to stop the ceasefire between the Tel Aviv and Hamas.

However, the Israelis faced defeat with the extraordinary performance of Palestinians. →7



ARTICLE
Taimur Khan
Political analyst from
Pakistan

Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and the dubious international media

Information and knowledge is power and the methods of presenting information and knowledge has profound impact on shaping perceptions and perspectives of the masses. Revolution in communication technologies in this age of globalization has bestowed the field of "Media" with immense power and unlimited outreach.

This unprecedented power and outreach has transformed the field of media (in all forms) into a social institution, naturally placing enormous social, moral and ethical responsibilities on the shoulders of the field of media and journalism.

In the contemporary times, where on one hand, media have been responsible for healthy and positive changes in societies around the world, such as becoming the voice of the marginalized, spreading the message of democracy and human rights and creating awareness amongst the masses regarding matters and issues that affect their lives and security. The very same media has also been responsible for spreading misinformation, propaganda and lies, resulting in conflicts, wars and destruction around the world as well.

Media, national or international, regardless of its unprecedented power and outreach has many social responsibilities that it needs to fulfill. Those social responsibilities include the reflection of truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance in its content. The media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions nationally and internationally and most significantly, media should avoid everything that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or give offense to any group in the world.

Unfortunately, media, especially the international media with a few exceptions, is not adhering to its journalistic responsibilities anymore and subjecting propaganda and misinformation on a colossal scale. Today, the field of media no longer functions as a social institution but rather as an 'industry'. The best example of this is the current interest of the international media in "Pashtun Tahafuz Movement" and its leader Manzoor Pashteen. →7

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



British, Iranian FM's set to meet in Tehran

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt is set to arrive in Tehran on Monday for talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif, IRNA reported on Sunday.

This is Hunt's first visit to Tehran since he took office on July 9.

Zarif and Hunt previously talked on the phone on November 5, when Hunt underlined his country's commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal.

The chief British diplomat is also slated to meet with Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, to discuss regional and bilateral issues.



Basij to build 3,000 solar power plants

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Qolamhossein Gheibparvar, head of the Basij Organization, said on Sunday that his forces are going to build 3,000 solar power plants across the country.

"We will start building 3,000 solar power plants [each] with 5KW capacity this week," he said at a press conference ahead of the Basij Week, which starts on November 20, Mehr reported.

He further said Basij aims to build 100KW solar power plants in the future.

Gheibparvar also touched upon Basij's plans to revolutionize the agriculture sector in 39,000 rural areas, saying 4,000 expert teams will be dispatched to different regions of the country in this regard.



Netanyahu is at the end of his rope, Larijani advisor says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is at the end of his rope and the Palestinian resistance movement will undoubtedly make the Zionists regret their actions, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, said on Sunday.

"I strongly condemn the recent aggression of the Zionist regime in Gaza, which has resulted in the martyrdom and wounding of defenseless people, as well as the destruction of residential areas and the Al-Aqsa TV and radio stations," Mehr quoted Amir-Abdollahian as saying.

The continuing blockade of the Gaza Strip and depriving the oppressed Palestinian people of having their basic rights have been the source of continued tensions in Gaza, he emphasized.



Major network disbanded for disrupting petrochemical market

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Intelligence Ministry has disbanded a major network of dealers who disrupted the petrochemical market by increasing fake demands for petrochemical products in the local market.

According to the ministry, the illegal network was acting in the provinces of Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Gilan, Qom, Mazandaran, Golestan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, and Qazvin, Tasnim reported.

The proceeds from the network's financial crimes are estimated to amount to 5 trillion Iranian rials, the ministry added.

It also said 14 main elements of the network were arrested and 10,000 tons of petrochemical products were confiscated in the operation.



Turkish official expected to visit Tehran Monday

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Turkish Deputy Interior Minister Muhtarrem Ince is scheduled to visit Tehran on Monday for talks with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Zolfagari, Fars reported on Sunday.

The visit comes after Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli's October visit to Ankara, where he met with his Turkish counterpart Suleyman Soyulu to discuss various bilateral and regional issues.

During that visit, the Turkish minister hailed the two countries' joint fight against terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal immigration, smuggling of goods, as well as cooperation in improving border security.



Mogherini to discuss Iran in Ankara visit

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn are scheduled to visit Turkey on November 22 for talks on a range of issues including Iran.

According to IRNA, the Turkish delegation will be led by Foreign Affairs Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, now also in charge of EU Affairs.

At the meeting, they will discuss all issues of common interest and concern, among them key foreign policy issues such as developments in Syria, Iran, and Iraq. They will also discuss bilateral relations between the EU and Turkey.

Bullying U.S. has been isolated: deputy FM

Araqchi says Iran ready if EU fails to save JCPOA



POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The United States, like a bully, is exerting pressures on other countries but it has been isolated politically, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi has said.

Earlier this month, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump announced the re-imposition of the "toughest" sanctions ever against Iran's banking and energy sectors with the aim of cutting off the country's oil sales and crucial exports. The announcement came after Washington withdrew in May from the landmark Iran nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and decided to re-impose unilateral sanctions against Tehran.

Under the deal, reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries - the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China - in 2015, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions.

A first round of American sanctions took effect in August, targeting Iran's access to the U.S. dollar, metals trading, coal, industrial software, and auto sector.

In an interview with the Spanish ABC newspaper published on Sunday, Araqchi said even before the new rounds of sanction took effect and since Donald Trump took office, some foreign companies had begun to stop activities in Iran due to uncertainty and a psychological climate.

"Those companies not linked with the United States are continuing their cooperation with Iran. Around 3,000 small, medium-size and large companies are working with Iran. What they want is a financial channel for doing business," Araqchi, who was in Madrid for a round of negotiations with Spanish diplomats, said, according to an English translation of the interview published by IRNA.

The Iranian official said there is possibility of reduction in Iran's oil sale but not to the extent that the U.S. has claimed.

"Maybe, the country has to pay heavy prices for sanctions but they cannot change Iran's policies. The previous U.S. administration had imposed much harsher sanctions against Iran but eventually it had to sit for negotiations. Trump is still following an already failed experience," the top diplomat remarked.

Asked whether like previous rounds of sanctions when Iran increased the number of its centrifuges to 20,000 from 200, it will do the same this time, Araqchi responded that Iran curbed its nuclear activities to show its credibility.

"If there is no agreement there will be no limitations. Iran's nuclear program will remain of peaceful nature forever. We used to have first generation centrifuges and now we are working on the third and fourth generations, but we do not want to reach

a point of tension," he said.

Asked about claims that Iran supports terrorism and is misusing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to develop nuclear arms, the Iranian deputy foreign minister said, "Our nuclear program is under supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which has verified 13 times Iran's commitment to its obligations under the deal. The Zionist regime is good at lying and we should not be deceived by false claims of war-mongering individuals."

On Iran's alleged presence in Yemen, Araqchi replied, "We have no presence in Yemen. We are in contact with the Houthis but this does not mean that they (Houthis) are doing whatever we want them to do. We are trying to help establish peace in that country. This war is the result of Saudis' miscalculations. They used to talk about

eliminating the Houthis within two months but with the passage of four years the war is still raging in that country. That is why they intend to attribute this to Iran. The solution is not war but rather politics."

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating military campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the aim of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the country's Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Some 16,000 Yemenis have been killed and thousands more injured since the onset of the Saudi-led aggression.

More than 2,200 others have died of cholera, and the crisis has triggered what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

Asked if Iranian President Hassan Rouhani had some evidence to support his statement that dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered with the support of the United States, Araqchi said "President Rouhani meant that Washington's all-out support for the Saudi Arabian government has emboldened it to do whatever it wishes, including Khashoggi's murder. Even the U.S. is supplying arms to Saudi Arabia for its war on Yemen."

■ Araqchi says Iran ready if EU fails to save JCPOA

Araqchi has also said that Tehran is ready for any scenario if the Europeans fail to save JCPOA.

"We have considered many mechanisms to counter the sanctions and our colleagues in the government economic apparatus have have established committees which are studying solutions," he told IRNA in an interview published on Saturday.

He said that the U.S. is putting pressure on the Europeans to prevent them from doing business with Iran, noting the move is "against the European countries' sovereignty".

Salih's Tehran visit shows Iraq defying Iran sanctions, ex-diplomat says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Former Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Hassan Danaeefar has said Iraqi President Barham Salih's visit to Tehran means that Iraq attaches great importance to its relations with Iran, despite the U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

In an editorial published on Sunday in the Etemaad newspaper, Danaeefar said in spite of Washington's pressure on Baghdad to comply with its anti-Iran sanctions, Iraq has shown its political independence by defying the sanctions.

"Recently, the U.S. has put pressure on Iraq's central government to implement its sanctions against Iran, and has sent delegations to Baghdad and the Iraqi Kurdistan in line with such policy," he said, adding that the Iran-Iraq ties are still strong regardless of the Trump administration's pressure campaign against Tehran.

"The Americans show enmity toward Iran, and this is what an enemy does. But we expect our friends to



Iraqi President Barham Salih (L) meets his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani in Tehran, November 17 show their friendship as well," Danaeefar remarked.

The former ambassador also said it is easy to say Iraq

must meet its energy needs from somewhere other than Iran, but it is practically impossible.

Hence it should be said that despite the U.S. pressure, the political and economic relations between Iran and Iraq will continue unabated, the former diplomat added.

Salih arrived in Tehran on Saturday and met with top Iranian authorities, including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, President Hassan Rouhani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran Ali Shamkhani, Parliament speaker Ali Larijani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

In a joint press conference with President Rouhani, the Iraqi president said his country will not forget Iran's support for the Iraqis in their struggle against the regime of Saddam Hussein and Daesh terrorists.

"Today I have brought a clear message from Baghdad and that we in Iraq comprehend the importance of relations with Iran very well," he stated.

Tehran, Baghdad show strong commitment to win-win relations: Zarif

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has expressed optimism at a recent visit by Iraqi President Barham Salih to Tehran, saying Tehran and Baghdad are seeking a "win-win" relationship.

"Constructive exchanges on next steps to work together towards regional peace & security," Zarif said in a post on his official

Twitter account late on Saturday.

Zarif, who held separate talks with President Salih on Saturday, added, "Strong, shared commitment to win-win in all neighborly relations."

The chief diplomat reiterated Tehran's position in strengthening ties with neighbors. "Our priority is our region."

Salih visited Tehran on Saturday. The

visit came at a sensitive time when the U.S. is pressuring regional countries to go along with Washington in squeezing Iran under new sanctions unveiled early this month.

But Iraqi officials have protested to the dictate and underlined Iran's importance, including its place as the top trade partner of the Arab country.

The newly-elected Iraqi president said

on November 11 that it was in his country's best interests to have good and stable relations with Iran, urging the U.S. to consider Baghdad's political and economic position in talks about imposed sanctions on Iran.

"Iran is a neighboring country and our interest lies in having good and stable relations with Iran," Salih said while speaking to reporters during a recent visit to Kuwait.

Ambassador pushes for closer Iran-Russia cultural co-op

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Mehdi Sanaei, Tehran's ambassador to Moscow, on Sunday called for more cultural cooperation between Iran and Russia.

"The situation is ripe to cooperate," Sanaei said in a speech at the Saint Petersburg's international cultural conference.

The rich culture of Saint Petersburg coupled with studies

by Iranologists and Orientalists provide more opportunities for cooperation, he stated.

He also said that the two countries have formed a cultural committee to expand cultural interaction which is a "great achievement".

Pointing to Iranian Culture Minister Abbas Salehi's visit

to Russia to attend the conference, he expressed hope that the visit would help expand cultural interactions.

Ambassador Sanaei said Salehi on Friday met with Vladimir Medinsky, the culture minister of the Russian Federation, to discuss cultural cooperation. The said the two ministers signed an agreement to expand cultural relations.

Sanctions on Iran have affected import of food, medicine

1 → Farhad Ehteshamzad, the head of Iran Auto Importers Association, also told ISNA that foreign banks refrain from interacting with Iran, because of fearing from being punished by the U.S. which also impedes importing certain commodities such as food and medicine.

Kianoush Jahanpour, spokesman for Iran's Food and Drug Administration, told ISNA in an interview published on November 13 that the claim by Washington that medicine is exempted from sanctions is a "big clear lie".

Sanctions include food and medicine and the only point is that these two items have not been mentioned in the sanctions list announced by the Trump administration, he said.

In a tweet on November 12, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed that "the U.S. does not, and never did, sanction food and medicine. They are exempt from sanctions." Jahanpour said, "Pompeo's remarks are clear lies. In the issue of medicine, it is not just the raw material that matters, money transfer is also very important."

Limits on financial transactions cause problems in the process of buying and producing medicine, Jahanpour added.

-----Sanctions on Iran are already choking off medicine imports: Washington Post

In an article on Saturday the Washington Post said the U.S. sanctions on Iranian financial firms, including a bank that until recently handled most payments for Iran's imports of humanitarian goods, are having a chilling effect



on foreign companies that help supply medicine and other medical products.

The far-reaching sanctions on Iranian financial firms reimposed two weeks ago could endanger the flow of humanitarian goods as foreign banks and outside suppliers abandon business ties with their partners in Iran, analysts and experts warn. In recent months, some European banks have refused to process payments even from Iranian firms that are exempt from sanctions out of fear of U.S. penalties, according to people familiar with the transactions.

The Trump administration last month imposed sanctions

on Parsian Bank, one of Iran's most reputable private-sector institutions.

Policy analysts and sanctions experts say Parsian processed much of Iran's humanitarian trade transactions and was trusted by European firms. It was one of the Iranian banks whose anti-money-laundering procedures were up to international standards, said Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, an expert on business relations between Iran and Western countries.

On Twitter this past week, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif posted letters he indicated were from four European pharmaceutical companies announcing the end of their business activities in Iran.

The Post said Iran has a large pharmaceutical industry of its own but imports some of the raw materials needed to produce medication.

Former U.S. Congressman Ron Paul has Pompeo's recent threat to "starve" Iranian people through economic pressure was a rare instance of truthfulness in America's foreign policy, Press TV reported on November 13.

In the latest episode of his online show "Liberty Report," Paul said Pompeo's remarks were important because not often American leaders tend to reveal Washington's true intentions.

Earlier, the U.S. secretary of state had told the BBC Persian that Iranian officials must listen to Washington "if they want their people to eat".

Israeli sources admit Hamas possesses game-changing missiles

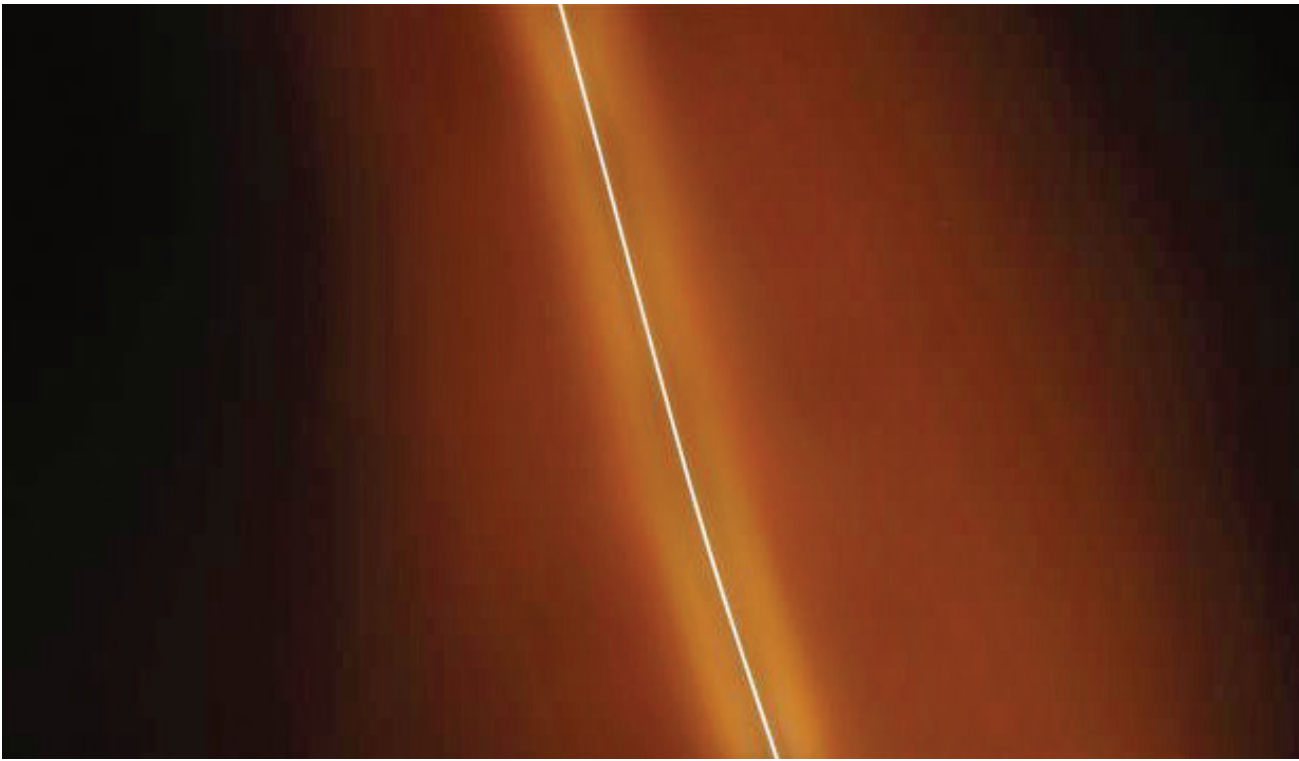
An Israeli website known for its close links to the regime's military intelligence services has admitted that the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas is now possessing "game-changing" missiles that could hit targets in Israel with considerable ease and precision. The Debka file said in a report on Saturday that its sources had identified the type of modern missiles used by Hamas in recent attacks on the Israeli-occupied territories that inflicted considerable damage and casualties on the regime and forced the Israeli government to accept a ceasefire with the Palestinians.

It said the missiles were of the 333mm-caliber type and had a medium range of 11 kilometers. The report added that the missiles were capable of destroying Israel's "artillery emplacements, Iron Dome batteries, armored force concentrations – whether over ground or in trenches, as well as combat engineering equipment and command centers".

"It is not launched from stationary batteries, but from any combat 4x4 vehicle or jeep, each of which carries two rockets," said the report, adding that the main advantage of the missiles was its mobility which allowed Hamas to fire them from any area in the Gaza Strip without Israeli radars noticing them.

The report came days after Israelis signed into a ceasefire with Hamas after a barrage of resistance missile attacks on southern occupied territories killed one and injured more than 80 Israelis.

The Israeli government decision to accept the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire, prompted its minister for military affairs Avigdor Lieberman to resign. Hamas called the resignation, which could bring about early elections in the occupied lands, as "an admission of



defeat" and a "political victory" for the Palestinian resistance.

Lieberman said after resigning from the Israeli cabinet that Hamas was on its way to become a serious threat to Israel, saying in a year time, the group and its partner in Gaza, the Islamic Jihad Movement, would reach the military prowess of Hezbollah, the dominant resistance movement in Lebanon

which has successfully defended the small country against Israeli aggression in the past.

The Debka file report about Hamas missiles also came hours after Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar warned Israel not to test the resistance group again.

"I advise Israel not to try and test us again. This time you did not have a lot of casualties and you managed to rescue your special

forces," said Sinwar at a memorial service for the Palestinians killed in recent clashes.

