



Iran has made most efforts to counter money laundering **2**



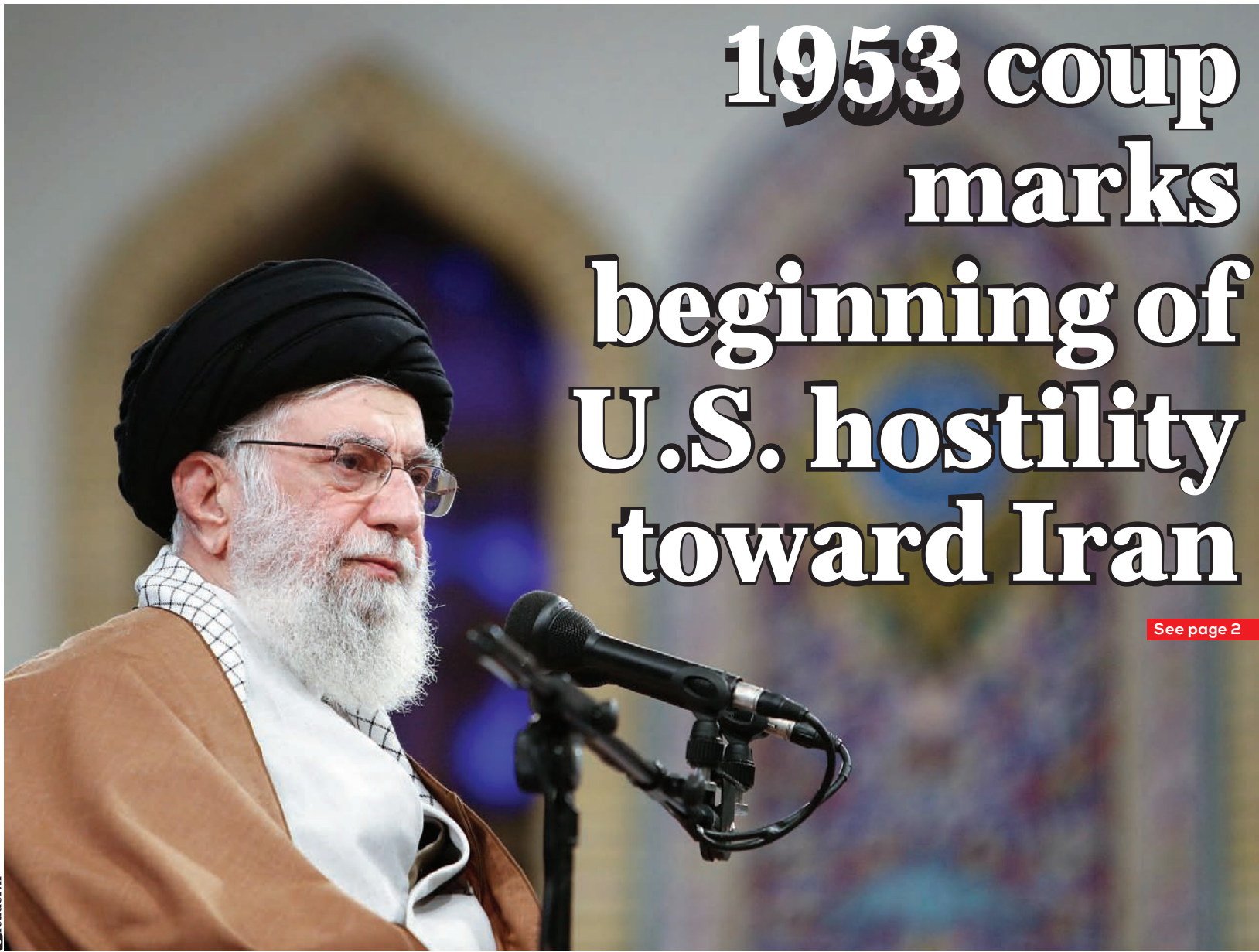
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1953 coup marks beginning of U.S. hostility toward Iran

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Energy, labor ministries team up for \$4.5b job creation plans

TEHRAN — The Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for implementing projects worth 192.81 trillion rials (about \$4.59 billion) aimed to create 23,600 job opportunities across the country.

The MOU was signed by Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Cooperatives, Labor

and Social Welfare Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari on Saturday, IRIB reported.

As reported by the news portal of the energy ministry (Paven), the projects will be carried out in cooperation with Tose'e Ta'avon Bank and Water and Wastewater Engineering Company as representatives of the two ministries.

The projects are mainly focused on water and electricity management. **→4**

Cuban diplomat calls U.S. sanctions 'insult to international community'

TEHRAN — Cuban Ambassador to Tehran Alexis Bandrich Vega said on Sunday that the United States' sanctions are an "insult to the international community" and crime against humanity.

During a press conference, the ambassador said that the economic sanctions by the U.S. have made it necessary to form an international front to counter U.S. unilateralism.

He described sanctions as "economic war" and noted that international action

is required to fight this war.

President Hassan Rouhani said on October 15 that the U.S. has committed "crime against humanity" by its "economic terrorism" against the Iranians.

"Undoubtedly, the United States' administration has committed a crime against humanity. The United States' action is economic terrorism," he said during a speech at a meeting of the health ministers from the Eastern Mediterranean region. **→2**

Thousands rally in Lebanon in show of support for President Aoun

TEHRAN — Thousands of Lebanese have rallied near the presidential palace in a major show of support for President Michel Aoun, after more than two weeks of huge nationwide protests against the country's ruling elite.

Aoun's supporters on Sunday filled up a two-kilometre-long (one-mile-long) road leading to the palace in Baabda, outside Beirut.

"We are here, General. We won't abandon you as long as we live," one poster at the rally read, responding to the protest movement calling for his departure, among other demands.

Some Aoun supporters held up portraits of the 84-year-old president, while others waved Lebanese flags and orange-coloured banners of the political party he founded, the Free Patriotic Movement. **→13**



ARTICLE

Fatemeh Salehi
Mehr News Agency
journalist

Roadmap by religious authority for Iraq's political future

Ayatollah Ali Sistani's last statement on Friday about recent developments in Iraq sends several messages. The grand ayatollah warned in his statement that the current situation in Iraq may drag the country into chaos.

In his statement, the ayatollah stated that the lost lives on both sides - protesters and security forces - are valuable to the religious authority, and that the country must not degenerate into chaos.

The religious authority has always respected the will of the Iraqi people to determine their political and administrative system through holding referendums on the constitution and regular parliamentary elections. Since the toppling of the former regime, the religious authority has constantly emphasized that reforms are a necessity.

"No person or group, no side with a particular view, no regional or international actor may seize the will of the Iraqi people and impose its will on them," Ayatollah Sistani said.

After the statement was issued, Iraqi political groups and figures greatly backed it. For example, Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi said that the parliament supports solutions put forward by the religious authority.

The Iraqi people, who are well aware of the political situation in their country, took to the al-Tahrir Square in Baghdad to declare support for the religious authority. Iraqis burned U.S. and Israeli flags, chanting slogans against the U.S., the Zionist regime, Saudi Arabia and the Ba'ath party. They also protested against the meddling of foreign countries which seek to create chaos and incite the protests.

The study of recent developments represents two important points: the first point is that political groups should pay attention to the statement of Ayatollah Sistani.

Those political groups in Iraq, which are trying to hold the current government and Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi responsible for corruption and agitate the situation to defame the government, should take the statement into account. **→13**

U.S. current political rancor is widely viewed as equal to civil war: Tillerson

TEHRAN — Former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that Republicans and Democrats need to work together for the good of the United States, while avoiding a direct reference to the Democratic-led impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump.

Tillerson, whom Trump fired in a tweet in March 2018 amid friction between the two over North Korea, Iran and Russia policies, has largely refrained from discussing politics publicly since leaving Washington.

Speaking in Houston at a fundraiser for the UCross Foundation, an artists and writers residency program, Tillerson urged a "civil and thoughtful discourse," saying that the current political rancor is widely viewed as equal to that during the Civil War, Reuters reported.

"Perhaps the arts can help the American people reconnect with their country and remember how precious this Republic is," he said to an audience of about 250 people. Tillerson

received the Wyoming-based organization's inaugural Award for Visionary Leadership.

■ More Republican senators consider acknowledging Trump's quid pro quo on Ukraine

Meanwhile, a growing number of Republican senators in the U.S. Congress are ready to acknowledge that President Donald Trump used American military aid as leverage to force Ukraine to investigate former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and his son, even as Trump repeatedly denies quid pro quo accusations by Democrats that triggered an impeachment inquiry against him.

The shift among Senate Republicans could complicate the message coming from Trump as he furiously fights the claim that he had withheld U.S. aid from Ukraine to pressure the Eastern European nation to dig up dirt on one of his main political rivals, The Washington Post said in a report on Saturday.

Democrats launched an impeachment inquiry in September after a whistleblower alleged the Republican president pressured Ukraine to investigate Biden and his son Hunter, who had served as a director for Ukrainian energy company Burisma.

The House of Representatives passed a resolution on Thursday to formally proceed with the impeachment inquiry and open the closed-door investigation to the public.

The House resolution ushered in a new phase of the investigation that poses the greatest threat to Trump's presidency to date.

Republicans in the upper chamber of Congress are insisting that the president's action was not illegal and does not rise to the level of an impeachable offense, even as an increasing number of these Republicans wonder how long they can continue to argue that no quid pro quo was at play in the matter, the Post said in its report. **→13**

Israeli forces detain Palestinian minister of Jerusalem al-Quds affairs

TEHRAN — Israeli military forces have arrested Palestinian Minister of Jerusalem al-Quds Affairs, Fadi al-Hadami, during an overnight operation in the Israeli-occupied city.

A local source, speaking on condition of anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media, said Israeli police forces and intelligence agents raided Fadi al-Hadami's home in the East Jerusalem al-Quds neighborhood of Silwan at Sunday dawn, and conducted searches before arresting him and taking him in for questioning.

The grounds for Hadami's detainment remain unclear. There was no comment from Israeli authorities on the report.

According to Press TV, this is the third

time that Hadami has been arrested by Israeli authorities since taking up his post as part of Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh's new government in April.

Back on September 25, Israeli soldiers stormed Hadami's house, and violently ransacked it for hours before taking the Palestinian minister away.

Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said at the time that Hadami had been detained on charges of allegedly breaking a law prohibiting political activity in Jerusalem al-Quds by the Palestinian Authority, which is based in the occupied central West Bank city of Ramallah, located 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Jerusalem al-Quds.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) condemned the arrest then, describing it part of the Israeli regime's plans to Judaize Jerusalem al-Quds.

Adnan al-Husseini, a member of PLO Executive Committee, also said the Tel Aviv regime's continued arrests of Palestinian figures in Jerusalem al-Quds is unjustified and part of "violations against civil."

Hadami was also arrested in late June, a few days after accompanying the Chilean ambassador on a visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which had angered the Israeli regime.

According to him, the reason given for the arrest was "violating sovereignty."



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Villagers hold oak forest preservation program

People in Sarsakhti village in the city of Shazand, central Markazi province, participated in a regional program to help preserve the oak reserve of Zagros forests.

Different species of oak are the most important and dominant trees in the Zagros forests (comprising some 70 percent of all trees).

Oak forests need special attention and detailed plans for preservation considering their effects on the ecosystem and human life.

U.S. troops back at military bases in northeast Syria

TEHRAN — U.S. troops are reportedly back in military bases in northeastern Syria which they had previously evacuated ahead of Turkey's military action against Kurdish forces in the area.

Turkey's Anadolu Agency has reported that American forces arrived in the west of Syria's northern province of Raqqa on Saturday to rebuild their military base.

A U.S. military convoy, including a personnel carrier armored vehicle, a mine flail and a utility vehicle, arrived in Jazira base located west of Raqqa via Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah, Press TV reported.

Nearly 30 U.S. soldiers were reportedly seen in the convoy.

Also on Friday, U.S. forces began rebuilding a military base in northern Syria's Sarrin village, south of Kobani, officially known as Ayn al-Arab.

The U.S. military bases in Sarrin and Sabit, nearly 30 kilometers south of the Turkey-Syria border, were previously evacuated and destroyed during Turkey's offensive last month.

U.S. troops also resumed patrols near oil fields in northeastern Syria on Friday, after an intermission prompted by Turkey's military incursion.

Turkey launched the offensive on October 9 in a declared attempt to push the People's Protection Units (YPG) militants away from border areas.