"Whoever tests Gaza will find only death and poison. Our missiles are more precise, have a greater range and carry more explosives than in the past," said Sinwar, adding, "Our hands are on the trigger and our eyes are open."

(Source: Press TV)

Interpol meets to select new president after China's arrest

Police chiefs from around the world gathered in Dubai Sunday for Interpol's general assembly to select a new president after the agency's former official in the post was detained in China.

Meng Hongwei – who was China's vice minister of public security while also leading Interpol – went missing while on a trip to China in September. It later emerged that the long-time Communist Party insider with decades of experience in China's security apparatus was detained as part of a sweeping purge against allegedly corrupt or disloyal officials under President Xi Jinping's authoritarian administration.

Interpol member-states will also be deciding whether to accept Kosovo as a full member, which would allow officials there to file red notices for Serbian officials that Kosovo considers war criminals.

The red notices are alerts circulated by Interpol to all member countries that identify a person wanted for arrest by another country. Interpol says there are 57,289 active red notices around the world.

Interpol acts as a clearinghouse for national police services that want to hunt down suspects outside their borders. The body, however, has faced criticism that governments have abused the "red notice" system to go after political enemies and dissidents, even though its charter explicitly proclaims its neutrality and prohibits the use of police notices for political reasons.

Two years ago, Interpol introduced new measures aimed at strengthening the legal framework around the red notice system. As part of the changes, an international team of lawyers and experts first check a notice's compliance with Interpol rules and regulations before it goes out. Interpol also says it enhanced the work of an appeals body for those targeted with red notices.

Chinese authorities say Meng is being lawfully investigated for taking bribes and other crimes. China's beleaguered rights



activists point out that as someone with a seat atop the country's powerful public security apparatus, Meng helped build the opaque system of largely unchecked power wielded by the ruling Communist Party to which he's now fallen victim.

Meng's wife has told The Associated Press from France that the bribery accusation he faces is just an excuse for a lengthy detention and that he is being persecuted for political reasons.

As more than 1,000 delegates from most of the 192 member-states began filling the main hall for the annual event, Interpol Secretary-General Jurgen Stock explained to reporters that the agency's rules did not allow for Meng to continue acting as president. Meng had been serving as president since November 2016, and his term was due to end in 2020.

He said Interpol received Meng's resignation letter from China on Oct. 7 and that Interpol was notified by Chinese authorities that Meng is no longer a delegate to Interpol.

"It sounds a little technical but again that automatically leads to the fact, according to our rules, that he is not the president anymore," Stock said. "We had to take the measures to ensure the functioning of the organization."

Meng's representatives say Interpol accepted an unsigned resignation letter without any resistance and without evidence of his consent.

In Meng's place Sunday, senior vice president of Interpol's executive committee, Kim Jong Yang of South Korea – who was previously named acting president – helped open the ceremony for the general assembly meeting.

A little more than a week ago, Stock told reporters in France – where Interpol is headquartered – that there was no reason for him to suspect that anything about Meng's resignation "was forced or wrong."

He said he "encouraged" Chinese authorities to provide information about Meng's location and legal status but can do no more because the role of Interpol is "not to govern over member states."

(Source: AP)

Death toll rises to 76 in California fire with winds ahead

Northern California crews battling the country's deadliest wildfire in a century were bracing for strong winds, with gusts up to 50 miles per hour, creating the potential to erode gains they have made in containing a disaster that has killed at least 76 and leveled a town.

Even as hundreds of searchers sift through the rubble in the town of Paradise looking for the dead, nearly 1,300 people remain unaccounted for more than a week after the fire sparked in Butte County, Sheriff Kory Honea announced Saturday night. Authorities stressed that the long roster does not mean they believe all those people are missing.

Honea pleaded with fire evacuees Saturday to review the list of those reported as unreachable by family and friends and call if they are safe. Deputies have located hundreds of people to date, but the overall number keeps growing because they are adding more names, including those from the disaster's chaotic early hours, Honea said.

"It's really very important for you to take a look at the list and call us if you're on the list," he said.

The remains of five more people were found Saturday, including four in the decimated town of Paradise and one in nearby Concow, bringing the number of dead to 76.

Honea said among the dead was Lolene Rios, 56, whose son Jed tearfully told KXTV in Sacramento that his mother "had endless amount of love for me."

President Donald Trump toured the area Saturday, joined by California's outgoing and incoming governors, both Democrats who



have traded sharp barbs with the Republican administration. He also visited Southern California, where firefighters were making progress on a wildfire that tore through communities west of Los Angeles from Thousand Oaks to Malibu, killing three people.

The president pledged the full support of the federal government. Gov. Jerry Brown and Gov.-elect Gavin Newsom thanked him for coming out.

"We've never seen anything like this in California, we've never seen anything like this yet. It's like total devastation," Trump said as he stood amid the ruins of Paradise.

Rain was forecast for midweek, which could help firefighters but also complicate the search for remains.

Northern California's Camp Fire has destroyed nearly 10,000 homes and torched 603 square kilometers. It is 55 percent contained.

The fire zone in Northern California is to some extent Trump country, and that enthusiasm was on display as dozens of people cheered and waved flags as his motorcade went by.

Kevin Cory, a wildfire evacuee who lost his home in Paradise, praised Trump for coming to a state that is often at odds with

the White House.

"I think that California's been really horrible to him and the fights. I mean they're suing him," he said. "It's back and forth between the state and the feds. It's not right."

But for the most part, survivors, some who had barely escaped and no longer had homes, were too busy packing up what little they had left or seeking help to pay much attention to the president's visit.

Michelle Mack Couch, 49, waited in line to get into a Federal Emergency Management Agency center in the city of Chico. She needed a walker for her elderly mother and tags for her car.

"Let's hope he gets us some help," said Couch, who voted for Trump and whose rental home burned down last week. But as far as taking time out to watch the president, she said wryly, "We don't have a TV anymore."

Honea expressed hope that Trump's visit would help with recovery, saying the tour by the Republican president and California's Democratic leaders "signals a spirit of cooperation here that ultimately benefit this community and get us on a path toward recovery."

In Southern California, Trump also met briefly at an airport hangar with families and first responders touched by the shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks more than a week ago.

Trump called the shooting at a country music bar, which left 12 dead, "a horrible, horrible event."

(Source: Daily Star)

Macron, Merkel seek common approaches to Trump, euro



French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, both limping in the polls, are looking for common approaches to Donald Trump and fixing the flaws in the euro currency.

Macron speaks in the German parliament Sunday on an annual day of remembrance for victims of war and dictatorship, a week after the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, and then consults with Merkel on European and international issues.

Merkel last week echoed Macron's call for a European army, a long-term prospect that drew tweeted criticism of Macron from Trump. Merkel said a European force would save money and agreed with Macron that Europe must be able to defend itself on its own. The two also face a December summit on limited reforms to the euro currency.

(Source: AP)

Egypt rounds up dozens of human rights defenders: HRW

Egyptian authorities have rounded up at least 40 rights workers, activists and lawyers since late October and detained them in "undisclosed locations," Human Rights Watch said Sunday.

"Many of those arrested were people who provided humanitarian and legal support to families of political detainees," HRW said, calling on the government to reveal their whereabouts.

The rights group spoke with a lawyer and three activists who had been "in direct touch" with the families of those detained, it said.

"The Egyptian security agencies' repression now extends to disappearing those brave men and women who have been trying to protect the disappeared," Michael Page said, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch.

One source told HRW as many as 80 people had been detained in the wave of arrests, but the rights group said it could only verify 40 names.

It called on Egyptian authorities to "immediately reveal all the detainees' whereabouts, release all of those arrested solely for exercising their rights, and bring any others swiftly before a judge to review their detention."

Sources told HRW that some of the detainees were close to the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms, an independent human rights group it said has come under fire from pro-government media in recent months.

Among those arrested is Hoda Abdel-Moneim, a 60-year-old lawyer and former spokesperson for the Egypt's Women Revolutionary Coalition – a group close to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Authorities also arrested Aisha Khairat al-Shater, the daughter of a former Muslim Brotherhood leader currently in detention, along with her husband, lawyer Mohammad Abu Horayra.

The Brotherhood was outlawed and branded a "terrorist" organization in December 2013, months after the military ousted president Mohammad Morsi following mass protests against his rule.

Former armed forces chief Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi won the presidency in 2014 and has since launched a crackdown against the Brotherhood that has also hit Egypt's secular opposition.

Egypt's courts have sentenced hundreds of Brotherhood leaders and supporters to death or lengthy jail terms after other speedy mass trials.

Earlier this month, Amnesty International denounced the arrest of at least 19 lawyers and human rights activists, including Shater and Abdel-Moneim.

(Source: AFP)

Police called on diplomats as APEC summit tensions boil over

Police were called when Chinese officials attempted to "barge" into the office of Papua New Guinea's foreign minister, it emerged Sunday, as APEC summit tensions boiled over.

The Chinese delegates "tried to barge in" to Rimbink Pato's Port Moresby office Saturday, in an eleventh-hour bid to influence a summit draft communique, but were denied entry, three sources with knowledge of the situation told AFP.

"Police were posted outside the minister's office after they tried to barge in," one source privy to summit negotiations told AFP, requesting anonymity.

The diplomatic incident came with tensions already high at a summit of Asian-Pacific leaders that has been overshadowed by a spat between the United States and China.

Pato had refused to meet with the delegates, according to a source, who said: "It's not appropriate for the minister to negotiate solo with the Chinese. The Chinese negotiating officials know this."

The minister himself sought to downplay the incident, telling AFP: "There wasn't an issue."

Asked about the incident, Chinese foreign ministry official Zhang Xiaolong told reporters: "It's not true. It's simply not true."

APEC nations usually agree a joint statement but officials are struggling to bridge deep divides on trade policy and admit that a formal communique may not be issued.

This is not the first time Chinese officials have been involved in a tense incident at a regional meeting.

At the Pacific Islands Forum in September, Nauru's president demanded China apologize after its delegation walked out of a meeting when the host refused to let an envoy speak until island leaders had finished.

"They're not our friends. They just need us for their own purposes," President Baron Waqa said at the time.

(Source: AFP)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	173557.7
IFX	1880.05

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,494 rials
GBP	55,053 rials
AED	11,379 rials

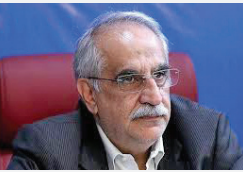
Source: iribnews.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$56.68/b
Brent	\$66.76/b
OPEC Basket	\$65.28/b
Gold	\$1,222.70/oz
Silver	\$14.24/oz
Platinum	\$850.55/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Karbasian named as new NIOC director

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Sunday appointed Masoud Karbasian, a former economy and finance minister, as the new managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), replacing Ali Kardor.

Karbasian will lead NIOC for the next two years, Tasnim news agency reported.

The ex-finance minister failed to secure the parliament’s vote of confidence in late August following an impeachment in the wake of skyrocketing prices in the country and devaluation of the local currency.



Modoudi appointed acting head of TPO

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian industry minister Reza Rahmani appointed Mohammadreza Modoudi as the acting head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), IRIB reported on Sunday.

Due to the implementation of Article 1 of the law banning employment of the retired officials, passed in mid-September by the Majlis, the ex-TPO head Mojtaba Khosrotaj announced his resignation in a letter to the industry minister.

Modoudi was a deputy in TPO, the report added.

Prohibition of the employment of retirees is part of the plan to employ the younger generation in top state jobs.

Iran’s exports to Iraq rise 30% in 7 months on year

1 → Iraqi market is a very good market for Iran and Iran should preserve this market and benefit from it for its economic growth, he stressed.

If trades between Iran and Iraq are made through national currencies of the two countries many problems regarding the financial transactions will be removed in the way of bilateral economic ties; Al-e Es’haq commented and announced that different negotiations have been fortunately conducted between the central banks of Iran and Iraq in this due and they may run related system.

Modi stacks Indian central bank board with allies to turn heat up on governor

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government turns up the heat on the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor to do its bidding ahead of next year’s general election it is getting the central bank’s board to take on a much more powerful role, according to government officials and board members.

Now stacked with government nominees who can be counted on to support the administration, the board is being transformed from having a passive advisory role into a body that can exert pressure for policy change. Some economists fear it could threaten the bank’s independence.

Two board members told Reuters that government pressure for easier lending policies is likely to become abundantly clear at Monday’s board meeting – the first to be held since the extent of a deep rift between the RBI and the government became public knowledge.

With the election due by May, and voters concerned about weak farm incomes and whether enough jobs are being created, Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is keen to stimulate the economy and sees the RBI’s hawkish stance as a barrier, said government officials and BJP allies.

The government has been pressing the Mumbai-based RBI and Governor Urjit Patel to accede to a range of demands that could help to boost demand. They include making it easier and cheaper for small businesses to borrow, easing lending curbs on 11 state-run banks which had debt and capital adequacy issues, and providing more liquidity to shadow lenders.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran’s power generation capacity rises 1000 MW since March

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran has increased its electricity generation capacity by 1000 megawatts (MW) since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018), IRIB reported citing energy ministry’s news portal (known as Paven).

Of the mentioned capacity, 92MW has been supplied by renewable power plants, 144 MW from dispersed generation units, 320 MW was accounted for

by combined cycle power plants, 383 megawatts came from gas power plants and finally 70 megawatts from hydro-electric units.

As reported, the energy ministry also plans to add another 2,465 MW capacity of new power plants to the country’s power network by June 2019.

According to Iran’s energy ministry, the country’s current power generation capacity stands at near 80,000 MW.



Currently, of the total nominal capacity of the country’s power plants, the share of hydroelectric power plants is 19.87 percent while gas power plants generate 31.41 percent of the country’s total

electricity, the share of combined cycle power plants is 29.48 percent, and finally the renewable power plants account only for 0.79 percent of Iran’s total power generation capacity.

Iron ore concentrate output up 18%

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran’s production of iron ore concentrate during the seven-month period ended on October 22 rose 18 percent compared to the figure of the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported on Sunday citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

As reported, the country’s iron ore concentrate output stood at 25.892 million tons during the seven-month period of this year, rising from 21.871 million tons in the same time span of the previous year.

Also, production of iron ore pellet in Iran witnessed a 12-percent rise during the seven-month time, rising to 3.216 million tons from 2.976 million tons in same time last year.

TSE’s main index drops 5,261 points in a day

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE)’s main index (TEDPIX) lost 5,261 points to stand at 173,557 points on Sunday, IRNA reported.

Some 2.199 billion shares worth 7.476 trillion rials (about \$178 million) were traded through 158,467 deals at TSE on Sunday.

The first market’s index fell 4,350 points while the second market’s index dropped 8,186 points.

Also, IFX, the main index of Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), fell 31 points to stand at 1,880 points on Sunday. Some 82 million shares worth 4.511 trillion rials (about \$107.4 million) were traded at IFB.

German minister looks to tax cuts as economy contracts

Germany needs a package of tax cuts and other measures to shore up economic growth in the long term, Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said in an interview published on Sunday, days after the country posted its first economic contraction since 2015.

Altmaier, a member of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s governing conservatives, said he was focused on cutting high German corporate taxes following tax cuts in the United States, Britain and soon France.

“The corporate tax in Germany is now higher than in other industrial countries,” Altmaier told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper. “That is a disadvantage and puts jobs at risk. That is why a medium-term cut is necessary.”

He proposed using half of the increase in tax revenues to fund the tax cuts and said it was imperative to ensure

that contributions for social benefits did not grow beyond 40 percent of a person’s gross salary.

Gross domestic product (GDP) in Europe’s biggest economy fell 0.2 percent in the third quarter from the previous three months, according to data released on Wednesday by the Federal Statistics Office.

At the time, Altmaier said the contraction was not “a catastrophe” and his ministry called the slowdown a temporary phenomenon that occurred as car companies struggled to adjust to new pollution standards known as WLTP.

Welt am Sonntag said Altmaier, a close Merkel ally, hoped to parlay concern over the downturn in the third quarter to gain support for tax cuts from Finance Minister Olaf Scholz and his left-leaning Social Democratic party (SPD).

“We need clarity about relief for workers and industry,

including the stepwise reduction of the solidarity tax for everyone, less bureaucracy and more innovation,” Altmaier said.

Clemens Fuest, head of the Ifo economic institute, said the German coalition government had missed opportunities in recent years to strengthen economic growth.

“It’s important to create new spots in kindergartens, but policymakers should not call those investments at a time when it is not making needed infrastructure investments in rail routes or power lines,” Fuest told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper.

He also faulted the coalition government for its piecemeal approach to digitalisation, and called for efforts to strengthen the longer-term competitiveness of the German auto industry, instead of focusing solely on environmental protections.

(Source: euronews)

First Announcement

IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97/164-1/20

Tender Holder:
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender:
Purchasing of Audio and Video Equipment in accordance with the technical specifications and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and How to Receive the Tender Documents:
From **Monday 19th Nov. 2018 (1397/08/28)** by **8 a.m.** on **Wednesday 28th Nov. 2018 (1397/09/07)** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of Receiving the Tender Documents:
Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept., 4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran Iran.

The Fee of the Tender Documents and How to Deposit it:
Submission of payment receipt for the amount of **1,000,000 Rials** to Account No. 4101029171204273 (IBAN: IR310100004101029171204273) with CENTRAL BANK OF IRAN in the name of IRIB.

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participation to Tender:
The amount of deposit for participant in tender is **AED 45,000** fixed or its equivalent in **1,700,000,000 Rials** which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.


Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted no later than **4 p.m.** on **Saturday 29th Dec. 2018 (1397/10/08)** and at the address mentioned in the 4th clause.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes:
The date of opening the envelopes A&B is on **Sunday 30th Dec. 2018 (1397/10/09)** at **3 p.m.** in the office of Financial Vice President and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.

For more information, please see:
www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and http://iets.mporg.ir **Tel: 00982122167463**

Purchasing (Kala) Dept. of IRIB


(Source: Reuters)



N.I.O.C
1397.4186

First Announcement

call for public tender (First/Second publish)
Two-Stages (semi compressed) tender
Subject of Tender: Hydraulic Hose ¼ Inch 50 Foot



National Iranian
Drilling Company

• Tender descriptions:

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,181,242	Tender No. :FP-09-07/041 Indent No.:08-22-9645057	3,500,000,000 (Rial)

• Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	
	R Based on minimum scoring(60) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.

• Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.	
	Distribution Place	Hall No. 113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN Tel: 061-341486601
	Submitting Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents.
Documents Receiving Method	Closing date	Days after the last time of Purchasing 14
	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569

• Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	175,000,000 Rial / 3,660 Euro
Type of guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)

More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on:

www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr

تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۷/۰۸/۲۸ نویت دوم ۹۷/۰۸/۲۹

Transatlantic relations take an indecorous turn

It was meant to be a solemn commemoration. It degenerated instead into a petty squabble between the presidents of America and France and a week of worsening transatlantic tension.

Last weekend's centennial memorial service for the end of First World War saw Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron, the French president celebrating Franco-German reconciliation in a series of events honoring past sacrifice and celebrating peace.

Present in France but absent in spirit was U.S. President Donald Trump. America entered the war in 1917, marking the first occasion when U.S. power was thrown decisively into the European balance. That set the stage for the Central American role in the conflicts — culminating in the cold war — that shaped Europe in the 20th century.