Ankara views the U.S.-backed YPG as a terrorist organization tied to the home-grown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been seeking an autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey since 1984.

Turkey's offensive came after the U.S. abruptly pulled its forces out of the region, clearing the path for Turkey to go ahead with the planned military action against Washington's longtime Kurdish allies.

Washington reversed an earlier decision to pull out all troops from northeastern Syria, announcing last week the deployment of about 500 troops to the oil fields controlled by Kurdish forces.

Pentagon chief Mark Esper said the deployment will seek to secure oil resources from Daesh. Washington, he said, will use "overwhelming" force against any other actor challenging the U.S., including Syria's own government.

Speaking last week, President Donald Trump suggested that Washington sought economic interests by controlling the oil fields.

Malaysia says U.S. sanctions against Iran are against law

By staff and agency

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Sunday that the United States' sanctions against Iran are unlawful.

"There is no provision in the United Nations that a country which is dissatisfied with another country can impose sanctions on that country and other countries trading with that nation," Free Malaysia Today quoted the prime minister as saying in a press conference on the sidelines of the 35th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits.



"When you apply sanctions, it is against the law," he noted.

He said, "The sanctions don't apply to one country alone," he said, adding that Malaysia is now being sanctioned.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that banks in Malaysia were closing the accounts of Iranian individuals and companies because of U.S. sanctions.

According to the news agency, some Iranians and one embassy official said that there were "mass closure" of Iranians' bank accounts in the

Southeast Asian country in recent months.

The Malaysia's prime minister told reporters on Wednesday his nation was being forced to "make it difficult" for Iranians to live normal lives in the country.

"Our ties are very good with Tehran, but we face some very strong pressures from certain quarters, which you may guess," Mohamad said, without naming where the pressure was coming from.

"We are forced to do this because if we don't, they will close our banks abroad. It's a kind of bullying by very powerful people," he said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday, "Sadly, a number of Malaysian banks have placed a series of restrictions on opening accounts and offering banking services for Iranians, under the influence of the United States' economic terrorism."

"In this regard, our country's embassy in Malaysia has put the issue on the agenda in constant and intensive arrangements with Malaysia's government bodies and banking officials, and multiple negotiations have been held with the relevant authorities, and figuring out a solution and resolving the problem is still on the agenda," he added.

Mousavi also said the banking restrictions have created problems for the presence and activities of Iranians in Malaysia, particularly the participation of Iranian elites and university students in Malaysia's scientific and academic sphere as well as those involved in the trade and business sector.

"We hope that the friendly state of Malaysia would work out solutions to settle the problem, considering the Malaysian government's goodwill and clear and recognized stances on the unilateral (U.S.) sanctions, and that the problems that have arisen in Iranians' bank accesses would be resolved with consultation and on the basis of the legal frameworks available for the issue," he added.

Cuban diplomat calls U.S. sanctions 'insult to international community'

➔ Cuban envoy condemns U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA

Ambassador Bandrich Vega also condemned the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"It took long time and efforts to hold nuclear talks and reach a deal. This agreement was not reached in one night. International deals must be implemented," he suggested.



Elsewhere, the ambassador said his country attaches great importance to security in the Persian Gulf region.

"Havana and Tehran have always said that no country should interfere in other countries' affairs," he pointed out.

President Hassan Rouhani said in August that Iran's position is that there is no need to foreign forces to maintain security in the Persian Gulf region.

"Major powers, especially America, seek nothing except causing division and emptying treasury of the Islamic countries. The Persian Gulf littoral states can maintain security and stability in the region," Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

In an interview with Al Jazeera in August, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said, "We believe that the best the U.S. can do for the protection of maritime navigation is to just leave people alone; don't interfere."

Iran, U.S. face off in all fronts, says Iranian lawmaker

Tehran (IRNA) — Iranian Parliament member Hossein Naqavi Hosseini on Sunday highlighted political divide over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying that the parliament made mistake to ratify the agreement within 20 minutes in 2015.

Naqavi Hosseini said that the U.S. Administration is currently ignoring all the international organizations emerged after the end of World War II and the aspirations of the United Nations to restore the international peace and security.

He said that Iran and Saudi Arabia were both allies during the World War II and have been working together in the context of international organizations, but, the U.S. Administration placed the two countries to stand against one another for suspicious agenda.

The MP added that Iran has no way out but to withstand the U.S. pressure on economic, military, international and regional spheres.

The lawmaker stressed that Iran has kept its promises stipulated in the nuclear deal but that Europe has failed to live up to its commitments.

Ra'eisi to judges: Put human rights violators worldwide on trial

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Ra'eisi called Sunday on conscientious judges across the world and those who consider themselves as human rights defenders to set up a mechanism to put real violators of human rights on trial.

Accusing the U.S. of being behind state terrorism in the today's world, Ra'eisi said, "We really believe that the world lawyers favor to defend human rights, therefore, we ask them to call for putting the real violators of human rights on trial."

He also pointed to creation of the Daesh terrorist group by the U.S. government, saying those who created, organized, armed and supported Daesh and allowed the group to commit awful crimes in the region must be put on trial too.

Ra'eisi, who was addressing the human rights supreme council meeting, went on to say, "We never consider the human rights issue as a threat; instead, we con-



sider it as an opportunity for voicing our performance (in this regard) and prin-

ciples and in the meantime as a chance for raising our voices against those who

Leader says 1953 coup marks beginning of U.S. hostility against Iran

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution said on Sunday that the U.S. enmity against Tehran dates back to a Washington-sponsored coup against the legal government of Iran in 1953, noting that the U.S. is now weaker than that time but more "barbaric and flagrant".

Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei made the remarks during a meeting with thousands of pupils and university students one day ahead of the Aban 13, which marks the U.S. embassy seizure in Tehran by students on November 4, 1979.

Since the takeover of the U.S. embassy,

Iranians have been celebrating the occasion every year by holding rallies on the anniversary and viewing it as the national day against "global arrogance".

"The wolfish U.S. has certainly become weaker, but in the meantime, it has become more barbaric and flagrant," the Leader reiterated, adding, "The Islamic Republic of Iran, in response, has blocked the entire ways on U.S. return and influence via mighty defense and logical rejection of any talks (with the White House)."

Noting that the United States has never been trustworthy, the Leader said, "The gov-

ernment which was overthrown (in the 1953 coup), in fact, was hit by the stick of reliance on the great Satan (the U.S.)."

Ayatollah Khamenei went on to say that today those who see dialogue with the U.S. as a remedy for problems are seriously mistaken.

"Negotiation with the U.S. is indeed fruitless. Those who consider resumption of talks with the U.S. as the only way out of the country's problems are one hundred percent wrong. There will be no achievement from talks with the Americans, because they certainly will not give any concession to us."

In the 1953 coup d'état (known in Iran as

declare themselves as the (only) defenders of human rights."

"Thanks God, defending human rights has been stipulated in text of the Islamic Republic constitution and also has been pursued by the country's officials," the judiciary chief stated.

Citing gross violations of human rights, the top judge said, "Targeting an Iranian passenger plane by the U.S. warship over the Persian Gulf in 1988 is a blatant evidence of human rights violation. Massacre of innocent people in Yemen, Palestine and other countries should be prosecuted (by a real international court) too."

An Iranian airliner was flying from Bandar Abbas in southern Iran to Dubai on July 3 1988, with 290 passengers onboard when it was shot down by the Aegis-class cruiser. All passengers, including innocent women and children, lost their lives on that tragic day that history and posterity will never forget.

Iran has made most efforts to counter money laundering: Zarif

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that Iran, including the Foreign Ministry, has made most efforts to counter money laundering.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and Foreign Ministry have made most efforts to counter the Westerners' move in money laundering," he said in a session of the parliament.

He added, "Most efforts in line with countering the Westerners' moves in money laundering have been made by the Islamic Republic and the Foreign Ministry and we will continue these efforts. I defended the position of Iran when the committee of joint action [Financial Action Task Force (FATF)] took action against Iran."

Pointing to remarks he made about money laundering last year, Zarif said, "Accusations are being leveled against the Islamic Republic about refraining to join conventions because the country does not seek to fight terrorism and money laundering. What I said was that there are pressure groups who have personal interests. Now, you can watch what 'sultan of coins' said in court about ways to do money laundering."

Vahid Mazloumin, known as "sultan of coins", was ex-

ecuted in December 2018 on charges of having hoarded two tons of gold coins in order to agitate the gold market.

Zarif noted, "If there is no money laundering in the country, on what charges did you execute the sultan of coins?"

"There are pressure groups who have interests in money laundering. If it was not so, the Judiciary would not approve a chart of 60 pages to fight money laundering. Why did you turn what I said in defense of the country into remarks against the system?" he stated.

In an interview with the Khabar Online published on November 10, 2018, Zarif said, "After all, money laundering is a reality in our country and there are many who benefit from money laundering."

He added that those who profit billions of dollars from money laundering are spending millions of it to prevent the passage of the bills requiring more financial transparency.

The comments triggered a wave of enraged responses from some conservative politicians, who called for the impeachment of the foreign minister.

President Hassan Rouhani defended Zarif's remarks, saying not just Iran but the entire world is suffering from money laundering.



"Why do we fight over such obvious issues? Yes, the entire world is suffering from money laundering. Show me one country in the whole world in which money laundering does not take place and show me one country in the whole world in which corruption, narcotics and fake products do not exist," he said.

Commander: Iran to target interests of Washington, collaborators in any war

TEHRAN (FNA) — Spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi warned that Tehran will give a crushing response to any possible aggression by the U.S. and its allies, noting that the countries whose territories are used for launching attacks against Iran will not remain safe either.

"Any place and any point of any territories which host the U.S. and its allies' interests will be threatened (in case of any war) and the Islamic Republic has proved that it has the capability to do so," General Shekarchi told FNA on Sunday.

"Even if a country does not directly participate in any possible war but its territories host the enemy, we consider that country as a hostile territory and will treat it as an aggressor," he added.

General Shekarchi also underlined that Iran's military might and power is not limited to the country's territorial borders.

He, meantime, said that Iran has



never started and will not start a war in the future, "but if an aggressor makes a strategic mistake, that aggression will be confronted with the strongest and the most crushing response" in the geography beyond the imagination of ill-wishers, a response that will make the aggressors regret their deed.

General Shekarchi had also warned in June that the interests of Washington and its regional allies would be endangered and destroyed if the U.S. fired even one single bullet at Iran.

'We will resist until U.S. learns to speak respectfully with Iran'

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Saturday that Iranians will succeed to offset the current U.S. policy of maximum pressure as they have done so over the past four decades, noting that Tehran's strategy of resistance will go on till Washington learns to speak with language of respect with the Iranian nation.

Mousavi's remarks came in response to an earlier tweet by U.S. State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus who had said that Washington is increasing maximum pressure by imposing bans on construction sector in Iran.

"Your maximum pressure will be neutralized with our maximum resistance, discretion and hope," Mousavi said in response to Ortagus.

He added, "Like the past four decades, we will honorably

pass this difficult stage until you learn to speak respectfully with Iranians and return to your obligations (under the nuclear agreement)."

On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had said that U.S. sanctions on his country's construction sector was a vivid demonstration of Washington's "maximum failure" in its maximum pressure policy against Tehran.

"Subjecting construction workers to Economic Terrorism only manifests maximum failure of 'maximum pressure'," Zarif wrote on his Twitter account.

He once again reiterated the Iranian people's determination to stand firm in the face of Washington's behavior. "U.S. can sanction every man, woman and child but Iranians will never submit to bullying."

The top diplomat called on the United States to abandon

failed policies and return to the landmark nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between Iran and the 5+1, instead of digging itself deeper.

The U.S. on Thursday imposed sanctions on Iran's construction sector despite Washington's announcement a week ago that it had created a new mechanism to facilitate "permissible trade" with Tehran.

The U.S. State Department issued a fact sheet, singling out the sale of software used for industrial purposes, raw and semi-finished metals, graphite and coal used in Iran's construction sector as targets for the new sanctions.

Also on Thursday, the State Department announced a separate batch of sanctions against what it described as the sale of "strategic material" being used "in connection with Iran's nuclear, military, or ballistic missile programs".

Navy chief: Iran to mass produce undersea missiles

The Iranian navy will stage military exercises with China and Russia at start of 2020

POLITICAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — The Iranian Navy commander announced on Sunday that his forces have accessed the technology to launch missiles from under the sea, vowing to upgrade the mission to mass production in the near future.

During a visit to a technical-engineering workshop at the venue of Shahid Beheshti University, Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi highlighted the navy's achievements in different aspects.