Yet rather than marking the enduring power of the transatlantic relationship, the feuding that bookended the ceremonies highlighted growing division.

In a series of exchanges, the U.S. president and Macron brought simmering rivalry into the public domain just as fears of a new escalation in U.S. protectionism against European allies heightened. The Trump administration has already broken all precedent by encouraging the populist forces challenging the established European order.

But if the U.S. president is seeking to undermine solidarity among old allies, the effect inadvertently is also to rally them together. Hence Merkel, Germany's chancellor, last week swung behind her French counterpart's calls for an integrated "European army".

When America can no longer be relied on, so the thinking goes, then Europe must be proactive in becoming more self-reliant. The barbs that Trump flung not only showed a lack of decorum at odds with the solemnity of the occasion.

They also marked a missed opportunity to make progress on issues fundamental to the health of transatlantic relations. U.S. soldiers gave their lives alongside European allies to help stop the imperial Kaiser's march.

Trump lacks any sense of that history or the role that America's allies have played since as a multiplier of U.S. influence. True, those alliances can be an encumbrance. Trump has made legitimate points about Europe paying its way in NATO, coupled with threats to pull out. This has prompted a marked, if insufficient, increase in European defense spending.

But even among Americans he is seen to be damaging his case by the way he makes it. As Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations says, NATO membership is an act of strategic self-interest not of philanthropy: "Any doubt as to U.S. reliability will only encourage aggression and increase the inclination of countries to accommodate themselves to a stronger neighbor."

If the idea of a "European army" motivates Europeans to spend more on defense, that serves America's goals too. A more astute and diplomatic approach would be to encourage this in a way that chimes with U.S. objectives and simultaneously increases European contributions to NATO.

Instead Trump has demonstrated once again his belief that America best gets its way through the application of power. In the Trumpian world view, foreign relations are a bilateral tug of war.

The U.S. president disregards the role the European Union has played in keeping the postwar peace, yet he is undermining NATO too. U.S. muscle can, of course, turn the tide of events alone. But last was a week in which America should have been celebrating the strategic benefits of alliances. Trump might have seized the day to look big.

(Source: FT)

A legal takedown of genocide

A verdict against two high-level Khmer Rouge leaders helps spread the application of human-rights law and could prevent such atrocities.

Despite a four-decade delay in justice, a United Nations-backed court established on Friday that the Khmer Rouge had indeed committed genocide in Cambodia during its reign. The two most senior and surviving leaders of the radical group, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, were convicted of the most heinous of crimes — the killing of innocent minority groups en masse in the late 1970s.

The verdict may further assist Cambodians in coming to terms with their "killing field" past. It might also reduce impunity in a country still ruled by a former lower-level Khmer Rouge figure, Hun Sen. Yet it should also ring loudly everywhere as a reminder to prevent genocide in the future.

For many, that future is now. In Myanmar, the regime has continued a campaign of genocide against Rohingya Muslims who remain in the country, according to UN investigators. In Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State (ISIS) was defeated only last year after trying to eliminate the Yazidi minority. In China, some members of the Uyghur community say Beijing is committing "cultural genocide" by detaining tens of thousands of the minority Muslims in "reeducation" camps.

Genocide is difficult to prove in court. Prosecutors must prove intent. Verdicts like those against the Khmer Rouge leaders are rare. Yet they help affirm the progress over recent decades in holding people accountable for gross violations of human rights.

"Overall there is less violence and fewer human rights violations in the world than there were in the past," writes human-rights scholar Kathryn Sikkink of Harvard University in her latest book, "Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21st Century," based on extensive review of historical data.

Most countries now accept treaties on human rights even if they do not always enforce them. And since the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the UN has set up more international courts like the one for Cambodia to try perpetrators under the idea that human rights are universal. The result, says Ms. Sikkink, is a steady decline in genocide.

More than 80,000 Cambodians attended the long trials of the Khmer Rouge leaders over four years. The courtroom crowd was witness to the application of a law that holds true far beyond their borders. This latest affirmation of that law can now more easily help protect other peoples facing genocide or similar crimes. It might also make leaders tempted to commit mass slaughter think twice.

(Source: The CSM)

MBS and Khashoggi: The crown prince's dilemma

The Saudi prince has found himself at the center of attention in an international murder case and King Salman cannot protect him indefinitely

By Madawi Al-Rasheed

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman must have breathed a sigh of temporary relief as two announcements about the murder of Jamal Khashoggi were issued on the same day. Both avoided mentioning his name and consequently absolved him of any responsibility for the murder at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October.

■ An exit strategy?

Both the Saudi public prosecutor's call for the death penalty for five members of the hit squad sent to kill Khashoggi and the U.S. Treasury announcement of sanctions against key figures in the case provide an exit strategy for an embattled crown prince whose name has become entangled with the murder. But the exit may not be as straightforward as imagined.

First, at a news conference in Riyadh, Saudi Deputy Public Prosecutor Shalaan bin Rajih al-Shalaan issued a conclusive investigation statement. He revealed that the person who ordered the killing was the head of the negotiation team sent to Istanbul by deputy intelligence chief General Ahmed al-Assiri to force Khashoggi to return to Saudi Arabia from his self-imposed exile.

He mentioned operatives consisting of negotiation, intelligence and logistics persons who were dispatched to persuade and return Khashoggi. The mission included individuals who were ready to administer injections, and, should force be used, to eliminate evidence of murder, dispose of the body and clean the site of the crime.

The public prosecutor called for the death penalty for five individuals who confessed to the crime. There was also an unnamed media specialist, who allegedly had known the victim, and a collaborator who disposed of the body.

The statement sounded like a horror film that had gone terribly wrong, with a violent cast and an unnamed director.

■ A troubling message

Now Mohammed bin Salman faces a major dilemma. Will he bring the five murderers to justice and execute them for their crime as requested by the public prosecutor? Or will he protect them in return for carrying out orders? Well, he will be damned if he does and damned if he doesn't.

If MBS executes the murderers, he will be remembered as the one who took Saudi justice to its logical conclusions.

The execution of the five murderers will absolve him from any responsibility at least for now, but this will send a serious and troubling message to his most loyal and obedient servants, namely the intelligence and security services and the death squads that he may



The crown prince will remain accused of first avoiding responsibility for the murder, and second protecting those who obey his orders even if they are murderers.

have groomed.

Killing Khashoggi is one thing, but executing five of your own close operatives is something else. The operatives probably expected medals as reward for "ridding the prince of that turbulent journalist" rather than a spectacular execution in one of Riyadh's public squares.

The public execution of loyalists and security personnel means that, should there be further scandals, involving excessive use of force, or murder, they will be the only ones to blame. Those who give them orders will remain protected. In fact those who order them to bring dissidents back to the country or eliminate them will also order their execution if they become a public embarrassment.

■ Sacrificing scapegoats

It seems that the survival of the Saudi regime will depend on sacrificing scapegoats. But these scapegoats have become essential for the survival of the regime as it continues to rule by fear and, ultimately, murder. The regime's intolerance of criticism reflects a shaky foundation that rests only on spreading terror. A confident and strong regime is not compelled to violently silence all voices of dissent.

If the loyalist murderers are executed,

future operatives will rethink the credibility of the regime they work for. There is nothing more troubling than obeying orders to kill then to pay with your own life for simply obeying these orders.

The Saudi intelligence community and security services cannot simply shrug off this incident and continue to fully embrace MBS, who has shown total disregard for their impunity and safety. They will know that at the end of the day, they are the ones to pay the price for operations that go wrong.

Mohammed bin Salman may be compelled to listen to Machiavelli's wisdom as he faces a difficult decision. He will learn that "certain virtues may be admired for their own sake, but for a prince to act in accordance with virtue is often detrimental to the state".

In the case of MBS, who is the state, his virtue may not cement his rule but may undermine it, as he will lose the trust of those he needs most, namely the deep state intelligence services and death squads.

If Mohammed bin Salman chooses not to execute the murderers, he will leave the question of who ordered the mission hanging over him. Failing to execute the murderers will continue to make him the center of the investigation, as the only person who could

have ordered the kidnapping or elimination of Khashoggi.

The crown prince will remain accused of first avoiding responsibility for the murder, and second protecting those who obey his orders even if they are murderers.

■ Public face of Saudi Arabia

Can MBS then continue to be the public face of Saudi Arabia after his name is so closely associated with a spectacular crime that has outraged the world?

While the prince ponders these difficult decisions, the U.S. Treasury Department issued a statement in which it imposed economic sanctions on 17 Saudi officials who it said had "targeted and brutally killed" Khashoggi.

If MBS and his allies to the east and to the west think this is going away, they're delusional. This isn't going away.

Later U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the sanctions were "an important step in responding to Khashoggi's killing" and vowed to "continue to seek all relevant facts, consult Congress, and work with other nations to hold accountable those involved".

Pompeo welcomed the conclusions of the Saudi public prosecutor, thus boosting its credibility, and demonstrating full support for any exit strategy that keeps MBS in power, albeit tarnished and bruised by the scandal in Istanbul.

■ The central question

The two statements seem to deflect the central question of why MBS, or any operatives under his command, would go as far as plotting the kidnapping or murder of dissidents abroad.

This decision is serious and should be the most important that the Saudi regime - and MBS in particular - has to answer for. Leaked audio tapes mentioned that Maher Abdulaziz Mutreb, who was part of the 15-member hit team sent to Turkey to kill Khashoggi, told an aide of the crown prince to "tell your boss" after Khashoggi's murder.

While the world - and in particular Khashoggi's family - may not see an independent UN-led investigation materialize, the murder of the journalist will continue to haunt the Saudi regime for the foreseeable future.

Executing the murderers or protecting them is unlikely to result in the case being forgotten. MBS finds himself at the center of a public relations disaster around this international state-sanctioned murder case, and this is unlikely to change after the latest statements from the prosecutor and the U.S.

His father, King Salman, may succeed in reducing tensions by asserting that he is still in charge, but he cannot protect his son indefinitely.

(Source: Middle East Eye)

Has Qatar succeeded in facing the blockade?

By Jawad Al-Anani

I took another look at the speech made the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, at the opening of the 47th session of the Qatari Advisory Council on 7 November.

I also looked back on his speech from last year, made at almost the same time, at the 46th session of the Council. I found that there is a difference between the two speeches in terms of language, style and content.

In his speech last year, Sheikh Tamim refrained from mentioning the consequences of the "economic blockade" adopted by four Arab countries against Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

He merely said that people and governments in the Persian Gulf region, the Arab world and across the world have denounced this issue. However, in this same speech, he stressed that Qatar would defend its dignity to the end, that it would not engage in a war of words with others. He also promised that every effort would be made to confront the blockade.

In addition to this, he listed the measures taken since the declaration of the siege on 5 June 2017, five months before the opening of the 46th session of the Advisory Council.

A year after his first speech, Sheikh Tamim mentioned in his second speech Qatar's success in overcoming the effects of the blockade (or comprehensive boycott), citing examples and figures. He mentioned that the exports were up by 18 per cent compared to the first year of the blockade.

He did not forget to emphasize, in this context, that Qatar has maintained its position as the number one largest source of natural gas. He stressed that the Qatari riyal exchange rate remained steady and stable and that the number of factories operating in the State of Qatar increased by 14 per cent compared to when the siege was first imposed.

These examples confirm two basic facts:

First, the State of Qatar has the flexibility to respond to external challenges, especially in the economic sphere.

The second is that Qatar has the capacity to raise its level of resilience to external challenges.

However, of course Qatar has had difficulties with transportation, especially Qatar Airways, which is suffering from the closed airspaces to its flights by the blockade countries.

This has not deterred many who want to work, invest



Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani

The Advisory Council Sheikh Tamim stressed the need for the youth and various groups of people to continuously cooperate with the government in order to achieve welfare for all.

and deal with the State of Qatar, because its economy remains strong.

What is interesting in Sheikh Tamim's speech this year is his emphasis on the need to use the concept of "democratic security" in the State of Qatar, so that it can always meet the external challenges with strength and power.

In his speech, he did not use the term "democratic security". He referred to the concept of security in its various forms, such as food security, security in the police sense,

military sense and social security.

The term "democratic security" is a term that is no more than 15 years old. It was the Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, who coined the term to address the major challenges facing Colombia at the time. This includes the long war between the Colombian army and the FARC revolutionary movement and the war against drug trafficking gangs, white slavery and kidnapping.

The drug gangs, on the one hand, and the revolutionary FARC, on the other, were cooperating with each other in smuggling, buying arms and recruiting elements opposed to the legitimate government in Bogota.

As the FARC operated from the mountains of Colombia and its jungles, drug cartels managed to take control of Medellin and turn it into its headquarters. At that time, young people feared the power of these groups and refused to join the army or the ranks of the Colombian security forces.

That is why Uribe came up with the idea of ?? "democratic security", which states that the people must be motivated and supported to do their best in order to confront these two challenges that are destroying the Colombian economy and limiting the possibility of its development.

The aim of the "democratic security" policy was to encourage the participation of young people in the army and the security forces, to combat terrorism and organized crime, to increase military allocations and to promote transparency, integrity and good governance so that people view their cooperation with the government as achieving a better future capable of flexibility and confrontation.

Two years later, Uribe managed to eliminate 50 per cent of the killings, smuggling and kidnappings, and managed to confront the FARC. By the end of his term, some of the FARC factions had begun to accept a peace proposal.

This was achieved in 2016 by President Juan Manuel Santos. Since then, Colombia has been experiencing strong economic activity, increased investment and employment, and has achieved much better growth rates than its neighbors in South America, such as Brazil, Argentina and others.

Of course, the challenge facing Qatar is the siege. Therefore, in his speech to the Advisory Council Sheikh Tamim stressed the need for the youth and various groups of people to continuously cooperate with the government in order to achieve welfare for all. His speech also emphasized the need to do things right and to adhere to ethics.

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

Kornet missile wins over Netanyahu's cabinet

By Mohammad Ghaderi

TEHRAN — The Israeli-Palestinian conflict last week has had a huge impact on the Zionist regime's security and in its politics and media. Most of the Hebrew media, in their analysis, has noted that Israel's deterrence may have been damaged, for one thing.

The damage began when the Zionists sent in a Special Forces team which botched its planned operations in Khan Yunis, in the south of Gaza. A brief conflict ensued with Palestinian resistance fighters and this led to hundreds of home-made missiles being launched in to Israel. The so-called "Iron Dome" proved to be porous.

Zvi Fogel, a former head of the IDF Southern Command told Maariv: "The security situation in which Israel is insulting, and not seen since the October 1973 war. It seems that politicians do not pay attention to the future of Israel and are engaged in political games. And even Benjamin Netanyahu gives us the story of an unacceptable illusion."

"After the recent clash with Hamas, we removed David's star and the blue color from the Israeli flag, leaving only white in the sign of surrender.

We have completely lost the deterrent power and Hamas has succeeded in achieving deterrence against Israel. We are in a state of ineffective security that we have not witnessed since 1973," he added, and also said that Israel had become relatively powerless and without an operational agenda. He suggested that Israel should target Hamas leaders, houses, cars, and their families, and put them in deep fear and force them to live underground.

Referring to this latest Middle East development, he said that the Middle East sees new and stronger enemies like Hezbollah in the north and Hamas in southern Israel. Israel fought against three Arab countries in the war of June 1967 and defeated all, but today, he said, Israel cannot apparently end the battle with Hamas.

Zionist TV network 2 also reported that the regime suffered a painful lesson from the failure of the Special Forces at Khan Yunis.

Yoav Limor, a military expert and security analyst for the Israeli newspaper Al-Youm, said: "We spent developments



began with a cease-fire in Gaza, and then the strategic mistake of sophisticated security operations continued to make matters worse. And then the exchange of allegations led to a dangerous military tension that ultimately led to the resignation of the Israeli Defense minister Avigdor Lieberman, and possibly the announcement of a new Israeli election."

He added: "The winner was Hamas in last week's developments. Hamas inflicted more damage than it received with its heavy rocket attacks around Gaza."

The failed Israeli operation allowed Hamas to launch nearly 500 missile attacks on Israel. It even knocked out an Israeli bus with a missile. The Resistance succeeded in turning the blockade into a crisis for the Israelis.

Analysis by the Zionists, especially the regime's troops, showed dismay at the apparent relative helplessness of the Tel Aviv authorities. Now, given the failed operation, there are political consequences for Netanyahu ahead similar to those which befell Ehud Olmert failures in Lebanon years ago, and Hamas is not nearly as powerful as Hezbollah.

Today's Europe is not in position to implement joint army: Entessar

➔ I do think that there is a growing sentiment among some European leaders to chart a more independent defense and foreign policy posture vis-a-vis the United States, but I don't think today's Europe is in a position to implement a genuine independent course from Washington's diktat.

■ Trump opposed the plan and in response to French President Macron's remarks called the formation of this army offensive. Due to the Trump reaction and his renewed appeal to Europeans to give money to NATO, can these disputes threaten NATO's future?

A: As has been customary for president Trump, he always wants to have his cake and eat it too. Thus, Trump's reaction to Macron's remarks was in line with his usual vituperation when Trump doesn't like something or when he is challenged. Trump and his foreign policy advisors know the importance of NATO to Washington and its global hegemony. Trump's periodic war of words with some European leaders do not



threaten NATO's future. Despite their frustration with Trump's behavior, Europe is grudgingly getting used to Trump's modus operandi.

■ Ursula von der Leyen, the German defense minister,

recently said that the founding of the European Army and its future activities could not only increase the security of European countries but also solve international crises. If the joint European army does missions outside Europe in addition to missions inside Europe, Is this not a parallel with NATO?

A: I agree with the assessment of the German defense minister regarding the utility of a European army in enhancing the security of European countries. But, as I mentioned in my answer to the first question, I don't think Europe has the political wherewithal to challenge the United States. Besides, Europe is too divided to present a cohesive bloc that is necessary for the establishment of an independent and united military force. But in the unlikely event that Europe is able to establish a European defense force that doesn't kowtow to Washington's whims, then the future of NATO as it is structured today will be in jeopardy.

The missiles that brought Tel Aviv to its knees

➔ The retaliation of the resistance group was also reaction to the normalization efforts of some Arab countries with the Zionist regime. They proved the resistance is alive and dynamic and can disrupt Israeli's plots in the region including the deal of the century and the new Balfour.

The source of concern for the Zionist authorities in the recent developments is Palestinians use of precision missiles and the ineffectiveness of the Iron Dome system.

The story gets more interesting when you know that every Iron Dome fired by the Zionist regime to combat Palestinian rockets costs \$1 million.

The Palestinian resistance, once again, sent the Zionists to seek shelter, and many settlers fled to areas farther away from Gaza.

In the November conflict between the Palestinian resistance and the Zionist regime, despite the massive bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli air forces, the Palestinian resistance rocket hit the Zionist soul.

Israel's Achilles' heel, the ground force of the Zionists, has failed against the forces that are taking part in the partisan warfare, which was revealed during the 33-day war against Lebanon as well as the wars launched against Gaza.

On the recent issues in Gaza, Abdel Bari Atwan writes: "The right of the people of Palestine, and especially the inhabitants of Gaza, to rejoice in victory, because if it weren't for their heroic resistance, Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, would have refused to accept ceasefire.

The Israelis only comprehend the language of force. Netanyahu realized that the attack on Gaza would have a severe response by the Palestinian resistance."



The recent conflict in Gaza was short, because Netanyahu and his cabinet realized that they would suffer heavy losses and casualties, and would put their Arab friends in a bottleneck. Therefore, they turned to Egypt for help.

The new resistance has created a new concept in war, which any eye for an eye. The fear and anxiety were not imaginable in Israel, when over 400 missiles were fired towards them from Gaza."

Anyway, it is clear that the Zionists never imagined that their adventure in Gaza would

have had a significant impact on the settlers around Gaza and that they would be subjected to heavy Palestinian resistance.

In 2014, it took the Zionists a 51-day war to accept a cease-fire, however, in November 2018, after a 24-hour war, they accepted the ceasefire as the Palestinian resistance has gained strength and has the previous experiences of the war on the enemy.

The Zionists, on the other hand, are not willing to enter the widespread war in Gaza, nor can they take any more missile strikes.

Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and the dubious international media



➔ The international media is portraying Manzoor Pashteen as the Che Guevara of the Pakistani Pashtun and the 'movement' led by him as the "Pashtun Renaissance". Few minor issues of tribal belt of Pakistan are being portrayed as a global issue with far reaching consequences. Acting as a typical monetized industry and riding the anti-Pakistan rhetoric train, the international media is hell bent on painting the Pakistani state and its institutions as repressive and dictatorial, that is marginalizing its people, particularly the Pashtuns and suppressing the voice of the public.


The reality however, is on the contrary and as evident from the coverage of the international media of this matter, the Pakistani state's narrative and the steps taken by it to reprimand the situation are missing and purposefully ignored. Lest the international media forget, the Pakistan state considers the demands of the PTM as legitimate and has even went on to address majority of the demands put forward by the PTM leadership such as the removal of landmines from operational areas of FATA, disbandment of many military check posts in the region, and reimbursement of losses endured by the traders and people of FATA.

The Pakistani state and the army in particular are also working on resolving the issue of missing persons as well. The Pakistani state, like any other functioning democracy is listening to the concerns of its public and addressing their grievances accordingly but the international media purposefully ignoring all the efforts being made by the state and rigorously working in promoting anti-Pakistan agenda by instigating propaganda, spreading misinformation in an attempt to turn the people of Pakistan, particularly the Pashtuns against the state of Pakistan and its institutions.

The sudden interest of the international media in the plight of the Pashtuns raises suspicions about its motives and intentions. Where was this international media that acts as moral police now, when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan back in 2001 and started a decades' long military campaign that resulted in the suffering of millions of Pashtuns in Afghanistan?

Why the international media was silent about the sacrifices rendered by the Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line (border between Pakistan and Afghanistan) during the U.S.-launched War on Terror? Why is the international media silent about the innumerable sacrifices and losses endured by Pakistan in War against terrorism, a war that was not even Pakistan's war to begin with?


The international media should stop acting as a tool for destabilizing forces and focus on the coverage of more pressing issues that are costing the lives of innocent people around the world, case and point the Israeli atrocities against innocent Palestinians, oppression of the Kashmiri people at the hands of the Indian state and occupying forces.



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A simple type of daily meditation may alter the course of Alzheimer’s

Recent research has found that short daily practice of mind-body therapy may help alleviate some of the signs and symptoms that often precede dementia.

Practicing an easy type of meditation daily may relieve some dementia symptoms.

The researchers behind the new study assessed a group of older adults experiencing memory difficulties who practiced 12 minutes per day of music listening or simple yoga meditation for 12 weeks.

Samples of their blood from before and after the 3 months of therapy revealed changes in levels of certain markers with associations to cell aging and Alzheimer’s disease.

These changes also linked directly to improvements in subjective assessments of cognitive function, mood, sleep, and quality of life.

Dr. Kim Innes, a professor at West Virginia University School of Public Health in Morgantown, led the study and is first author of the study paper, which features in the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease.

■ Blood markers as predictors of Alzheimer’s

The team chose to measure a number of blood markers that “have emerged as possible predictors of cognitive decline and dementia.” These included telomere length, telomerase activity, and levels of certain beta-amyloid peptides with links to Alzheimer’s disease.

Telomeres are “protective caps” that work to prevent the ends of chromosomes from deteriorating. Telomerase is an enzyme that helps preserve telomere length. Reduction in telomere length and telomerase activity are both “markers of cellular aging.”

Symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease, such as a gradual decline in the ability to remember, think, and make decisions, emerge long after the changes in the brain that cause them have already taken hold.

For this reason, and because of the difficulties of diagnosing this form of dementia from symptoms, researchers are pushing for a model that “defines Alzheimer’s by brain changes, not symptoms.”

They argue that this would help clinicians



Scientists are, however, becoming increasingly confident that a blood test based on beta-amyloid markers will one day be able to predict Alzheimer’s long before symptoms such as memory loss and confusion emerge.

diagnose Alzheimer’s much earlier and give therapies a chance to make a real difference in delaying, if not averting, the debilitating symptoms.

One change that often occurs in the brains of people with Alzheimer’s disease is clumps of beta-amyloid protein. Whether these beta-amyloid clumps in the brain cause the disease or just accompany it, and how they relate to blood levels of the protein, is not entirely clear.

Scientists are, however, becoming increasingly confident that a blood test based on beta-amyloid markers will one day be able to predict Alzheimer’s long before symptoms such as memory loss and confusion emerge.

■ Changes in beta-amyloid and symptoms

In the new study, the scientists randomized 60 older adults to undertake a 12-minute daily practice of either a simple yoga meditation called Kirtan Kriya or a music-listening program for 12 weeks. All had undergone assessments that indicated that they had “subjective cognitive decline.”

The researchers assessed blood markers from samples drawn at the start and end of the 3 months of practice. At these times, and also after another 3 months, they also assessed memory, cognitive function, quality of life, sleep, stress, and mood.

After 12 weeks of practice, the yoga medi-

tation group had higher levels of beta-amyloid 40 than the music-listening group.

Beta-amyloid 40 is one of the biomarkers that scientists are focusing on as the basis of a potential predictive blood test for Alzheimer’s disease.

This result does not mean that those with higher levels of beta-amyloid 40 have a higher risk of Alzheimer’s; the relationship between higher blood beta-amyloid 40 and amyloid clumps in the brain is not that straightforward.

Where scientists are working on a blood test for predicting the disease, for example, they are thinking about using a ratio between beta-amyloid 40 and another beta-amyloid.

What is significant about this result, however, is that a change in blood beta-amyloid occurred.

The analysis also revealed links between increasing levels of beta-amyloid and improvements in memory, cognitive function, quality of life, mood, and sleep for the 3- and 6-month measuring points. The links were much stronger, however, in the group that did the yoga meditation.

■ Changes in markers of cellular aging

Markers of cellular aging also changed in both groups as a result of practice. Telomerase activity went up in both groups, but the increase was only significant in those with lower telomerase activity at the start and who practiced more often. A similar pattern occurred with telomere length.

The results also showed links between increases in these two markers and improvements in some of the cognitive and “psychosocial” measures.

Stress, mood, sleep, quality of life, and other symptoms improved in both groups, but the biggest improvements occurred in the meditation group. These improvements lasted or even strengthened during the 3 months following the intervention.

The authors conclude:

“Biomarker increases were associated with improvements in cognitive function, sleep, mood, and [quality of life], suggesting potential functional relationships.”

(Source: techsidestuff.com)

Do you use music as a sleep aid?



Participants in a study reported that music helps them fall asleep and removes internal and external stimuli that disrupt sleep habits.

A high number of people use music to combat sleep disorders.

Sleep disorders are changes in sleep patterns that increase the risk of health problems and can impact a person’s everyday quality of life.

Symptoms of sleep disorders include difficulty falling asleep, daytime sleepiness, and excessive movement during sleep.

One of the most common types of sleep disorders is insomnia, which is an inability to sleep. Other, less common, disorders include sleep apnea (irregular breathing patterns while asleep), restless legs syndrome, and narcolepsy (falling asleep at any time, often without warning).

Some people may experience insomnia during periods of excessive stress, but it can appear for no apparent reason and can become chronic if left untreated.

■ Facts about insomnia

According to a poll by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), more than half of the participants experienced sleep disorders.

Symptoms mentioned by participants included difficulty falling asleep, waking up frequently during the night, being unable to get back to sleep, and waking up very early. Of the participants, 33 percent said they had experienced “at least one of these symptoms every night or almost every night in the past year.”

In occasion of the Annual Insomnia Awareness Day, in 2017, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine published an article about the impact of chronic insomnia. Studies revealed that insomnia is associated with about 253 million days of lost work each year in the United States and more than \$100 billion in annual costs.

■ Can music improve our sleep habits?

Many people use medications to treat insomnia, but some medications may have

side effects — while natural methods, such as music and meditation are unlikely to cause any serious harm.

According to a recent study, many people use music to fight sleep disorders. To get the data, Tabitha Trahan of the University of Sheffield, in the United Kingdom, and colleagues explored the use of music as a sleep aid, using an online survey — the first one on this topic. People with insomnia were not the focus of the study; it included the general public.

Up until now, there was a lack of data on how widely people use music as a sleep aid, why people use it, and the type of music that works for them. This online survey scored sleep habits, musicality, and open-end responses on the preferred type of music and reasons for the choice. The findings are available in the journal PLOS ONE.

More than 60 percent of the 651 participants reported that they listen to music to fall asleep. They mentioned 14 musical genres comprising 545 artists.

People who did not experience sleep disorders also said that they use music to improve sleep quality. Results also showed that younger people are more likely to use music as a sleep aid.

Participants believe that music stimulates sleep and helps remove internal and external stimuli. Even though the survey provides initial evidence on the use of music as a sleep aid, it does not draw any conclusions about music’s physiological and psychological effects because it relies on self-reported answers.

“The largest-ever survey of everyday use of music for sleep reveals multiple pathways to effect that go far beyond relaxation; these include auditory masking, habit, passion for music, and mental distraction.” The authors added:

“This work offers new understanding into the complex motivations that drive people to reach for music as a sleep aid and the reasons why so many find it effective.”

(Source: Medical News Today)

Why a low-carb diet can help you lose weight and keep it off



“The largest and longest feeding study to test the ‘carbohydrate-insulin model’ concludes that a lower carb intake burns more calories, which may help people maintain weight loss over a longer period of time.

Eating a high-quality, low-carb diet may help us stave off weight gain for longer.

Cara Ebbeling, Ph.D., together with Dr. David Ludwig — both at Boston Children’s Hospital in Massachusetts — led the new study, which now appears in the BMJ.

As they explain, when we lose weight, the body adapts by lowering its energy expenditure. In other words, it burns fewer calories.

This way, the metabolism protects itself against long-term weight changes.

However, when the weight loss is intentional, this adaptive response can be frustrating for dieters, as it leads to weight regain.

Although weight gain after dieting is a well-known phenomenon, researchers do not know much about how different diets affect the way the metabolism responds to them.

The so-called carbohydrate-insulin model, however, suggests one such mechanism. It posits that highly processed foods high in sugar drive hormonal changes that increase the appetite and lead to weight gain.

“According to this model,” explains Dr. Ludwig, “the processed carbohydrates that flooded our diets during the low-fat era have raised insulin levels, driving fat cells to store excessive calories. With fewer calories available to the rest of the body, hunger increases and metabolism slows — a recipe for weight gain.”

In this context, Ebbeling, Dr. Ludwig, and their colleagues decided to investigate the effects that different diets had on the metabolism. Specifically, they looked at the carb-to-fat ratio in varying diets over a 20-week period.

■ Studying carb intake, weight, and calories

The researchers examined the effect of different diets on 234 adults aged 18–65 whose body mass index (BMI) was at least 25. As

part of the study, the participants had also adhered to a weight loss plan for 10 weeks.

By the end of the trial, 164 participants had achieved their weight loss goal of around 12 percent of their total weight. Then, they adhered to either a high-, moderate-, or low-carb diet for 20 weeks, allowing the researchers to examine if they managed to maintain the weight loss.

The high-carb diet was composed of 60 percent high-quality carbs, the moderate-carb one had 40 percent carbs, and the low-carb diet had 20 percent carbs. The diets also minimized sugar intake and used whole grains.

During this time, the scientists measured the participants’ weight and tracked the number of calories they burned. They also examined the participants’ insulin secretion and metabolic hormones.

■ ‘A 20-pound weight loss after 3 years’

At the end of the study period, people in the low-carb group burned significantly more calories than those who had been on a high-carb diet.

Specifically, participants who were on a low-carb diet burned around 250 kilocalories more per day than those who were on a high-carb diet.

Ebbeling explains, “If this difference persists — and we saw no drop-off during the 20 weeks of our study — the effect would translate into about a 20-pound weight loss after 3 years, with no change in calorie intake.”

The results also indicated that for participants who had the highest insulin secretion, the impact of a low-carb diet was even more significant: low-carb dieters burned 400 calories more per day than high-carb dieters.

“This is the largest and longest feeding study to test the ‘carbohydrate-insulin model,’ which provides a new way to think about and treat obesity.”

(Source: Medical News Today)

Smartphones ‘causing mental health problems in two-year-olds’

One hour of screen time a day has been linked to anxiety and depression.

Spending hours on smartphones and tablet devices has frequently been linked to exacerbating mental wellbeing, but new research claims the damage might start in users as young as two.

After just one hour of screen time, children and adolescents may have less curiosity, lower self-control and lower emotional stability, which can lead to an increased risk of anxiety and depression, claims a US study published in the journal Preventive Medicine Reports.

The researchers found that those aged 14 to 17 are more at risk for such adverse effects, but noticed the correlations in younger children and toddlers, whose brains are still developing, as well.

■ Surgery students losing dexterity to sew due to smartphone usage

The study found that nursery school children who used screens frequently were twice as likely to lose their temper.

It also claimed that nine per cent of those aged 11 to 13 who spent an hour a day on screens were not curious in learning new things, a figure which rose to 22.6 per cent for those whose screen time was seven hours a day or more.

Authors Professor Jean Twenge, of San Diego State University, and Professor Keith Campbell, of the University of Georgia, said: “Half of mental health problems develop by adolescence.

“Thus, there is an acute need to identify factors linked to mental health issues that are amenable to intervention in this population, as most antecedents are difficult or impossible to influence.

“Compared to these more intractable antecedents of mental health, how children and adolescents spend their leisure time is more amenable to change.”

Both are urging parents and teachers to reduce the time children spend online, playing video or watching television in a bid to combat this.

The National Institute of Health claims that young people spend an average of five to seven hours on screens in their spare time.

Twenge, who has written extensively about the issues smartphone usage poses for children, advises implementing a limit of two hours.

The study includes data on more than 40,000 children aged two to 17 in the US, provided by parents for a nationwide health survey in 2016.

(Source: The Independent)

Osteoporosis: Could probiotics protect bone health?

Osteoporosis predominantly affects older adults, but bone loss can start at as early as age 40. Recently, scientists have found that probiotics might be a safe and effective tool to help fight bone loss.

As we age, the interlinked bone structure (shown here) slowly becomes less robust.

Bones do not just grow once and then stay the same for life. Instead, bone is made up of living tissue that is constantly being broken and remodeled into new bone.

This process is more efficient when we are young. By around age 30, the body stops increasing bone mass, and once we reach our 40s and 50s, more bone might be being broken down than we are replacing.

Over time, this can result in osteoporosis. Bones gradually become thinner, which can lead to fractures — even from a simple fall.

Older women tend to have a higher risk of developing the disease, but it is not exclusive to women; it can affect men as well.

Other risk factors may include breaking a bone after the age of 50, experiencing early menopause, having a smaller body frame, smoking tobacco, and having a family history of osteoporosis.

Fractures can have severe consequences; for instance, during the first year after a hip fracture, mortality rates are 24–30 percent due to the risk of complications.

Osteoporosis becomes more of an issue the older we get, and women tend to lose bone mass quickly during menopause. Regardless, by the time that people are in their 70s, both men and women lose bone mass at around the same rate.

Medications are available that can help treat osteoporosis, but preventing or slowing the initial bone loss would be a vast improvement.

■ Preventing osteoporosis?

A recent study, published in the journal Immunity, tested the ability of a probiotic to enhance bone growth.

The researchers, led by senior study author Roberto Pacifici — of Emory University in Atlanta, GA — tackled this topic with female laboratory mice. The scientists gave them oral Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG supplementation for a period over 4 weeks.

The team revealed that the probiotic stimulated the growth of gut bacteria that produce a particular metabolite called butyrate. Butyrate, in turn, prompted T cells in bone marrow to produce a protein called Wnt10b, which is vital for bone growth.

“We were surprised by the potency of the gut microbiome in regulating bone and by the complexity of the mechanism of action of probiotics.”

He explains that probiotics are somewhat controversial, claiming, “Because their mechanism of action in bone is unknown, they are regarded as some kind of alternative, esoteric, unproven treatment.”

However, the research shows that they can affect bone structure in a positive way. Pacifici also believes that the number of bacteria contained in the probiotics may be as important as the probiotic that is used, but more research is needed to confirm this.

■ Limits of this study

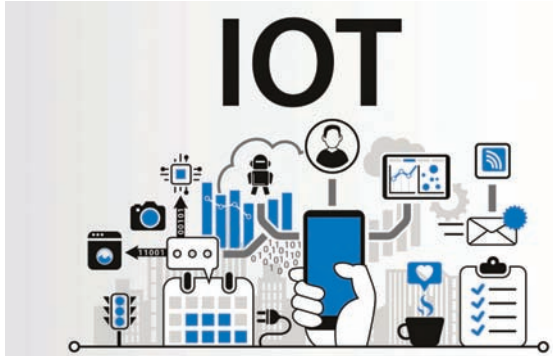
The main thing to keep in mind from this study is that it was in mice, and not humans. The authors say that there is a big need to continue with the research. They would like to understand whether probiotics could help in other bone conditions and hope this research is continued with humans.

“Our findings will need to be validated in human studies,” explains Pacifici. He notes that if those studies are successful, it may pave the way for an inexpensive and well-tolerated treatment that can help optimize skeletal development in young people and may help prevent osteoporosis in older people.

(Source: Medical News Today)

ICT Faculty, Amirkabir University to conduct joint IoT projects

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The Faculty of Applied Science in Telecommunication, known as ICT Faculty, and Amirkabir University of Technology plan to cooperate in order to boost Internet of Things (IoT) projects, ILNA reported last week.



“Amirkabir University has a great capacity in the field of IT, hence we welcome further cooperation with the ICT Faculty,” Amirkabir University Chancellor Ahmad Motamedi said during his visit to the ICT Faculty on November 13.

The University is now making smart its energy section and is planning to improve smart building through IoT and Building Management System (BMS), he added.

During his visit, the dean of ICT Faculty Vahid Yazdanian also expressed his hope over further cooperation with Amirkabir University in different fields of technology.

“We hope that we can have tripartite agreements between ICT Faculty, Amirkabir University and a foreign university in the near future,” Yazdanian concluded.

New space industry emerges: on-orbit servicing

Imagine an airport where thousands of planes, empty of fuel, are left abandoned on the tarmac. That is what has been happening for decades with satellites that circle the Earth.

When satellites run out of fuel, they can no longer maintain their precise orbit, rendering them useless even if their hardware is still intact.



“It’s literally throwing away hundreds of millions of dollars,” Al Tados, vice president of space infrastructure and civil Space at a company called SSL, said this month at a meeting in the US capital of key players in the emerging field of on-orbit servicing, or repairing satellites while they are in space.