"Today in the navy, we have attained the technology of launching missiles from under the sea decks and also from depth of the sea. Human resources, submarines, missiles, the missiles' cylinders are to be totally Iranian and domestically-made or trained," Khanzadi explained.

The admiral further said, "Last year at this time, we test-fired a missile from under the sea and now we have managed to mass produce it."

The commander went on to say, "The Iranian navy owns the largest logistic vessel in the Middle East region."

The commander also said the Iranian navy will stage a military exercise with the Chinese and Russian navies at the beginning days of 2020.

Khanzadi also said Iran's navy enjoys the largest flotilla in the Caspian Sea after Russia.

Back in November 2018, Khanzadi said that the country's experts decreased the time needed for manufacturing destroyers to less than two years.

"Today, we enjoy the capacity to build destroyers in a timespan of less than two years and we are making efforts to reduce it to less than one year," Rear Admiral Khanzadi said at the time.

Iran has made major achievements in manufacturing different weapons and military equipment in recent years.

Trump reveals true face of American regime, says Larijani

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Recent remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump about the United States' oil interests in the Middle East and his lack of interest in regional peace show the true face of the American regime, says Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani.

"Fortunately, today the U.S. has a president who has made it easy to demonstrate the true face of the White House's policies," Larijani said on Sunday, ISNA reported.

He was making a reference to Trump's remarks last week, when he said he hoped to secure a U.S. share of the Syrian oil revenues.

"We have taken it and secured it," Trump said of Syria's oil during remarks at the White House, after announcing the killing of Daesh's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

"We are leaving soldiers to secure the oil. And we may have to fight for the oil. It's okay. Maybe somebody else wants the oil, in which case they have a hell of a fight. But there's massive amounts of oil," the U.S. president stated.

Larijani said explicit expression of the top secret policies of the White House is one of Trump's characteristics.

"Such shameful remarks have been made



by the head of a regime, which is constantly worried about human rights in countries that think independently," he said.

■ Larijani to U.S. officials: Watch Trump's big mouth

The parliament speaker also advised the U.S. officials to watch Trump's big mouth, which reveals their inhumane and colonial policies to the world.

He said the U.S. does not care about the

Iranian people as well. "It's Iran's oil that is important for the U.S.," Larijani added.

In the last forty years, the U.S. has repeatedly failed to re-establish its dominance in Iran, he said, adding that the Iranian nation's resistance, perseverance and deep understanding have thwarted U.S. plots.

The U.S. has been putting enormous pressure on Iran since it pulled out of the 2015 nuclear agreement in May 2018. It has attempted to drive Iran's oil exports down to zero.

In the latest round of its anti-Iran sanctions, the United States said on Thursday it had imposed sanctions on the Iranian construction sector.

The U.S. State Department said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had determined Iran's construction sector was controlled directly or indirectly by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), which Washington has named a foreign terrorist organization.

As a result, the sale of raw and semi-finished metals, graphite, coal, and software for integrating industrial purposes will be sanctionable if the materials are to be used in Iran's construction sector, the department said in a fact sheet.

Iran not involved in providing security in Iraq during Arbæen season: minister

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli has hailed the security of Iraq during the Arbæen season, saying Iran had not been involved in providing Iraq's security.

"Iran did not interfere in Iraq's security at all because Iraq's security was at its peak. Neither Iraqis asked us to help them, nor did we interfere in Iraq's security and affairs," Rahmani Fazli said on Sunday, according to Mehr.

The Arbæen pilgrimage "occurred with relative satisfaction but we should strive to make it more and more glorious and orderly each year," he said.

The Arbæen march, which is the largest religious gathering in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the second Imam of Shia Muslims and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Each year, a huge crowd of people flock to Karbala, where the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located, to perform



mourning rituals.

This year, Arbæen falls on Saturday, October 19.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rahmani Fazli pointed out that there have been three major incidents and events since the beginning of the Iranian year, which

were managed very well.

"The first incident was the floods that occurred at the beginning of the year in the country, which we managed to overcome with God's grace and coordination among executive bodies," the minister said.

He went on to say that the second incident was the cruel sanctions, which "we managed to stand up to with tactfulness of the Supreme Leader and coordination among the administration, parliament and other bodies."

"The third event was the Arbæen issue. We succeeded in managing it very well and held the pilgrimage in a coordinated, coherent manner," he added.

Rahmani Fazli also said the Islamic Republic was concerned over the recent unrest in Iraq but it all went well. At the start of October, street protests erupted in several Iraqi cities over unemployment and lack of basic services.

The rallies resumed on October 25 after a pause of about two weeks, but took a violent turn.

Alavi: Embassy takeover foiled U.S. plots



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran forty years ago ridiculed the empty grandeur of the United States in the world and foiled their plots against the Islamic Republic, Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Sunday.

In a message ahead of the anniversary of the U.S. embassy seizure, Alavi congratulated the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Iranian nation on the historic event.

He noted that the event showed the Iranian nation's determination to end the influence of arrogant powers in Iran, IRNA reported.

On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took 52 Americans, including diplomats and staff, hostage.

They were held in captivity for 444 days.

The embassy in Tehran is now an Islamic cultural center and a museum. It stands as a symbol of the Iranian revolution.

Each year on November 4, Iranians take to the streets across the country to commemorate the anniversary of the embassy seizure.

The deputy head of the Islamic Development Coordinating Council said on Saturday that some 150 foreign reporters and photographers along with 2,000 Iranian ones will cover this year's "Aban 13th rallies" nationwide.

"Some 150 foreign photographers and reporters have announced readiness to cover the event," Nosratollah Lotfi said in a press conference in Tehran held for announcing the timetable of the Aban 13th rallies which falls on Nov. 4.

Foreign Ministry says Rouhani has sent letters to Persian Gulf states on Iranian peace plan



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Saturday that Iran is serious about providing security in the Persian Gulf region and confirmed that President Hassan Rouhani's letter about the Hormuz peace plan has been sent to heads of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Iraq.

"Mohammad Javad Zarif, the foreign minister of our country, will send a letter to secretary general of the United Nations in this respect as well," he said.

At the United Nations' summit in New York in late September, Iran officially unveiled proposal for regional security, officially called the Hormuz Peace Endeavour.

"Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz,

I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the 'Coalition for Hope', meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor," President Hassan Rouhani told the UN delegates.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has invited all regional states to join Iran's initiative for securing the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

In a tweet in September, Zarif said the initiative entails "dialogue, confidence-building, freedom of navigation, energy security, non-aggression, and non-intervention".

In a post on his Twitter account on October 15, Zarif renewed Iran's call to all countries bordering the Persian Gulf to join Tehran's initiative to "forge a blueprint for peace, security, stability, and prosperity" in the region.

U.S. pullout from JCPOA has caused great harm to it: British diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — British Ambassador to Tehran Rob Macaire has said that Donald Trump's pullout from 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, has caused great harm to the international pact.

"The United States' pullout from the JCPOA has caused great harm to the agreement. We cannot eliminate the effects of sanctions, however, we cooperate with Iran with good intention and to find ways to make the situation better," IRNA quoted him as saying on Sunday in a video message he posted on his Instagram page.

He said that Britain is making efforts along with France, China and Russia to guarantee Iran's benefits from the deal.

He added that Britain is helping Iran move forward with civil nuclear program.

In a video message posted on his Twitter account on October 28, Macaire said that London will remain committed to the JCPOA.

"There are many challenges, however, we will be committed to the JCPOA even when we exit the European Union," he said.

He also said, "Recently, I had the honor to host a delegation of high ranking British nuclear experts. This delegation achieved good advances in line with modernizing the Arak nuclear reactor."



He said this nuclear cooperation is a benefit of the JCPOA. "China and Britain have gathered around some of best nuclear experts in the world including Professor Robin Grimes," he added.

Macaire noted that Britain supports Iran's plans to build an advanced non-military nuclear reactor in order to conduct medical and industrial researches.

"This project is an example of things we do to assure

that Britain is still working (even) after the United States' withdrawal [from the JCPOA]," he said.

He added, "At first, the United States and China guided this project and now we have replaced the United States to continue the project."

British and Chinese nuclear expert teams visited Iran in October to discuss the redesigning and upgrading of the Arak heavy water reactor.

On October 14, Macaire tweeted, "Civil #Nuclear cooperation is an important benefit that #Iran receives under the #JCPOA. Delighted to welcome Professor @RobinWGrimes along with UK and Chinese delegations to Tehran for technical talks on the #Arak modernisation project."

Reportedly, a statement issued by the British embassy in Tehran said, "We are upholding our obligations to cooperate with Tehran on modernizing Arak facility."

The statement added that the 3-day visit to Iran by British experts "forms part of our commitment to ensuring that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) provides benefits for both Iran and the wider international community."

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned the deal in May 2018 and returned sanctions and imposed new harsh ones.

Top MP urges administration to take stronger fourth nuclear step

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A senior member of the parliament has urged the administration of President Hassan Rouhani to take its next step of scaling back its commitments under the 2015 nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).



"The fourth nuclear step should be taken more firmly in order to push the Europeans to fulfill their commitments to the deal," Mehr quoted Mojtaba Zonnour as saying on Sunday.

Zonnour said he had suggested that the administration take all its retaliatory measures in a single step instead of giving the other side 60-day ultimatums.

This would have been a more effective approach to secure Iran's interests from the deal, he stressed.

The top lawmaker also said Iran has many options to choose from in the fourth step, including installation of advanced centrifuges and increasing heavy water stockpile.

Washington withdrew from the internationally-endorsed nuclear deal with Iran on May 8, 2018, reimposed the toughest-ever sanctions against the country and started a plan to zero down Tehran's oil sales.

Under the nuclear agreement, Tehran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of economic and financial sanctions.

Following the U.S. withdrawal, Iran remained fully committed to the JCPOA for a year, but announced on the anniversary of Washington's bellicose move that its "strategic patience" is over and would gradually reduce its commitments to the deal at 60-day intervals, which were designed as deadlines for Europe to protect Tehran's interests under the deal.

So far, Iran has taken three steps in that regard.

In the first step, Iran removed cap on its nuclear deal stockpile which was limited to 300 kilograms enriched to purity of 3.67 percent. In the second step, which started in July 7, Iran started enriching nuclear fuel to more than 3.67 percent. And in the third step, which fell on September 6, Iran removed ban on nuclear research and development (R&D).

Tehran has repeatedly said its measures will be revered as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral U.S. sanctions.

In remarks last month, Zonnour said Europe should pay the price if it wants to salvage the nuclear accord.

"Europe is capable to do this, but instead it takes steps in line with U.S. goals, and accordingly it does not have the necessary will to preserve Barjam (JCPOA)," he added.

Gharibabadi elected UNIDO vice president

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has been elected as the vice president of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

According to Fars, Gharibabadi was elected as the UNIDO vice president during a session of the body in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

The election was held in presence of delegations from member states.



At the beginning of the meeting, UNIDO board of directors were elected for a two-year term.

Headed by Gharibabadi, the Iranian delegation was made up of Deputy Industry and Trade Minister Barat Qobadian and Director General of the ministry's office for industrial property Seyed Mehdi Mirsalih.

The 18th session of the General Conference of the UNIDO in the UAE will wrap up on November 7.

The General Conference is UNIDO's supreme policy making organ where all member states meet once every two years.

It determines the guiding principles and policies of the organization, and approves the budget and work program of UNIDO.

Every four years, the general conference appoints the director-general.

Since becoming a specialized agency, the UNIDO General Conference was hosted away from its Vienna headquarters only three times: in Bangkok, Thailand (1987); in Yaoundé, Cameroon (1993); in Lima, Peru (2013); and now in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (2019).

The General Conference will be preceded by UNIDO's least developed countries (LDCs) ministerial conference, which will also be hosted in Abu Dhabi.

Early in July, Iran's permanent delegation to Vienna, in a statement read out at the 47th UNIDO meeting, lashed out at Washington for adopting unfair policies to hinder development in developing countries.

The statement also welcomed the joining of the new members, Palestine in particular, to UNIDO and asked UNIDO's secretariat to help industrial development of Palestine.