In recent years, new aerospace companies have been founded to try and extend the lifespan of satellites, on the hunch that many clients would find this more profitable than relaunching new ones.

In 2021, his company will launch a vehicle—as part of its Robotic Servicing of Geosynchronous Satellites (RSGS) program—that is capable of servicing two to three dozen satellites in a distant geostationary orbit, some 22,000 miles (36,000 kilometers) from Earth where there are about 500 active satellites, most in telecommunications.

This unmanned spacecraft will be able to latch onto a satellite to inspect it, refuel it, and possibly even repair it or change components, and put it back in the correct orbit.

Tados describes it as “equivalent to a AAA servicing truck in geostationary orbit.”

And “it’s financially a very, very big opportunity,” he adds. Telecommunications giant Intelsat, which operates 50 geostationary satellites, chose a different option and signed a contract with Space Logistics, a branch of Northrop Grumman, for its MEV, a “very simple system” vice president Ken Lee told AFP is much like a “tow truck.”

When it launches in 2019, the spacecraft will attach itself to a broken down satellite, and reposition it in its correct orbit.

The MEV will stay attached and use its own engine to stay in orbit.

■ Too much debris

On-orbit servicing could also help cut down on the perplexing problem of mounting space debris.

Of the 23,000 space objects counted by the US military, just 1,900 are active satellites.

The rest—which move at speeds of some 12-19,000 miles (20-30,000 kilometers) per hour—includes nearly 3,000 inactive satellites, 2,000 pieces of rockets (such as the second stages of rockets) and thousands of fragments produced by two key events: the deliberate missile explosion of a Chinese satellite in 2007, and the 2009 collision of an Iridium satellite with an aging Russian one.

No short term solution has been identified for small-scale space junk, but some companies would like to be able to remove defunct satellites from orbit.

Since 2008, France has required satellite operators to take steps to “deorbit” their spacecrafts by programming them to re-enter Earth’s atmosphere in 25 years so that they burn up, according to Laurent Francillout, head of space security at the French National Center for Space Studies (CNES).

When it comes to satellites in geostationary orbits, their end-of-life option is to go farther from Earth to a “graveyard orbit” 200 miles (300 kilometers) further away.

“We are trying to promote these principles” in other countries, Francillout told AFP.

A small Japanese company founded in 2013, Astroscale, is developing a system to approach and capture space debris and broken satellites.

Though it doesn’t have a clientele yet, director of operations Chris Blackerby anticipates the business would be “very viable.”

(Source: phys.org)

Over 42,000 jobs created by science and technology parks: minister

TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — Over 42,000 jobs have been so far created by the science and technology parks located at universities, Science, Research and Technology Minister Mansour Gholami said on Saturday.

“There are a total of 43 science and technology parks at the universities across Iran,” he said.

The parks and incubator centers support new ideas, entrepreneurship development and sustainable jobs, he said.

In general, universities are not responsible for job creation for alumni, he said.

“However in recent years, the science ministry provide a plan for increasing skill and entrepreneurship, according to which, the universities hold workshops and courses for the students during education,” he said.

Over five thousand knowledge-based companies are active in Iran’s science and technology parks, Gholami said in early September.



Participants attend an exhibition on energy technology at the Khorasan Science and Technology Park near Mashhad in late November 2017

University of Tehran to host startup weekend on e-mental health

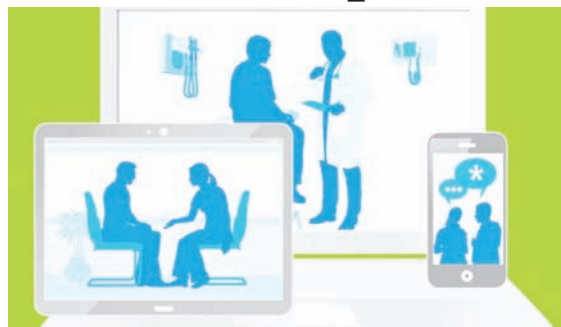
TECHNOLOGY **TEHRAN** — The University of Tehran will hold the first startup weekend on electronic mental health from February 26 to 28, Mehr reported.

The event aims to increase mental health knowledge amongst students, promote innovation culture and entrepreneurship and to improve electronic services.

The decrease in mental health services using electronic technology is one of the other goal of the event.

About 100 students from different universities will attend the event.

According to Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science website, depression, anxiety, and combinations of these two mental health disorders are prevalent



around the world.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO), unipolar depression was the third leading cause of disease burden in the world in 2004.

Today, e-mental health refers to mental health services provided through the internet and related technology (including apps for smartphones).

In recent years, Asian countries have started thinking about how to incorporate electronic mental health into their national health systems to reach the vast populations in rural areas or those in large cities who do not have access to appropriate mental health care.

Secrets to increase employee engagement with technology

Employee engagement is serious business.

In 2015, a Gallup study poll found that incredibly, only 30% of employees say that they’re engaged in their job. More than 50% of employees said they weren’t engaged, and almost 20% of employees stated that they were “actively disengaged.” [1] That’s a severe problem in the workplace. This isn’t just a single piece of research, either; other surveys have found that just 25 to 35% of the workforce across the U.S. are engaged in their work. This really is a silent epidemic.

However, all is not lost. There may be a way out. Companies are finding smarter ways to boost employee engagement through the use of technology.

Hang on a second – what does ‘employee engagement’ even mean?

Employee engagement is nothing more than the measure of how emotionally invested your staff is in the organization. An engaged employee WANTS the company to succeed; they don’t just want the next paycheck. They believe in the company’s mission.

According to Forbes, employee engagement “Is the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.” What we have to realize is that an engaged employee is not just bothered about a huge salary and swanky benefits.

It’s about more than an airline gold club card and a company car.

An engaged employee wants to have a say in the business, they need to feel like they’re part of a team that’s working towards a common goal, and crucially, they need to feel that they are a valued member of the company – not just a tool for generating profit.

So where does technology come in here? Well, some companies feel hesitant to issue their staff with new fancy gadgets, like mobile phones, smart devices, tablets, and so on. Employers think these things are productivity sinks that take up people’s time with games about candy and farms and pirates. But that’s not the case. If a worker wants to be unproductive, trust us, they’ll find a way. It doesn’t matter whether you give them a 1990 Apple II or a state-of-the-art iPhone 6S. It’s the person, not the tool.

We’ve been working on this post in the lab for quite some time, and now the day has come to set it free. So here you go – different methods for leveraging technology to boost employee engagement.

■ Encourage collaborative working

Just like the human body, work is better when it’s flexible. Flexible and virtual work is the next big thing, and Forrester Research reports that by 2016, over 63 million Americans will work virtually. In 2010 what was this figure? A jaw-dropping 34 million. That’s a huge increase. So why this trend? Well, according to the PGI Telework Week survey, 82% of workers who ‘telecommute’ experience less stress, while 80% have higher morale,

and 69% missed fewer days of work. [2]

What we’re saying here is that companies should use technology to encourage workers to work virtually. If they do that, then they reap the benefits of happier, more motivated, and more productive employees. A virtual workforce also cuts overhead costs and shows that you trust your employees to work remotely.

Oh, and did we mention communication? With today’s technologies, it’s easy to use professional social media and collaboration tools to keep up-to-date on projects instantaneously. All we’re saying is that using remote work and online communication helps us to boost employee engagement by allowing more and better communication between workers, no matter where they may be.

Some of the potential tools you should look into to facilitate co-working include:

- File sharing: but not in the illegal, tormented way. You could just use Dropbox, Google Drive, or anything else. The fees for mass storage are cheap, the interface is easy, and you have the peace of mind that everything is safe and well-communicated, not to mention backed-up on the cloud.

- Wikis: Create a resource where your employees can find all the information they need on their own – a self-access center for training and development. It’ll help everyone get on the same page and keep all your employees up to date on the right way of doing things.

- Org and Project Management tools: Just like Asana, Jira, and Basecamp. These sites let you create, organize, and delegate tasks, sharing certain elements into shared projects. You can also have conversations and chats between tasks. These really do make life easier and help increase engagement and productivity. Great! Now just one more suggestion...

- Shared whiteboards and forums: You can also consider using tools to assist your colleagues share ideas and work together. Again, the keyword is collaboration – we keep saying it for a reason. A great tool is called Slack. You can pass files, brainstorm, float questions and ideas, and compare notes. One company, Hubspot, described slack as “A team post-it-note board on steroids”, and that’s a pretty accurate description! Check out Slack here.

■ Use gamification

A key issue within training, in general, is generating enough motivation so that students will want to invest the time and effort required to learn. As gamification makes practical day-to-day activities (like training) more compelling, using it appropriately can boost participation rates in eLearning courses and increase employee motivation.

People have a natural desire to compete, and if there’s a fun, measurable way of doing so, you’ll notice employees joking and comparing with one another. It’s not a case of ‘just getting it done’ it’s a case of wanting to keep up with their co-workers. And it’s fun!



However, for gamification to deliver expected results, it is critical that you first assess your existing HR strategy, your goals and the needs of the organization. Consider whether gamification can harmoniously fit in with the whole strategy before investing in it.

For instance, one gamified learning portal produced a staggering 417% increase in employee use. In particular, the younger members of staff responded more strongly to this new strategy. The big picture? Increased sales and increased customer satisfaction.

Check out other examples of Gamification techniques used in companies to boost employee engagement.

■ Allow personal tools at work

Time to mention smartphones – you knew it was coming. First, here are some key stats from the 2014 Cisco Connected Tech Report:

- 88% The majority of professional use two to three work and personal devices in their daily lives.

- About 60% of respondents would choose a device other than a laptop for both work and personal use.

- 70% of HR professionals think Gen Y employees perform faster if they are allowed to use their mobile devices instead of computers.

These statistics might say a lot about our priorities these days, but again, we’re rolling with the punches. Millennials are the largest group in the US workforce, and they’re glued to their device – so let them use it! BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) increases employee engagement by giving employee autonomy to work the way they want, when they want. In the long run, these minor gains lead to big improvements. So don’t go giving the “evil eye” to any employee with their iPhone out.

BYOD is here to stay, and organizations need to realize this. Don’t upset your employees, especially the millennials – let them use their own tech!

■ P2P recognition (don’t worry, we’ll explain)

43% of workers cite a lack of recognition as one of their biggest sources of unhappiness at work [4]. Smart companies have started to adopt P2P (peer-to-peer) recognition to boost employee engagement. As an example, just look at Salesforce Chatter. This kind of tools helps your workforce feel valued and respected. Teammates become cheerleaders for one another and create stronger support

networks. When senior management is too busy, or too uninterested, having an active network of colleagues behind you can make all the difference to engagement and productivity.

This method also works for those who have trouble with authority or don’t get along with their superiors. It’s an unfortunate fact of life that a lot of workers out there are deprived of praise or positive feedback because they have friction with their boss. If those workers got support and recognition from their peers, then they’d be able to surmount this challenge a lot more easily. And even those who love their boss can still benefit from peer to peer recognition. The best boss in the world is still going to have a lot of employees to monitor and a lot of their own work to do, so it’s inevitable that some employees will get overlooked. Coming back to Gen Y, this is even more applicable, as this generation particularly requires feedback.

Creating a culture of recognition is truly a beautiful thing. It creates a whole new attitude and outlook on the company and on working life. All you have to do is you’re your team members recognize what their worth and feel good about themselves, and who can ask for more than that?

■ Mobile learning

In 2014, Bersin released its Global Human Capital Trends 2014 Survey. This was a huge undertaking, with over 2500 respondents from 90 countries all over the globe. One of their most pivotal findings is that mobile learning is changing employee training – really, it is.

Mobile learning and online learning are changing expectations from employees – we’ve been championing this idea for a while. With Generation Z on the horizon and ready to enter the workforce, this trend isn’t going to end in a hurry. The modern employee juggles a hugely complicated, multifaceted life, balancing work, hobbies, outside interests, education, and family. Consequently, it’s absolutely vital that learners access content and complete training at the time, pace, and place that suits them.

It links into this of course that mobile is everywhere. Employees can complete training whenever and wherever they want. It’s a ubiquitous technology that people can’t exist without, so it’s only natural that we use this training method to help increase flexible working practices and raise enthusiasm toward learning.

We know that people don’t ever want to bring work home with them, but the reality is that it’s inevitable. What’s more, as people find that their work is more flexible, they’re happier to complete learning on their mobile at home or wherever they might be. Smart managers and HR departments are realizing this represents a better way of doing things – not to mention that it saves on classroom costs, instructor hiring, and travel times!

(Source: shiftlearning.com)

Space-inspired ‘speed breeding’ could improve crops, scientists find

Technology first used by NASA to grow plants extra-terrestrially is fast tracking improvements in a range of crops. Scientists at John Innes Center and the University of Queensland have improved the technique, known as speed breeding, adapting it to work in vast glass houses and in scaled-down desktop growth chambers.

The ability to work at these scales gives scientists greater opportunities than ever before to breed disease resistant, climate resilient and nutritious crops to feed a growing global population. The research is published in the peer reviewed journal Nature Protocols.

Speed breeding uses enhanced LED lighting and day-long regimes of up to 22 hours to optimize photosynthesis and promote rapid growth of crops. It speeds up the breeding cycle of plants: for example, six generations of wheat can be grown per year, compared to two generations using traditional breeding methods.

By shortening breeding cycles, the method allows scientists and plant breeders to fast-track genetic improvements such as yield gain, disease resistance and climate resilience in a range of crops such as wheat, barley, oilseed rape and pea.

Cutting-edge research
Being able to do this in a compact desktop chamber enables affordable, cutting-edge research on a range of crops to take place before the experiments are scaled up to larger



glass houses.

The latest advances come at a crucial time for European crop development. They follow a decision this summer by the Court of Justice of the European Union which ruled that crops improved using modern gene-editing

techniques should be classed as genetically modified organisms.

The decision was greeted with dismay among many leading plant scientists, breeders and farming industry leaders in the UK, because it frustrates efforts to meet the challenge

“Speed breeding allows researchers to rapidly mobilize the genetic variation found in wild relatives of crops and introduce it into elite varieties that can be grown by farmers.

of a growing world population.

More dependent on speed
Dr. Brande Wulff a wheat scientist at the John Innes Center and one of the lead authors on the paper explains that European crop research and breeding will become more dependent on speed breeding in the light of these developments.

“Speed breeding allows researchers to rapidly mobilize the genetic variation found in wild relatives of crops and introduce it into elite varieties that can be grown by farmers. The EU ruling that heavily regulates gene editing means we are more reliant on speed breeding to grow sturdier, more resilient crops.”

Dr. Wulff’s team at the John Innes Center has developed techniques such as rapid gene discovery and cloning that, alongside speed breeding, would allow crop improvements via a non-GM route.

Collaborators in Australia — currently experiencing one of the worst droughts on record — are using the technology to rapidly cycle genetic improvements to make crops more drought resilient.

Dr. Wulff predicts the speed breeding technology will become the norm in research institutes: “We know that more and more institutes across the world will be adopting this technology and by sharing these protocols we are providing a pathway for accelerating crop research.”

(Source: phys.org)

Bizarre microbes represent a major new branch on the evolutionary family tree

Canadian scientists have identified microscopic creatures that are so unlike anything seen before, they had to create an entirely new branch on the evolutionary tree of life to slot them in.

Biologists have known about these wee beasts for well over a century, but only now can hemimastigotes be officially slotted into the evolutionary tree of life, a process more formally known as phylogeny. And by doing so, scientists have stumbled upon a completely new branch on the tree of life — one dating back billions of years.

Yana Eglit, a doctoral student at Dalhousie University and a co-author of the new study, found two different species of hemimastigotes — one already known and one completely new to science — in soil samples collected along the Bluff Wilderness Trail in Nova Scotia, Canada. The previously known species is called Spironema and the new one was dubbed Hemimastix kukwesjijk (pronounced “ku-ga-wes-jij-k”), which means “rapacious hairy ogre” in the language of the Mi’kmaq First

Nations people of Nova Scotia.

Grasping into prey
Rapacious and hairy, indeed. These single-celled, free-roaming predators feature two rows of hair-like flagella, which they use for locomotion and grasping onto prey. Hemimastix feeds by connecting its mouth — if it can be called that — to the surface of its equally microscopic prey, sucking up the victim’s cytoplasm, according to observations made by Eglit and her colleagues.

“This discovery literally redraws our branch of the ‘Tree of Life’ at one of its deepest points,” explained Alastair Simpson, the lead author of the study and biology professor at Dalhousie, in a statement. “It opens a new door to understanding the evolution of complex cells—and their ancient origins — back well before animals and plants emerged on Earth.”

Using a new technique called single-cell transcriptomics, and with the help of PhD candidate Gordon Lax, the Dalhousie team was able to tease large amounts of genetic material from

the two species of hemimastigotes. The entire genomes could not be extracted, but enough information was gleaned for the researchers to perform a phylogenetic analysis.

Physical characteristics
The purpose of this organizational scheme is to sort and cluster species according to their relation to common ancestors, rather than by their physical characteristics or other attributes.

The six previously established eukaryote super-groups and Diaphoretickes supra-group, plus the new hemimastigotes supra-group proposed in the new study. Animals and fungi are in the Amorphea super-group, while plants fall under Archaeplastida + Picozoa.

Previously, scientists had designated Hemimastigophora at the level of phylum (below kingdom), but the new study suggests they belong to a distinct supra-group, or a “novel supra-kingdom-level lineage of eukaryotes,” in the words of the researchers.

(Source: gizmodo.com)

Team presents solar panels for yeast cell biofactories

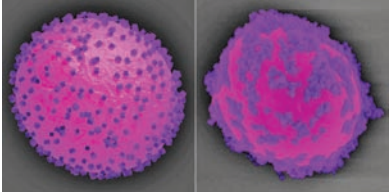
Genetically engineered microbes such as bacteria and yeasts have long been used as living factories to produce drugs and fine chemicals. More recently, researchers have started to combine bacteria with semiconductor technology that, similar to solar panels on the roof of a house, harvests energy from light and, when coupled to the microbes’ surface, can boost their biosynthetic potential.

The first “biological-inorganic hybrid systems” (biohybrids) mostly focused on the fixation of atmospheric carbon dioxide and the production of alternative energies, and although promising, they also revealed key challenges. For example, semiconductors, which are made from toxic metals, thus far are assembled directly on bacterial cells and often harm them in the process. In addition, the initial focus on carbon-fixing microbes has limited the range of products to relatively simple molecules; if biohybrids could be created based on microorganisms equipped with more complex metabolisms, it would open new paths for the production of a much larger range of chemicals useful for many applications.

Now, in a study in Science, a multidisciplinary team led by Core Faculty member Neel Joshi and Postdoctoral Fellows Junling Guo and Miguel Suástegui at Harvard’s Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering and John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) presents a highly adaptable solution to these challenges.

Bacterial biohybrid systems

“While our strategy conceptually builds on earlier bacterial biohybrid systems that were engineered by our collaborator Daniel Nocera and others, we expanded the concept to yeast — an organism that is already an industrial workhorse and is genetically easy to manipulate — with a modular semiconductor component that provides biochemical energy to yeast’s metabolic machinery without being toxic,” said Joshi,



Ph.D., who is a Core Faculty member at the Wyss Institute and Associate Professor at SEAS. Co-author Nocera is the Patterson Rockwood Professor of Energy at Harvard University. As a result of the combined manipulations, yeasts’ ability to produce shikimic acid, an important precursor of the anti-viral drug Tamiflu, several other medicines, nutraceuticals, and fine chemicals, was significantly enhanced.