Iran expresses satisfaction over UNIDO programs in helping developing countries to attaining their industrial goals, it said.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	308960.7
IFX	3914.59

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,896 rials
GBP	54,330 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.69/b
WTI	\$56.20/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.24/b
Gold	\$1,516.00/oz
Silver	\$818.20/oz
Platinum	\$953.85/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Energy, labor ministries team up for \$4.5b job creation plans

1 → Under the MOU, the National Development Fund will provide 9.5 trillion rials (about \$226 million) of the needed fund for the projects and the rest will be provided by Tose'e Ta'avon Bank. The signing of the mentioned MOU marks the beginning of a mutual collaboration between the two ministries for increasing employment in the country with a focus on the issue of water management.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Ardakanian emphasized the importance of management in water and energy sectors, saying "Our country needs to pay more and more attention to both utility and consumption management in the water and energy industries."

"According to the MOU, signed today, besides directing employment, bank resources are also being used in the right way to boost production and to contribute greatly to the management of water utility and consumption," he said.

India among top 10 FDI destinations, \$5 trillion economy to be reality soon: PM Modi

Highlighting India's economic growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on November 3, said the country is among the top 10 destinations for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the world and had received \$286 billion of FDI in the last five years.

According to moneycontrol.com, he was speaking at an event in Bangkok, to mark golden jubilee of the Aditya Birla Group's presence in Thailand.



PM Modi said it was the best time to be in India and that many things such as foreign direct investment, ease of doing business, ease of living and productivity are rising while tax rates, red-tapism, corruption, cronyism are on a decline.

"All of what I have said just now makes India one of the world's most attractive economies for investment. India received 286 billion dollar FDI in the last five years. This is almost half of the total FDI in India in the last twenty years," Modi said.

"When my government took over in 2014, India's GDP was about two trillion dollars. In 65 years, two trillion. But in just five years, we increased it to nearly three trillion dollars," PM Modi said.

India has stopped working in a routine, bureaucratic manner as it's undergoing "transformative changes", PM Modi told a group of influential business leaders, hard-selling the country as one of the most attractive investment destinations globally.

■ Reforming tax regime

PM Modi particularly talked about initiatives to reform India's tax regime and said his government is now starting face-less tax assessment procedure so that there is no scope for discretion or harassment.

"In today's India, the contribution of the hard-working tax payer is cherished. One area where we have done significant work is taxation. I am happy that India is one of the most people friendly tax regimes. We are committed to further improving it even more," PM Modi said.

The prime minister is on a three-day visit to Thailand to attend ASEAN-India, the East Asia and the RCEP summits.

"India has seen many success stories in the last five years in various sectors. The reason for this is not only the governments. India has stopped working in a routine, bureaucratic manner," PM Modi said.

Referring to direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme, Modi said it has ended the culture of middlemen and inefficiency.

"You would be shocked to know that for years, money was spent on the poor which did not really reach the poor. Our government ended this culture thanks to DBT. DBT stands for direct benefit transfer. DBT has ended the culture of middlemen and inefficiency," he said.

The prime minister projected India as one of the very few attractive investment destinations globally and called upon the Thai business leaders to be part of the India growth story.

"For investment and easy business, come to India. To innovate and starting up, come to India. To experience some of the best tourist sites and warm hospitality of people, come to India. India awaits you with open arms," he said.

In his over 20-minute speech, Modi also talked about India's skilled human resources. "If there is one thing I am especially proud of, it is India's talented and skilled human capital. No wonder India is among the world's largest start-up eco-systems," he added.

ICCIMA ready to set up trade offices abroad

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Head of desk Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafei said the chamber is ready to establish five trade offices in five countries to boost the private sector's role in the national trade.

Speaking in a meeting of Mashhad Chamber of Commerce's Trade Committee attended by Tajikistan ambassador, the official noted that neighboring countries would be the priority for this program and the first office is to be

established in Russia.

"In the wake of Iran's joining to Union of Eurasian States, the first trade office will be set up in Russia," Shafei said.

Underling the fact that joining the Eurasian Union would be a good opportunity for the country, he said that the items which have been considered by the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) for trade between Iran and Eurasia should be thoroughly reviewed and assessed.

He stressed the importance of boosting



trade and economic relations with neighboring countries, saying, "In this path, we must move toward developing sustainable business relationships [with the neighbors]. Naturally, the role of Iranian ambassadors and attachés in neighboring countries is undeniable."

"Given the successful experience of in-

stitutes such as Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) in boosting the countries' trade, we proposed the establishment of national trade offices to be able to promote the market for the Iranian goods," he said.

TEDPIX gains 230 points in a day

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of desk Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has risen 230 points to 308,960 on Sunday, IRIB reported.

As reported, 3,502 billion securities were traded during 386,804 deals on Sunday.

Indices of banks, carmakers, and petrochemical units accounted for the highest amount of rise in TEDPIX.

While lagging the parallel markets of foreign currency, gold coin, and real estate behind, Iran's stock market hit a new record during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as TEDPIX closed at an all-time high of 302,103 points.

It is while the index had stood at 178,000 points at the end of the previous calendar year.

Experiencing a growth of 74 percent during the first six months of the present year, TSE witnessed its best performance since the Iranian calendar year of 1382 (March



2003-March 2004).

Also as reported, Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) exchange

Red meat production down 22% in summer

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of red meat in Iran has dropped 22 percent during this year's summer compared to the same season in the previous year, Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has announced.

As the SCI has reported, 77,000 tons of red meat have been produced in the country during summer, IRNA reported.

The report said that beef and veal

had the lion's share in the country's red meat output during summer with 43,000 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 25,700 tons, goat meat with 6,100 tons, and buffalo meat with 590 tons.

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the Middle East region with lamb being the most sought after.

However, the consumption per person

is around a third of what is normally seen in countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in the Islamic law.

Around 10 percent of the domestic demand is responded to with imports from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they complies with religious rules.



Lagarde era begins with chance to map out plans

The Christine Lagarde-era at the European Central Bank is underway and the new president gets her first chance to frame her outlook for the economy and monetary policy publicly today.

As stated by business.financialpost.com, Lagarde, who took the reins on Nov. 1 from Mario Draghi, will speak in Berlin at a time when policy makers at the ECB are split over dwindling stimulus tools and the economy is flirting with recession. She may use the opportunity to tell governments, including Germany's, to do more to boost demand.

"Lagarde takes over against a backdrop of flagging growth and stubbornly low inflation," said Jamie Rush, chief European economist at Bloomberg Economics. "Stimulus options are limited and the Governing Council is divided. She'll have a fight on her hands to turn the euro area around."