The baker’s yeast Saccharomyces cerevisiae naturally produces shikimic acid to generate some of its building blocks for the synthesis of proteins and other biomolecules. However, by genetically modifying the yeast’s central metabolism, the researchers enabled the cells to funnel more of the carbon atoms that their main nutrient source, the sugar glucose, contains into the pathway that produces shikimic acid and prevent the loss of carbon to alternative pathways by disrupting one of them.

“In principle, the increased ‘carbon flux’ towards shikimic acid should lead to higher product levels, but in normal yeast cells, the alternative pathway that we disrupted to increase yields, importantly, also provides the energy needed to fuel the final step of shikimic acid production,” said co-first author Miguel Suástegui, Ph.D., a chemical engineer and former Postdoctoral Fellow in Joshi’s team and now Scientist at Joyn Bio LLC. To boost the more carbon-effective but energy-depleted engineered shikimic acid pathway, “we hypothesized that we could generate the relevant energy-carrying molecule NADPH instead in a biohybrid approach with light-harvesting semiconductors.”

(Source: Science Daily)

Most luminous known galaxy is eating three neighbors, astronomers say

Active galaxies are some of the most luminous and impressive objects in the sky. They tend to be massive, distant and emit extraordinary amounts of energy as material falls into the supermassive black hole that lurks at their center. Astronomers have recently discovered that some of them are also hidden from plain view by huge amounts of gas and smoke-like dust. But it is unclear how these rare objects form and feed.

Now our team of astronomers has worked out more about the origin of the most luminous galaxy found in the universe: a “quasar” called W2246. Our findings, published in Science, show clear signs of W2246 forming by several galaxies merging.

W2246 was first discovered in the all-sky infrared survey made by the WISE spacecraft in 2010. But we don’t see it as it looks today. When we look out into the universe we detect light that has taken some appreciable time to get to us. This galaxy is so far away that we see it as it was when the universe was only about 8 percent of its present age.

The object is extremely bright — about 10,000 times more luminous than our galaxy, the Milky Way. Previous work using a range of cutting-edge telescopes — including the Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA), and the Hubble and Herschel Space Telescopes — confirmed in 2016 that W2246 is the current holder of the record for the most luminous galaxy in the universe.

The bulk of the power from W2246 emanates from a relatively compact region in its center, several times smaller than the Milky Way. The images also show that this region contains a remarkable cloud of hot, uniform, high-pressure gas, plausibly starting to expand out as a bubble in all directions.

The latest observations were carried out by my colleague Tanio Diaz Santos in Chile, and 11 other astronomers, using the ALMA and Jansky Very Large Array (JCLA) telescopes, at excellent sites in Chile and New Mexico respectively.

(Source: Newsweek)

Scientists find city-sized meteorite crate underneath Greenland ice

Researchers found one of the biggest impact craters in the history of the world under thick ice sheets in Greenland. According to the study, the impact crater might have been created around the end of the last ice age thousands of years ago.

First discovered in 2015, the team discovered the impact crater in northwest Greenland using data from NASA. It took the team three years to verify its existence and size.

The researchers first detected the impact crater while studying satellite data from NASA’s Operation IceBridge, a multi-year project that used ice-penetrating radar to track changes in the polar ice in Greenland.

The impact crater is right under the Hiawatha Glacier. At 19 miles wide and 1,000 feet deep, the impact crater is one of the biggest in the history of the world and the first to be found under thick ice sheets.

He explained that the impact crater was perfectly preserved under all the ice — a surprise considering that glacier ice is an erosive agent. He added that the newly-discovered impact crater is one of the youngest on the planet.

The researchers spent three years confirming and studying the impact crater, but their work is not done yet. Their next mission is to figure out how the meteorite impact affected its surroundings and the world.

Earlier studies claim that large impacts can alter the planet’s climate and the meteorite that hit the Earth might have had the force of 700-megaton warhead. Its arrival did not only left a mark in Greenland but shook the entire planet while sending rocky debris as far as North America and Europe. It might have also caused the ice age to extend for another 1,000 years.

(Source: Tech Times)

Lockheed Martin starts work on X-59 quiet supersonic aircraft

Lockheed Martin began milling the first part for its X-59 Quiet Supersonic Technology test aircraft at its facility in Palmdale, California, after being selected earlier this year by NASA to design, build and flight test a Low Boom Flight Demonstrator.

Lockheed Martin says it plans to have the X-59 make its first flight in 2021, the company announced 16 November. Those tests will be used to collect response data from residents on the ground on the acceptability of the quieter sonic boom generated by the aircraft. Lockheed Martin would then use that information to help NASA establish an acceptable commercial supersonic noise standard to overturn current regulations banning supersonic travel over land.

The “start of manufacturing on the project marks a great leap forward for the X-59 and the future of quiet supersonic commercial travel,” says Peter Iosifidis, Low Boom Flight Demonstrator program manager with Lockheed Martin Skunk Works in Palmdale, California.



The “long, slender design of the aircraft is the key to achieving a low sonic boom.”

The X-59 is designed to cruise at 55,000ft at a speed of about 817kt (1,512km/h) or Mach 1.23, says Lockheed Martin. The company aims to eliminate the aircraft’s sonic boom, instead creating a sound about as loud as a car door closing, 75 Perceived Level decibel. Supersonic flights over the USA are currently banned by law due to the disturbances caused by sonic booms.

Lockheed Martin and NASA are not the only organizations pursuing supersonic commercial aviation. Business aviation start-ups Aerion, Boom Technology and Spike Aerospace are also designing aircraft. For its part, Boeing unveiled a hyper-sonic passenger airliner concept in June 2018 that it says it is seriously researching.

(Source: flightglobal.com)

Over 651mn./lit. crude oil delivered to Kermanshah Oil Refinery in six months

Statistics showed that more than 651 million liters of crude oil were delivered to Kermanshah Oil Refinery in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year in 1397 (March 21 – Sept. 21), the Public Relations Dept. of IOPTC (Iranian Oil Pipeline Telecommunication Company) reported.

The head of Center for transfer of oil and facilities in West Region, he said, “the volume of crude oil delivered to the mentioned refinery has been taken through two 8- and 16-inch pipelines.”

In the mentioned period, 54 million liters of crude oil

has been delivered to Kermanshah Oil Refinery via 8-inch pipeline, the report added.


Moreover, 1.136 million liters of crude oil and oil products has been delivered to the refinery via 16-inch pipeline.

Eng. Jalal Hayati Head of Oil and Facilities Transfer Center made the above remarks and said, “in this regard, 350 million liters of oil gas was delivered to Kermanshah Oil Refinery via 16-inch pipeline, 217 million liters of which was delivered to Kermanshah Oil Products Distribution Company.

Of total crude oil delivered to Kermanshah Oil Refinery, 133 million liters of which was delivered to Kermanshah Oil Products Distribution Company via 10-inch pipeline, he opined.

In the same direction, 129 million liters of gasoline has been received via 16-inch pipeline in the same period.


In conclusion, he reiterated, “the gasoline delivered to Kermanshah Oil Products Distribution Company at 87 million liters while the gasoline sent to Sanandaj Oil Products Distribution Company at 42 million liters,” he concluded.



N.I.O.C
1397.4122

Second Announcement

call for public tender (First/Second publish)
One -Stages tender



National Iranian
Drilling Company

Subject of Tender: (P/F: "HILL GRAHAM " SILICON CONTROL RECTIFIR PANEL AC & DC

The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,181,072	<small>INDENT No: 01-22-9746010</small> <small>TenderNo.: FP11-97/039</small>	12,972,000,000

• Qualitative evaluation of tenderers

Method	
	R The evaluation will be made subject to submission of needed certificates in meeting for opening the received tenderer's proposals.

• Purchasing & Submitting

Tender Document Distribution by Company	<p>The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Distribution Place</th> <td>Hall No. 113, 1st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Submitting Method</th> <td>Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004029491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004029491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents</td> </tr> </table>	Distribution Place	Hall No. 113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN	Submitting Method	Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004029491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004029491) in name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting format Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents
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Documents Receiving Method	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Closing date</th> <td>Days after the last time of Purchasing 35</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;">Address</th> <td>Hall No. 107, 1st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569</td> </tr> </table>	Closing date	Days after the last time of Purchasing 35	Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569
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Address	Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569				

• Tender Guarantee

Value of guarantee	648,600,000 RLS 13,563 EURO
Type of guarantee	<p>✓ Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.</p> <p>✓ Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) in name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.</p>
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee & quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.

(Foreign Procurement Dept.)

More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on:

www.nidc.ir
 iets.mporg.ir
 http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr

تهران تایمز نویت اول ۹۷/۰۸/۲۷ نویت دوم ۹۷/۰۸/۲۸

Theresa May: Brexit won't be easier if I'm ousted

I→ There is also doubt over whether it can win the approval of the House of Commons, with opposition parties - including Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party - opposing it.

Some cabinet ministers have resigned and others are believed to be still trying to change its wording.

May told Sky News's Ridge on Sunday it had been a "tough week" but that she would not be distracted.

"Politics is a tough business and I've been in it for a long time," she said, adding that the next seven days "are going to be critical" for the future of the UK.

Asked whether Sir Graham Brady - chairman of the backbench 1922 committee - had received the 48 letters needed to trigger a confidence vote in her leadership, she replied: "As far as I know, no - it has not."

And in a warning to those pushing for a change of leader, she said: "It is not going to make the negotiations any easier and it won't change the parliamentary arithmetic."

The 585-page withdrawal agreement - which was published alongside a far shorter document setting out what the UK and EU's future relationship could look like - has triggered resignations from the cabinet including that of Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab.

May said negotiations were still taking place to put more detail into the future deal proposals, saying it was this part that "delivers on the Brexit vote".

Sir Graham told BBC Radio 5 Live's Pienaar's Politics he would not reveal how many letters he had received - saying he had not even told his wife, who is his parliamentary assistant.

"I get asked in the supermarket, in the street," he said.

Sir Graham said he found the suggestion he had received 48 letters but not acted on it to be "slightly offensive".

"It's critical that people trust my integrity in this," he said.

Sir Graham also told the BBC's Sunday Politics North West it was "very likely" May would win a vote of no-confidence if there was one.

■ What happens to Brexit if May is ousted?

It is difficult to see how the 25 November



EU summit could go ahead if Theresa May were to lose a confidence vote in the next few days.

It is up to Sir Graham to decide when such a vote would be held, once he has received the required 48 letters from Tory MPs demanding one, but he has said the process will move quickly. The last time a Tory leader was ousted by their own MPs, in 2003, Iain Duncan Smith faced a confidence vote the next day.

If May were to lose that confidence vote it would spark a leadership election but she would not be allowed to take part in it. She would remain prime minister until the contest was over unless she opted to resign and hand over to a caretaker prime minister.

In either circumstance, her version of Brexit, as set out in the withdrawal agreement and future relationship document, would be in doubt.

European Council President Donald Tusk has said the summit will go ahead unless something "extraordinary" happens - he did not elaborate on what that might be.

Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian chancellor who currently holds the revolving EU presidency, told Die Presse: "The next week will be intense, because of course it

will be crucial if there is a majority for a vote of no confidence in Prime Minister May. In any case, as the EU Presidency, we have made all the preparations to move forward swiftly."

■ Raab explains why he quit

Raab, who negotiated for the UK with the EU's Michel Barnier, has been explaining his decision to quit on the BBC's Andrew Marr show.

With "two or three points" being changed he could support the government's proposals, he said.

He said he did not know who had inserted a clause on customs relations into the future partnership document but said it was a "clear breach" of the Conservative manifesto.

"The difficulty for me is that I was being asked to go over to Brussels and sign on the bottom line... on a deal which I said in good conscience I did not feel was right for the country," he said.

"I do think we are being bullied, I do think we are being subjected to what is pretty close to blackmail frankly.

"I do think there is a point at which, we probably should have done it before, where we just say 'I'm sorry this is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, we cannot accept those dictated terms'."

■ Why are people unhappy?

The draft document sets out the terms of the UK's departure, including details such as how much money will be paid to the EU, details of the transition period and citizens' rights.

Both the UK and the EU want to avoid a hard Northern Ireland border so they agreed to include in the deal a "backstop" - or back-up plan - in case they cannot reach a long-term trade agreement which does this.

This would mean Northern Ireland would stay more closely aligned to some EU rules, which critics say is unacceptable.

And the UK would not be able to leave the backstop without the EU's consent.

Tory MP Zac Goldsmith, the party's London mayoral candidate in 2016, has revealed he has sent a letter.

Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, the Brexiteer said that under the PM's plan "in effect, Britain would remain in the EU, but without having any say".

He added: "Had that been the choice, I personally would have voted to remain."

■ What would Labor do?

Labor leader Corbyn says his party, which has 257 MPs, will not support the deal.

He told Ridge on Sunday the "one-way agreement" on Northern Ireland was "not acceptable", and there were no guarantees on workers' rights and environmental protections.

If it was voted down in the Commons, he said the government should go back to the EU and "renegotiate, rapidly".

Corbyn insisted Labor would be able to negotiate a better deal, even within the time remaining before Brexit, saying the proposed transition period - which will only happen if there is a withdrawal agreement - offered "some opportunities" for this.

He also said another referendum - as demanded by some of his MPs - was "an option for the future but not an option for today".

He said he voted Remain in the 2016 referendum but if there were to be another, he said: "I don't know how I would vote - what the options would be at that time."

He also revealed that he had not yet read all of the 585 page draft EU withdrawal agreement.

(Source: BBC)

Trump says doesn't want to hear 'suffering' Khashoggi tape

U.S. President Donald Trump said he has been fully briefed on an audio recording of journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder but does not want to listen to it himself.

"Because it's a suffering tape. It's a terrible tape," he said in an interview with "Fox News Sunday" that was conducted Friday. "It was very violent, very vicious and terrible."

Earlier, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar was quoted as saying by broadcaster CNN Turk Sunday that Khashoggi's killers may have taken his dismembered body out of Turkey in luggage.

Speaking at a panel as part of an international conference in Halifax, Canada, Akar said the killers may have taken the journalist's body parts out of Turkey in luggage.

"One probability is that they left the country three to four hours after committing the murder. They may have taken out Khashoggi's dismembered corpse inside luggage without facing problems due to their diplomatic immunity," CNN Turk cited Akar as saying.

Turkey has said a group of 15 individuals, including a two-man "clean-up team", was involved and that Khashoggi's body had been dismembered. Turkish officials have also called for an investigation into whether the body was dissolved in acid.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. peace envoy hopes for deal with Taliban in 2019

The U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan hopes to cement a peace deal with Taliban militants by April 2019, local media reported Sunday.

Zalmay Khalilzad, in Kabul to lead talks between the United States, the Taliban and the Afghan government, told reporters he hopes "a peace deal is reached before April 20 next year." Afghanistan is planning to hold a presidential election on April 20, 2019.

The Afghan-born U.S. diplomat said he remained "cautiously optimistic" about the peace talks.

Khalilzad, chosen by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration to hold direct talks with the Taliban, met the leaders of the hardline group in Qatar last month to find ways to end the 17-year war in Afghanistan.

On Sunday Khalilzad said the end state of the talks would be "peace and a successful Afghanistan, one that doesn't pose any threats to itself and to the international community."

The Taliban were not immediately available for comment. The militants, fighting to expel foreign forces and defeat the Western-backed Afghan government, last month presented demands to Khalilzad that included a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the release of senior Taliban from jails.

(Source: Reuters)

One dead, over 400 injured in French protests over fuel prices

I→ Protesters blame a 20-percent rise in diesel prices in the last year on the so-called "green taxes" under President Emmanuel Macron.



At Pont-de-Beauvoisin, in southeast France, a woman trying to get her daughter to the doctor panicked when protesters surrounded her car and started banging on the roof. She accidentally struck and killed a woman in her 60s, the interior ministry said.

In Paris, protesters holding "Macron resign!" signs and singing the national anthem partially blocked the Champs Elysees in the heart of the French capital.

The Interior Ministry said security forces used tear gas in several places to unblock major routes, notably at the access road to the Mont Blanc tunnel where about 30 canisters were fired.

Police at first held back protesters from advancing on Paris' Champs-Elysees, with police vans blocking them from moving down the famed avenue. But up to 200 people were later seen walking down the street, apparently heading toward the Elysee presidential palace.

Protesters, wearing yellow safety vests and dubbing themselves the "yellow jackets," had pledged to target tollbooths, roundabouts and the bypass that rings Paris. The fluorescent yellow vests donned by the protesters must be kept in the vehicles of all French drivers in case of car troubles.

■ Macron's popularity rate drops amid deadly fuel protests

French President Emmanuel Macron's popularity rate has dropped to 25 percent, during a tumultuous week marked by nationwide protests over fuel prices.

A popularity survey conducted by research group Ifop on nearly 2,000 participants in mid-November showed a 4-percent drop in Macron's popularity compared to October.

According to a report published in the Journal du Dimanche on Sunday, 4 percent of those surveyed were "very satisfied" with Macron's performance, and 21 percent were "mostly satisfied."

On the other hand, 34 percent were "mostly dissatisfied," and 39% were "very dissatisfied."

The report did not say what the remaining 2 percent of participants in the poll thought about Macron's performance.

Some of the drop in Macron's popularity could be attributed to the French president's high fuel prices.

More than 400 people were injured, 14 of them seriously, during the fuel price protests that swept through France. A woman died in the ensuing violence and 28 members of the police and fire brigade also sustained injuries.

The uproar spread to 87 locations around the country, with protesters blocking roads in a show of anger at fuel tax increase

(Source: agencies)

Bahraini courts give prison sentences to over dozen anti-regime activists

Courts in Bahrain have handed down prison sentences to more than a dozen anti-regime protesters as the ruling House of Khalifah regime does not shy away from its heavy clampdown on political dissidents and pro-democracy activists in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

On Sunday, Bahraini judiciary officials sentenced 13 defendants to five years in jail each after finding them guilty of "deliberately setting fire to a police patrol car and holding unlawful gatherings in the northern village of Abu Saiba," the Arabic-language Lualua television network reported.

Separately, Bahrain's Supreme Court of Appeal upheld a 15-year prison term against a defendant on trumped-up charges of stealing a car and then setting it ablaze with a gas cylinder back in 2014.

The Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), in a statement released on November 13, announced that law courts have issued death sentences against 32 opposition figures since 2011, of which three have been carried out, seven have been commuted to life imprisonment and two others been appealed.

"All these verdicts have been pronounced following unfair trials, and therefore do not comply with the guarantees of fair trials. The BCHR has documented many cases in which

those sentenced to death have been subjected to torture," the statement read.

The BCHR then called on Manama to reverse all death sentences and sign the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is aiming at the abolition of death penalty.

The center further noted that the Bahraini judiciary has overused death penalty in recent years, particularly with regards to freedom of opinion and expression in addition to the exercise of political rights.

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the House of Khalifah relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established.

Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from the House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of the House of Khalifah regime's crackdown.



On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3 last year.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. warns of 'consequences' as Palestine joins international bodies

The United States has threatened "consequences" as Palestinians step up efforts for statehood demanding accession to almost a dozen international bodies and conventions.

The threat came after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed the documents on Thursday to join the Universal Postal Union, a UN agency that coordinates international postage, and 10 international protocols and conventions.

The move infuriated the U.S., Israel's staunch ally, with a State Department official claiming that the Palestinian efforts to join international institutions were "premature" and "counterproductive."

"We are currently reviewing possible

consequences of the Palestinians' recent actions," the official said in a statement published by the Times of Israel on Sunday.

In November 2012, the UN General Assembly upgraded Palestine's status from "non-member observer entity" to "non-member observer state" despite strong opposition from Israel.

Since then, the Palestinians have joined dozens of international or organizations and agreements, among them the International Criminal Court, as part of a campaign to garner support for the recognition of their homeland as a sovereign state.

Washington has asked the Palestinians not to join international agencies, citing laws dating to the early 1990s that require the

U.S. government to cut off funding to any UN organization that grants the Palestinians full membership.

Abbas, however, said a Palestinian agreement with the U.S. not to join international bodies was conditioned on the U.S. not ending aid payments, not moving its embassy to Jerusalem al-Quds and not changing the status of the Palestine Liberation Organization mission in Washington.

The U.S. withdrew some funding for UNESCO after the Palestinians joined the cultural and education organization back in 2011. It also pulled out of the agency altogether in 2017.

Most recently, Washington cut funds to

the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA.

The U.S.-Palestine ties deteriorated last December when President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem al-Quds as the "capital" of Israel.

The American embassy was also relocated from Tel Aviv to the ancient city in May, sparking angry reactions from Palestinians and severe criticism from the international community.

At that time, Abbas formally declared that Palestinians would no longer accept the U.S. as a mediator to resolve the conflict because Washington was "completely biased" towards Tel Aviv.

(Source: Press TV)

Video shows Saudi troops taking fire from close Hudaydah protectors

By staff & agencies

New footage provided by Yemen's War Media outlet shows Yemenis fighting back a Saudi regime push against the port city of Hudaydah and targeting troops in Saudi Arabia's southwestern Najran region.

The announcer in the footage identifies the opening scene of the clashes as the road near Hudaydah International Airport where speeding armored vehicles are struck with a Zalzal-1-type missile and artillery rounds.

Later, the images show burned-out equipment and the dead bodies all over the battlefield, some of which were cut out by Press TV because of their graphic nature.

According to Yemen's al-Masirah television, a significant cache of weapons was also seized from the Saudi regime-backed militants and mercenaries by Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement fighters and their allies

in the army.

In the scenes related to battles in Najran, Saudi Arabia's military vehicles are seen being hit by Yemeni rockets and catching fire.

According to al-Masirah, the Yemeni operation was carried out in a desert near the al-Khazra border crossing, in which a significant portion of Saudi military equipment was destroyed.

The House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) deployed about 10,000 new troops to Yemen's west coast this month after their repeated campaigns to seize Hudaydah were thwarted.

The invaders, however, have hit a stiff wall of resistance put up by the city's protectors who have pushed back the militants and mercenaries.

Last week, the Saudi regime announced a pause in the

offensive, which an Ansarullah spokesman described a bid to buy time and reinforce the military strength for a fresh push.

"In every round of aggression against Yemen, the escalation begins and then dies down, mostly without declaring a truce," Ansarullah spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam wrote in a tweet on Thursday night.

"Given the recent developments in the battle on the ground, the aggressive coalition is trying to pretend that it has halted its attacks [on Hudaydah] in response to global pressure or to allow the dispatch of humanitarian aid, but that's a big lie," he said.

The United Nations has warned that the Hudaydah offensive, which first began earlier this year and was re-launched last month after a pause of several months, could deprive millions already on the verge of starvation of access to food or medicine.

Sauber to give Calderon more F1 test experience

Sauber will give Colombian Tatiana Calderon her second Formula One test outing in a 2013 car at Ferrari's Fiorano circuit this weekend, the Swiss-based team said on Thursday.

The 25-year-old last month became the first Latin American woman to drive a Formula One car in an official capacity when she drove the 2018 car on a filming day at Mexico City's Hermanos Rodriguez circuit.

Sauber said in a statement that Calderon would test the Ferrari-powered V8-engined C32 car on Saturday and Sunday "to advance in her learning process and development".

The Colombian is hoping to compete in Formula Two, the rung below Formula One, next year. The Formula One season ends in Abu Dhabi next week.

Backed by the team's Mexican sponsor Telmex, she is the first woman to drive a current Formula One car since Britain's now-retired Susie Wolff, who took part in two grand prix practice sessions for Williams.

Formula One has not had a woman driver start a grand prix since Italian Lella Lombardi in 1976.

(Source: Reuters)

Ronaldo still very much part of Portugal team, insists coach

Portugal coach Fernando Santos insisted Saturday that superstar Cristiano Ronaldo remains a key part of his national team despite being left out of his Nations League squad, after the European champions became the first team to advance to the semi-finals of the competition.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner spent much of last month vehemently denying allegations of rape and was dropped by Santos for the Nations League internationals amid accusations by former model Kathryn Mayorga that Ronaldo raped her in 2009, just before he joined Real Madrid from Manchester United.

"There are no questions to ask. Ronaldo is part of this team, just read the post he wrote today," said Santos, referring to the message the Juventus player sent to wish his teammates good luck via Twitter.

Portugal booked their ticket to the semi-finals next June after holding Italy to a 0-0 draw at the San Siro on Saturday.

They progressed top of Group A3 with one match to play, dashing Italy's hopes in the process.

"The qualification confirms the quality of our football," said Santos.

"I thought it would be a great match and instead especially in the first half we had a lot of difficulties.

"After the break I explained to them what was happening, and the game became more balanced."

Portugal host relegated Poland in three days in Guimaraes, in a match that has no significance for either side.

But Santos insisted: "The final match against Poland will be important because it will be on front of our public, who are always with us.

(Source: AFP)

Barcelona not ruling out Neymar return

Neymar represented Brazil in a friendly against Uruguay on Friday evening and he was asked about whether or not he could return to Barcelona.

In response, the Brazilian offered no words but instead smiled at the question, remaining a complete enigma about his future.

Recently, his return was spoken about as impossible at Barcelona, but now things have shifted slightly and the door is creaking open.

Pep Segura, the club's sporting director, has started to open it ever further a recent interview. "If we believe that, despite the insult to us, it must be him then it will be him," Segura said to La Vanguardia. The main factor in favour of the move is the player's own desire to return to Catalonia and Barcelona are aware of it.

Both the club's offices and dressing room know he wants to return, and those at the Camp Nou are happy for it to happen.

Neymar Senior continues his business and, as every year, he offers his son around to Europe's elite.

As reported by MARCA already, the star was offered to Barcelona just last summer. Just as the Brazilian was offered to Barcelona, he was offered to Real Madrid as well and the Paris Saint-Germain jewel remains Florentino Perez's great obsession.

The last word, however, remains with PSG and the Ligue 1 side are specialists in refusing to sell a player.

If Neymar is to return to Spain it will take an offer of 222 million euros once more, with reports saying there is a verbal agreement between the player and club to allow him to leave should such a proposal be made.

(Source: Marca)

Lovren faces talks with boss over Ramos video

Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic will speak with Dejan Lovren about comments the Liverpool defender made to Sergio Ramos on social media. Lovren published a video on Instagram stories following Croatia's 3-2 win over Spain in the UEFA Nations League on Thursday evening. The video, which has since expired, showed Lovren appearing to suggest he had elbowed Real Madrid defender Ramos during the game. "I will talk personally with Dejan, but that will stay between us and the squad," Dalic told a news conference ahead of Croatia's game against England on Sunday.

"I don't want to talk publicly about this."

Lovren spoke about Ramos earlier this month in an interview where he claimed the Spain international makes a lot of mistakes, in the latest of a number of incidents of bad feeling between Liverpool players and Ramos.

During last season's Champions League final, in which Real Madrid beat Liverpool 3-1, Ramos was involved in a tussle with Mohamed Salah which saw the Egyptian depart injured.

(Source: ESPN)

Relegation reality check good for Germany

Germany's fate in the first rendition of the UEFA Nations League was decided long before the final whistle in Feyenoord on Friday night. Relegation from League A is far from ideal, but it's an outcome Germany can recover from – even if they have to do it against less alluring opposition when the competition kicks off again in September 2020.

If anything, dropping down into League B could afford Joachim Löw's new-look side the chance to start from scratch as they look to free themselves from the ghosts of recent shortcomings. By forcing Löw's hand sooner, it could even prove to be a blessing in disguise as Germany look to reinvent themselves.

■ Seeded status on the line for EURO 2020

To start the rebuilding process, Die Mannschaft first have to stop the bleeding. Leon Goretzka can make all the jokes he wants about Jonas Hector being the "only player to experience relegation" – of far greater concern is the prospect of losing seeded status heading into EURO 2020 qualifying.

Along with the four group winners in League A of the Nations League, the six next-best teams will be seeded for December's ten-group draw, meaning two sides miss out. With Iceland already out of contention, Germany have to better Poland's result against Portugal or they could find themselves in a qualifying group with a fellow European heavyweight.

"Our sights are now as before clearly in the direction of EURO 2020 for which we will qualify and again have a strong team," Löw said. "On the way there we will continue to make room for our young players and steadily introduce them to the national team. We want a good game in Gelsenkirchen on Monday to say farewell from our fans from what has been a disappointing year."

■ Netherlands revamp a shining example

Löw has been outspoken about Germany's "need for an axis". After the World Cup that 'axis' appeared to consist of



Manuel Neuer, Jerome Boateng, Mats Hummels, Toni Kroos and Thomas Müller. Relegation from the Nations League has changed the landscape sooner than expected, but that's a good thing. A core of Niklas Süle, Joshua Kimmich, Kai Havertz, Serge Gnabry and Timo Werner, promises much more long-term, providing they can find the balance with the old guard.

It seems almost fitting that the Netherlands should be the gate keepers set to determine Germany's fate at the end of a turbulent 2018. Die Mannschaft's arch rivals have

themselves undergone a painstaking revamp and are now producing an electrifying brand of counter-attacking football that caught both Germany and France short.

Results in 2018 have further underlined that Germany's rebuilding attempts can't just skim the surface and the early signs are positive. In the 3-0 win over Russia, Löw's charges provided a glimpse of what they're capable of when afforded the freedom to use their pace, power and precision in a more ambitious attacking approach.

(Source: Deutsche Welle)

Creator of Brazil's famed yellow jersey dies, aged 83



If the likes of Garrincha, Pele, Socrates, Zico, Romario, Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Ronaldinho and Neymar have come to define the distinctive style of Brazil's international football side over the years so too did Aldyr Schlee, the man who created the team's distinctive yellow shirt and who has died at the age of 83.

"It's our unit, our business card for the world," said the Brazilian Football Federation (CBF) in its obituary for Schlee, who passed away on Thursday.

"We lost the idealizer of 'Amarelinha,' as it was affectionately known by the Brazilian fans," added the CBF statement. "At the age of 83, Aldyr Schlee left us, but his most famous creation will always be part of the Brazilian people."

On Friday, Brazil beat Uruguay 1-0 in an international friendly at the Emirates Stadium in London and Schlee was honored with a minute's silence before the game started.

Until 1954, Brazil had played in white shirts with a blue detail, but after losing the 1950 World Cup final to Uruguay, the CBF organized a competition to choose a new kit.

Schlee was still a teenager when his en-

try -- a yellow shirt with green collar and cuffs -- was chosen as the winner ahead of hundreds of other entrants.

In an interview with writer Alex Bellos for the Independent newspaper in 2014, Schlee said he was "I'm tired of talking about it (the shirt design).

"And it all comes a bit late. They are taking notice of me for something I did 60 years ago. After this World Cup I'm never going to talk about it again."

A journalist, university professor and novelist, Schlee grew up on the Brazil-Uruguay border and was in fact a supporter of the Uruguay national team.

"I am well-known in Uruguay," Schlee told Bellos. "I am considered a Uruguayan writer."

Schlee's design debuted in a 1954 World Cup qualifier with Brazil beating Chile 2-0 in Santiago. The legendary shirt was off to a winning start.

"Since then, Amarelinha has accompanied the Brazilian national team in endless glory," said the CBF statement.

"Four of the five world titles came with Brazil in yellow, as well as Olympic gold and so many South American achievements.

(Source: CNN)

Some ex-players can't come to terms with England success - Rooney



Some former England internationals "can't come to terms" with the current team doing well, says Wayne Rooney.

The Three Lions reached the World Cup semi-finals this summer before beating Spain in the Nations League in October.

But Rooney, who earned his 120th and final cap in Thursday's 3-0 win over the United States, suggested some ex-players are jealous.

"That is wrong. I'm not like that," said the 33-year-old ex-captain. "I'm a fan now. I want England to do well."

Speaking to several national newspapers, he added: "I'm happy with what I've contributed to the national team and I look forward now to the next few years and watching this team progress."

DC United striker Rooney - England's record goalscorer - retired from international football in 2017 but returned to Gareth Southgate's set-up for a final farewell at Wembley on Thursday.

During his time as an England international, the team never progressed beyond the quarter-finals of a major tournament - last reaching the last eight at Euro 2012.

"I know some ex-players I've spoken to

can't come to terms with England doing well," said Rooney, who played for Manchester United and Everton in the Premier League.

"I wouldn't say I regret never winning a trophy with England.

"I have given everything when playing for England and I've tried to make us successful. Sometimes everything just isn't enough.

"I've had my time and it didn't quite work out in terms of trophies."

England play Croatia in the Nations League at Wembley on Sunday (14:00 GMT kick-off) and a victory will mean they qualify for next summer's finals in Portugal.

And, having been immersed with the squad over the previous week, Rooney says the potential for success is "huge".

"They called the team I played in the 'golden generation' but this team has also got superstars like Harry Kane, Raheem Sterling and John Stones," he said.

"This is a great young squad with other players who can come in if there are injuries.

"To win any trophy would be great for England - and hopefully this team can be the ones to bring that home."

(Source: BBC)

'All my other injuries were paper cuts compared to this'

Pain is the only word Katie Ormerod associates with Pyeongchang.

The physical pain of breaking her heel bone clean in two. The mental pain of not being able to show the world her ability on a snowboard on the biggest stage of all.

Yet this comes from someone who has experienced her fair share of pain. A snapped anterior cruciate ligament and a broken back are among her extensive list of injuries, and she's had seven operations on this one alone.

"They were all paper cuts compared to this one," says the 21-year-old. "Up until my last operation, I was in pain every day just walking about."

Ormerod - an X-Games and multiple World Cup medalist - was one of Great Britain's greatest hopes before the Winter Olympics in South Korea, having won bronze at the test event.

However, she came off a rail too early in training and her Games were over before they had even started - a fractured right heel ruling her out three days before she was due to compete.

In the nine months since, Ormerod has endured some of her darkest days - but at last she is pain free, physically and mentally.

Here, she tells BBC Sport about her battle with depression, how she plans to grow women's snowboarding, and how pig and shark skin came into the equation.



■ Reflections on a nightmare day

Ormerod had already broken her wrist out in Pyeongchang - and it was on the same rail the following day that she snapped her heel in two.

"Straight away I knew my Olympics was over. It was the most horrendous pain I have ever felt and it was very traumatic," she says. Medics took more than an hour to remove her boot - they tried to cut through it but in the end were forced to pull it off - and it was her boyfriend, former New Zealand snowboard coach Lachie Good, who had to inform her of the severity of the injury.

"I was gutted because of all the hard work I had put in over the past four years and for it all to be taken away

from me so quickly, in the most painful way possible, was awful," she adds. "I just think it wasn't meant to be for me in Pyeongchang. I feel like it was always meant to happen."

■ Fighting for her career

Ormerod had her first operation in South Korea to pin her heel back together, and she thought that would be her last.

"I felt so confident that I could do well and bring a medal back," she says. "For that to be taken away from me in an instant was so hard for me to come to terms with.

"I struggled with it for a few months after."

Those struggles turned into depression for a "sad and confused" Ormerod, who kept her emotions to herself and questioned her future.

"All I have ever known is snowboarding. I started when I was five and in my head I've always seen myself snowboarding for as long as physically possible," she says.

"I couldn't get to grips with the idea it could be career-ending. I really didn't want that to happen."

One quick glance through Ormerod's Instagram page and you would never think the dark clouds of depression had descended. But that, Ormerod says, is the problem with social media. "It is not always real but I felt I had to be positive to help others," she adds.

She finally found the courage to voice her struggles - first to her parents, then to her team manager.

(Source: BBC)

Mohammad Bana named Iran's Greco-Roman wrestling team coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — After more than two years, Mohammad Bana took charge of Iran Greco-Roman wrestling team once again.

He was named as replacement of Ali Ashkani in the wrestling team by acting president of Iran's Wrestling Federation Hamid Banitamim.

Bana is the most decorated coach in Iran's Greco-Roman history.

Under leadership of Bana, Iranian Greco-Roman team claimed three gold medals and won the title of the 2012 Olympic Games for the first time ever.

After the poor performance of his team at Rio Olympics 2016, he said he felt "ashamed" toward the results and was seen sitting and crying outside the wrestling hall, the video and photos of which went viral in social media.

He was later quoted as saying he cried because he failed to make the Iranian people happy.

"Honestly, I didn't want to return to the National Team but I think it's time to help the team. We have a lot of work to do," Bana said.

"I faced many obstacles in my career in the National Team but we have to learn from our mistakes if we want to avoid repeating them. We have a difficult task in the 2020 Olympic Games," he added.



Australia well-prepared for IFCPF Asia-Oceania Championship: coach

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Australia coach Kai Lammert says they are well-prepared for the 2018 IFCPF (International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football) Asia-Oceania Championship.

The 7-a-side football competition will be held in the Iran's southern Kish Island, located in the Persian Gulf, from Nov. 22 to 30.

Iran (host), Australia, South Korea, Jordan and Thailand will compete at the eight-day competition.

2018 IFCPF Asia-Oceania Championship is an important event for the participants since the top two teams will automatically qualify for the 2019 IFCPF World Cup – Pinto Madrid, Spain.

"We are going to book a place at the 2019 IFCPF World Cup. Australia are fully ready for the competition and want to be among the top two teams at the end of the games," Lammert said in an interview with irisfd.ir.

"I am sure our players will do their best in Kish and



we wait to see where we will finish the competition, then we will start our preparation for the 2019 IFCPF World Cup," he stated.

"We know that Iran, Russia and Ukraine are CP football role models. We also know Iran is considered as one of the great civilizations in the world. We want to experience warm hospitality of the Iranians," Lammert said.

"In Australia, CP football is supported by our football federation, rich persons and benevolent fund. We believe that there is no difference between football and CP football" he concluded.

Football 7-a-side was introduced to the Paralympics during the 1984 New York Games, originally called Cerebral Palsy football. The sport now includes athletes with other brain injuries and similar conditions.

Football 7-a-side is governed by the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CIPISRA) using the modified rules of the International Federation of Associated Football (FIFA).

Arsenal will choose Premiere League over Super League – official



Arsenal managing director Vinai Venkatesham says the club would not break away from the Premier League to join a European Super League.

Reports in Der Spiegel, via Football Leaks, claimed 11 clubs were already keen to sign up to an eventual 16-team competition for the continent's best teams, with FIFA insisting that any players who joined were at risk of missing out on the World Cup.

Arsenal want to be part of any discussions but Venkatesham told the Press Association that the club have no intention of leaving the Premier League.

"Arsenal aren't or never have been interested in playing in any competition that weakens the Premier League," he said. "The Premier League is the world's leading league in the leading sport, we don't want to do anything to damage the

Premier League.

"When people talk about the European Super League, that covers a really big spectrum. People jump to one end of the spectrum and think this is what we are talking about -- but actually often it's just a slight evolution from where we are today.

"I see these articles that Arsenal want to breakaway, we never want to do any of that. But we also have to recognize we have to be in these conversations or we wouldn't be responsible.

"We have to be in the conversations, it doesn't necessarily mean we support them."

After former chief executive Ivan Gazidis left for AC Milan, Venkatesham was promoted to managing director at Arsenal this summer while Raul Sanllehi became head of football.

(Source: ESPN)

Chris Gunter wants Gareth Bale's jet to get family to Albania



Chris Gunter will become Wales' most capped player on Tuesday night, but may need teammate Gareth Bale's help to get his family out to watch the game in Albania.

Gunter is set to overtake Neville Southall's 92-game haul, but joked that he will have to ask Bale to lend him his Cessna Citation XL Plus private jet (valued at £9.35m) to bring his family along.

"I'll ask Gaz if I can borrow his plane," Gunter said. "It's not the easiest place to get to, but if the Welsh fans can do it I'm sure I can find a way.

"I'll be trying to get some family over there. But I know they'll be watching somewhere even if I can't, because they've done that throughout my career."

Manager Ryan Giggs confirmed that

the 29-year-old Reading defender would start the game in Elbasan, with 2,000 Wales fans expected to make the trip to Albania's third largest city -- an hour outside capital Tirana.

"It's fitting in a way to do it in front of those fans," Gunter said. "A lot of those who will be in Albania have been to far and wide places where I've picked up a lot of my caps.

"To do it in front of those fans who spend their hard-earned money getting to all these places would be a huge honor.

"We've seen over the last couple of games in Cardiff that the away support hasn't been that big. But everywhere we go we take lots of fans, they always seem to be there. It's a constant when we play for Wales."

(Source: Soccer.net)

Syrian powerlifter suspended for anti-doping violation

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has suspended Syrian powerlifter Shadi Issa for two years for committing an anti-doping violation.

The London 2012 Paralympian returned an adverse analytical finding for clomiphene in a urine sample provided on 1 March 2017 after competing at the 8th FAZZA 2017 World Para Powerlifting World Cup in Dubai, UAE.

This substance is included on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) 2017 Prohibited List under the category S4: Hormone and Metabolic Modulators and is prohibited in-competition.

As a result of his violation, Issa – who was competing in the men's up to 80kg class – will be ineligible for competition for two years from 26 April 2017, the date of the provisional suspension, until 26 April 2019.

All Issa's results obtained from 1 March 2017, the date of the test and onwards will be disqualified including forfeiture of any medals, points, records and prizes. This includes the silver medal he won at the 8th FAZZA 2017 World Para Powerlifting World Cup. Due to his disqualification, Great



Britain's Michael Yule - who originally finished third - will receive the silver medal. The bronze medal will now go to Iraq's Mohammed Mohammed.

World Para Powerlifting continues to deliver the information and awareness program "Raise The Bar" to educate athletes and their support personnel about

anti-doping matters.

The IPC would like to remind all athletes about the need to verify all medications before taking them, and that the principle of strict liability applies to anti-doping matters. Therefore, each athlete is strictly liable for the substances found in his or her sample, and that an anti-doping rule violation occurs whenever a prohibited substance (or its metabolites or markers) is found in his or her bodily specimen, whether or not the athlete intentionally or unintentionally used a prohibited substance or was negligent or otherwise at fault.

As a signatory of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC), the IPC remains committed to a doping-free sporting environment at all levels. The IPC, together with the International Federations and the National Paralympic Committees, established the IPC Anti-Doping Code to prevent doping in sport for Paralympic athletes, in the spirit of fair play. The IPC Anti-Doping Code is in conformity with the general principles of the WADC.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Iran's Kaveh Rezaei linked with Olympique Marseille: report

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian forward Kaveh Rezaei has been reportedly linked with a move to French top-flight football club Olympique Marseille.

The 26-year-old striker currently plays at Club Brugge but the media reports suggest that he could be sold in January transfer window.



According to voetbal24.be, Olympique Marseille are looking to sign a striker in January and Rezaei could be a candidate to join them.

Rezaei, who started his playing career in Iranian football club Foolad in 2000, joined the Belgium football team on Aug. 22 for a reported club-record fee of €5 million.

He has also made 10 appearances for Iran national football team and scored one goal.

Persepolis fans third in #TheBestSupporters poll

The fans of Persepolis football team of Iran came third in the world by MARCA readers.

With over 1,700,000 votes, Penarol's supporters have been voted as the best in the world.

Brazilian side Palmeiras' fans came in second place in the poll, but, in truth, they were some way behind with just over 1,000,000 votes.

Iranian club Persepolis complete the podium with almost 400,000 votes.

Over 4,000,000 votes were counted in total, though Peneol managed to win by an impressive margin of close to 700,000 votes. The Uruguayan club's fans are famous the world over for the atmosphere they generate at their home games and they do not stop for the entirety of the 90 minutes.

They also hold the honor of having made what is considered to be the biggest flag created, when in 2011 they marked their 120th anniversary with a 309-metre-long flag that was 50 feet high.

The design of the flag showed the five Copa Libertadores crowns the club possess and their three Intercontinental Cups. (Source: Marca)

Four taekwondo athletes to represent Iran at Fujairah Grand Prix

TASNIM — Iran will send four taekwondo athletes to Fujairah, the United Arab Emirates to participate at the World Taekwondo Grand Prix series.

Armin Hadipour and Farzan Ashourzadeh in -58kg, Abolfazl Yaghoubi in -68kg and Sajad Mardani in +80kg will represent Iran in the event.

The 2018 World Taekwondo Grand Prix is the 6th edition of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix series.

This is the first year in which there will be five Grand Prix events.

The Grand Prix Final is set for Fujairah on November 22 and 23.

Beiranvand reportedly shortlisted for Asia's best player of 2018

MNA — Team Melli and Persepolis' Alireza Beiranvand is reportedly being shortlisted for Asia's Footballer of the Year 2018.

The Arabic version of Goal.com reported that Beiranvand along with two other players from Qatar and Japan has been shortlisted for Asia's best player of the year.

Beiranvand had an impressive performance in the 2018 Russia World Cup, the peak of which was saving Cristiano Ronaldo's penalty in the match against Portugal.

He also proved his quality in AFC Champions League with Persepolis, reaching the final of the event while having the height number clean sheets compared to other goalkeepers.

Japanese striker Yuma Suzuki of Kashima Antlers and Qatari defender Abdelkarim Hassan of Al Sadd are the two players who will compete with Beiranvand for this award.

Iran's Hassanzadeh nominated for AFC Futsal Player of the Year

IRNA — Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh, the captain of the Iranian national futsal team, has been nominated for 2018 AFC Futsal Player of the Year.

Hassanzadeh has previously won the title for three times in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

The 2018 AFC Futsal Player of the Year will be announced and awarded during a ceremony in Muscat, Oman in November.

Hassanzadeh, who has scored 120 times in 120 national games, became champion in 2018 AFC Futsal Club Championship with Iran's Mes Songon club.

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Entezami comes to COI as Heidarian leaves over law banning employment of the retired

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Hossein Entezami, a senior assistant to the culture minister, took office as the director of the Cinema Organization of Iran on Saturday shortly after Mohammad-Mehdi Heidarian left the organization due to a new law banning employment of retired officials.

The appointment was announced by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The former deputy culture minister for press affairs, Entezami, is also the secretary of the ministry's Committee for the Publication and Free Access to Information.

The law to ban employment of the retired was passed in mid-September by the Majlis and it was to be implemented by November 15.

Heidarian had held the post since March 2017.

Cinema Organization of Iran acting-director Hossein Entezami in an undated photo. (Mehr/Maryam Kamyab)

Austrian musician Andreas Spechtl to join Saba Alizadeh for Tehran duet

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Austrian singer and guitarist Andreas Spechtl and Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Saba Alizadeh will team up to perform a duet at Tehran's Azadi Tower on Thursday.

A poster for a duet by Austrian singer and guitarist Andreas Spechtl and Iranian kamancheh virtuoso Saba Alizadeh.

Spechtl spent two months in Tehran during the winter of 2016 composing his album "Thinking about Tomorrow, and How to Build It".

He also gave several informal performances during his sojourn in Tehran.

Mickey Mouse, the icon of an animation empire, celebrates 90th birthday

NEW YORK (Reuters) — It was the Roaring '20s. Calvin Coolidge was in the White House, the New York Yankees had just won their third World Series title and Mickey Mouse made his debut on the silver screen.

On Sunday, Mickey Mouse, the brainchild of cartoonist Walt Disney that eventually came to symbolize a global entertainment empire, celebrates his 90th birthday.

The iconic rodent, whose easily recognizable silhouette consists simply of a big circle and two little ones for ears, launched his celluloid career in "Steamboat Willie," at New York's Colony Theater on Nov. 18, 1928.

In the eight-minute-long, black-and-white cartoon, Mickey pilots a steamboat and entertains his passenger, Minnie Mouse, by making musical instruments out of the menagerie on board, according to IMDB.com.

Mickey Mouse, whom the Walt Disney Co calls its global ambassador, also starred in Disney's critically acclaimed 1942 animated film "Fantasia," and would go on to launch a franchise with "The Mickey Mouse Club," the 1950s television series that was a favorite of American baby boom kids.

His image appeared on T-shirts, lunch boxes and watches, and the telltale mouse ears are still worn by kids visiting Disney theme parks today.

To mark his birthday, Disney opened a 16,000-square-foot art exhibition in Manhattan, called "Mickey: The True Original Exhibition," featuring original art, larger-than-life photo ops and, of course, commemorative merchandise. The exhibition runs until Feb. 10.

After all, reaching one's 90th birthday is a milestone for anyone, but especially for a mouse, which the pest control company Teminix estimates has a normal lifespan of no more than three years.

University of Guilan honors poet Shams Langerudi

C U L T U R E d e s k **TEHRAN** – Mohammad Shams Lagerudi, the 68-year-old poet of such outstanding collections as "Ode to the Slit Smile", "Ashes & the Lady" and "The Hidden Fete", was honored for his lifetime achievements by the Guilan Research Center at the University of Guilan on Saturday.

A large number his fans, friends, and cultural figures of Gilan Province attended the honoring ceremony held in Rasht, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Sunday.

In his brief speech at the ceremony, Shams Langerudi quoted a comment from his fellow poet, Ahmad Shamlu, "Working in crises is like tunneling in the mount of impossibilities," and said, "There are many problems, limits and impediments, but people do not see the path of change."

He expressed his thanks to all those people who have empathy for his poetry and added, "This empathy is really great, because it's impossible to compose a poem in a vacuum."

"It is you who care about the works of the poets and encourage them by your empathy," he added.

Shams Langerudi is also the writer of "An Analytic History of Persian Modern Poetry", an extensive research work on contemporary Persian poetry, which was published in four volumes in 1998.

He called the book a response to his unawareness of the subject and said, "It was sheer luck that what I have done over my life was to satisfy all my mental desires."

"Life doesn't cost a thing, however, nothing is more precious than life, therefore what I wrote and composed were for my heart, and as result, my poems are influential and inspiring," he stated.

He said that he has promoted kindness and honesty in his poetry and noted that these characteristics make it popular.

"Politicians have made the world into nonsense, but art creates beauty and never lies, and if the art doesn't exist, the realities would deteriorate us," he concluded.



Mohammad Shams Lagerudi speaks during a ceremony the Guilan Research Center held in Rasht on November 17, 2018 to honor the poet for his lifetime achievements. (ISNA)

Guilan Research Center director Hashem Musavi also delivered a speech. "Master Shams Langerudi has been raised in a cultured family and we owe him a lot."

Shams Lagerudi also pursued a career in acting by portraying a poet in "Flamingo No. 13" directed by Hamidreza Aliqolian in 2010.

He also played roles in "Five to Five" by Tara Otadi and "Risk of Acid Rain" by Behdash Sanaeiha.

"Amour Du Reel" named best doc at Azerbaijan Start festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – "Amour Du Reel" by Iranian filmmaker Iman Behruzi won the Golden Pomegranate for best documentary at the 9th Start International Short Film Festival in Azerbaijan, the organizers announced on Saturday.

In the film, Behruzi poses this question: if we love each other then why do we declare our love.

Turkish director Onur Yagiz's "Earth" won the award for best fiction while his fellow filmmaker Alican Durbas's "Soil" was named best experimental film.

"Sog" by Jonatan Schwenk from Germany received the award for best animated movie.

Kambuzia Partovi, the Iranian writer and director of



A poster for "Amour Du Reel" by Iranian filmmaker Iman Behruzi.

the acclaimed movie "Café Transit", was a member of the jury at the festival, which took place in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku from November 14 to 17.

A number of Iranian films, including "The Hole" by Zahra Torkamanlu, "Birth" by Siamak Ata and "The Slaughter" by Rasul Iranzad, were also screened at the event.

The festival also organized a special screening for Iranian director Jafar Panahi's latest film, "3 Faces".

Organized by the Center for Young Cinematographers – SINEMA, the festival is supported by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Youth Foundation of Azerbaijan.

Marilyn Monroe's Golden Globe sells for record \$250,000 at auction

BEVERLY HILLS (Reuters) — Marilyn Monroe's Golden Globe Award sold for a record-breaking \$250,000 at Julien's Auctions in Beverly Hills, California, auction officials said late Saturday.

The 1961 award statue for World Film Favorite Female from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association made history as the highest selling Golden Globe sold at auction.

Monroe's raven black two-seater, 1966 Ford Thunderbird, which was auctioned for the first time, fetched \$490,000 at Icons & Idols: Hollywood, which took place Friday and Saturday.

Monroe, one of the most collectible celebrities, was pictured driving in the car with her husband, playwright Arthur Miller, shortly after their June 1956 wedding.

The movie star owned the vehicle for six years until shortly before her death in 1962.

Darren Julien, president of Julien's Auctions, said the car was "not only part of automotive history but comes with an aura of glamour, romance and tragedy of a true Hollywood legend."

Monroe gifted the Thunderbird to the son of her acting coach, Lee Strasberg, in 1962.

The current owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, tracked the vehicle down through registration and other documents. The car has undergone restoration but retains many original parts.

Monroe's copy of Playboy's first issue with her on the cover, signed by publisher Hugh Hefner, sold for \$32,000 along with almost a dozen other items owned by the iconic actress.

The auction also included items from other celebrities including pop stars Tina Turner and Cher.

William Goldman, Oscar-winning writer of "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid", dies at 87

LOS ANGELES (Variety) — William Goldman, who won Oscars for his original screenplay for "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and his adaptation of "All the President's Men", died on Friday morning in his Manhattan home, Variety has confirmed. He was 87.

According to the Washington Post, his daughter Jenny Goldman cited complications from colon cancer and pneumonia as the cause of his death.

"Butch Cassidy", a revisionist Western that helped popularize the buddy movie, announced Goldman as a screenwriter able to balance big laughs with a sense of adventure, while "All the President's Men" cemented his status as a deft writer of suspense. The two are considered to be among the finest screenplays ever written and exemplify Goldman's range and versatility.

In a 2015 interview with Signature, Goldman was asked about his ability to bounce from genre to genre.

"You cross your fingers and never stop," he said. "Praying is also good."

Goldman, who frequently transferred his novels, such as "Magic", "The Princess Bride" and "Marathon Man", to the screen, was also a chronicler of the movie business. His books, "Adventures in the Screen Trade" and "Hype and Glory", offer an unvarnished look at the kind of meddling and risk aversion by studio big wigs that all too often neutered creativity. Of the movie business he once famously observed "nobody knows anything," a bit of wry wisdom that is often quoted on studio lots and executive suites.

Goldman also turned his penetrating eyes towards the stage and professional sports, collaborating on accounts of those industries. As with his scripts, he brought acute observation, entertainment value and, especially, wit to even his most serious enterprises. He also did uncredited touch ups on such films as "Indecent Proposal", "The Right Stuff" and "Good Will Hunting" as well as some films he was probably happy not to have on his resume, such as the Arnold Schwarzenegger flop "The Last Action Hero".

In an April 2015 piece on Goldman, the Writers Guild magazine Written By declared: "What's remarkable about



Writer William Goldman. (AP/Pendergrass)

'Butch Cassidy' and Bill Goldman is how many kids they encouraged and how many would-be writers turned themselves into screenwriters by studying the script and the movie and Goldman's memoir 'Adventures in the Screen Trade.'" Further detailing his influence, the magazine said: "His descriptive style, with its literary origins and frequent use of asides and comments, provides a map to a screenwriting path followed enthusiastically by writers from Shane Black to Vince Gilligan."

His 1964 novel "Boys and Girls Together" failed to impress critics, but it became Goldman's first bestseller. That same year came "No Way to Treat a Lady", a comic thriller that also later became a film. It was published under one of the many pseudonyms he used, Harry Longbaugh, the real name of the Sundance Kid.

A screenwriting career came about by accident, Goldman said. Having read an early draft of "No Way", actor Cliff Robertson thought it a film treatment and asked Goldman to adapt the short story "Flowers for Algernon" to the screen. Though none of Goldman's work made it into the movie eventually called "Charley", it was through Robertson that Goldman was brought in to work on the 1965 caper movie "Masquerade", his first produced film, for which he shared the script credit with Michael Relph. He next adapted Ross MacDonald's "The Moving Target," which became the 1966

Paul Newman vehicle "Harper".

Goldman spent a year exploring the 1967-68 Broadway season — doing everything from attending out-of-town tryouts of every production and to conducting interviews with actors and directors. "The Season: A Candid Look at Broadway" was criticized for bias and snark when it was published in 1969, but reviewers conceded that it was a highly entertaining read.

Also in 1969, Goldman received what was then a high-water mark of \$400,000 for his original screenplay "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." The film starring Newman and Robert Redford was one of the biggest hits of the decade and made Goldman a screenwriter in demand.

Goldman adapted his 1974 novel "Marathon Man" as a bigscreen vehicle for Dustin Hoffman and Laurence Olivier. The ending of the movie was changed without his consent, but the film contained a memorable sequence of torture that still leaves viewers reluctant to return to the dentist's chair. His 1976 novel "Magic" later made it to the screen with Anthony Hopkins.

Goldman always considered himself first and foremost a novelist, but his scripts received so favorable a reception that he could not resist turning out such efforts as heist comedy "The Hot Rock" in 1972, a 1975 adaptation of Ira Levin's "The Stepford Wives" (from which he begged to have his name removed) and "The Great Waldo Pepper", a less-successful Redford vehicle about aviatorial barnstorming.

He had such a strong working relationship with Redford that he was enlisted to adapt "All the President's Men," based on the Watergate investigation by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, in 1976. The film scored at the box office and picked up several Oscar nominations, including one for best picture. However, his next adaptation, of Cornelius Ryan's WWII epic "A Bridge Too Far", was deemed overlong and was a box office disappointment.

Goldman's first venture into television was the four-hour miniseries "Mr. Horn" in 1979. By now his experiences in Hollywood had reached critical mass, and he fictionalized some of those feelings in the 1979 novel "Tinsel."