In the UK, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Report (just renamed from the Inflation Report) is also out on Thursday. No change in interest rates is expected, so the focus will be on new economic predictions and Governor Mark Carney's press conference. Brexit uncertainty is still the big factor for the outlook, and now there's a general



election to throw into the mix.

Four Eastern European central banks deciding on rates this week can sit out the global push for looser monetary policy as their economies are still growing healthily and inflation is hovering above or near their targets. Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Serbia are all expected to leave benchmark borrowing costs unchanged.

■ Cutting interest rates

Federal Reserve officials seem to be planning a pause after cutting interest rates three times. But a lot will spend the week discuss-

ing the outlook. Fed Bank of San Francisco President Mary Daly speaks Monday, while Dallas's Robert Kaplan and Minneapolis's Neel Kashkari follow on Tuesday. Charles Evans of Chicago, John Williams of New York and Patrick Harker of Philadelphia get their turns on Wednesday. Kaplan and Raphael Bostic of Atlanta speak on Thursday and Daly goes again on Friday.

It's a light week for data with orders for durable goods and factories expected to show declines on Monday. The trade balance on Thursday will be monitored for effects from the U.S.-China trade war. Canada releases jobs data for October on Friday.

Australia, Malaysia and Thailand will decide on interest rates. The Reserve Bank of Australia is expected to pause on Tuesday after three interest-rate cuts this year brought the benchmark to a record-low 0.75% and spurred speculation among economists that unconventional policies will soon be needed to get inflation back into the central bank's target range. Most economists expect Malaysia to hold too on Tuesday, according to Bloomberg's survey. There's pressure on Thailand to ease to take some steam out of the baht, which is one of the world's strongest

currencies this year.

Chinese exports, data for which is out on Friday, may have extended declines in October after the U.S. imposed another round of tariffs. The Philippines publishes a gross domestic product report on Thursday with Bloomberg Economics predicting an acceleration in the third quarter, while Indonesia follows the same day with the expectation it will show growth was little changed.

Inflation is likely to have slowed further in Brazil in a report set for release on Thursday, consolidating the view that the central bank will cut interest rates again in its final meeting of the year. The benchmark IPCA index for October is forecast to decline to 2.53%, the lowest in two years. On Tuesday, the country's central bank will release minutes of the latest monetary policy meeting, when it slashed the Selic rate to a record-low 5%.

Meanwhile, Mexico's consumer prices are seen stabilizing at 3%, the slowest since 2016, with the stagnation of the economy also providing room for further rate cuts. And Peruvian policy makers will debate on Thursday whether to leave their borrowing costs unchanged.

UK firms face sharpest drop in output in eight years as Brexit bites

By Sajid Shaikh

Private companies in the UK are heading for their sharpest fall in economic output in eight years, new figures suggest.

Data shows businesses hurting across the UK economy from retail to manufacturing to professional services, with Brexit uncertainty continuing to hit business sentiment ahead of the general election.

Private sector activity will shrink by 17% over the three months to January next year, according to Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) latest monthly growth indicator.

New figures, based on surveys of private companies in Britain, show private sector output also sank in the three months to October by 11%, a sharper decline than the previous quarter.

The latest decline marks the 12th consecutive quarter of flat or falling volumes, the CBI said on Sunday.

It comes after a leading index warned on Friday UK manufacturers could be heading towards a recession.

Figures from IHS Markit/CIPS UK manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) showed factories' output shrinking month on month.

Its headline figure in October came in at 49.6, showing manufacturing sector contracting as it fell below the growth benchmark of 50 and marking a decline for sixth months in a row.

■ Weak investment levels

In September, the UK's service sector – which includes



restaurants, hotels and finance and accounts for about 80% of the economy – also shrank. It saw sliding sales, job losses, cancelled and postponed projects and weak investment levels, according to an IHS Markit/Cips survey for the month.

The deterioration in private firms' activity in the latest CBI survey reflects a sharp decline in manufacturing output and consumer services business volumes, coupled with a further drop in retail sales and business, and professional services volumes. Retail sales are expected to stabilize, however.

The "drops across the manufacturing, retail and dom-

inant services sector, paired with the hugely damaging effect of Brexit uncertainty, are ingredients for a perfect storm for British firms," warned Anna Leach, CBI's deputy chief economist.

The "squeeze on the private sector continues to tighten, with our growth indicator showing that volumes have been flat or falling for a full year. And with expectations for activity at their lowest in nearly eight years, it's clear businesses are worried about the future."

Across the economy more broadly, growth has been volatile during 2019, driven by shifting activity in response to moving Brexit deadlines.

The CBI expects the economy to grow modestly in the event of a smooth transition to a new Brexit deal, with the longer-term economic impact dependent upon the details within the final deal.

The "general election is an opportunity for all parties to present their visions for the UK's future. Passing a good deal with the EU is the first step. Then the real heavy lifting can begin, building a future relationship with our biggest trading partner.

"Ending political instability will enable a renewed focus on domestic priorities, which will give the economy the boost it needs," Leach said.

Since the Brexit referendum the UK economy has grown at an ever slower rate, dropping from above 2% three years ago to a predicted 1.2% this year.

Number of knowledge-based participants in IEE 2019 rises fourfold

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Homayoon Haeri said the presence of knowledge-based companies in the 19th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2019) has increased fourfold compared to last year's event.

Speaking in the closing ceremony of the exhibition, Haeri emphasized the important role of knowledge-based companies in the country's exports of engineering services, saying "We need to have a clear strategy and planning in exporting power industry's technical services."

Mentioning the significant participation of various companies in this year's exhibition, the official noted "The condition is currently ripe for focusing on the exports of technical and engineering services of the electricity industry."

According to Haeri, four major issues should be considered in strategic planning for exports of technical services in this area to obtain a better outcome.

"The first is the convergence among the companies and firms from management and technical perspectives.... The second is technology innovation and this is the



key to export success worldwide.... The third issue is knowing the target markets that is the target countries should be studied because each country has its own conditions and finally the fourth is formulation of a roadmaps in this regard," he explained.

The 19th Iran International Electricity Exhibition kicked off on August 31 at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

According to the organizers, in this year's exhibition over 40 knowledge-based companies presented their achievements and services in the electricity industry.

'Iranian households welcoming rooftop PV systems'

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA) says Iranian households have embraced the renewable energy sources with open arms, IRNA reported.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 19th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2019), Seyed Mohammad Sadeqzadeh mentioned the increasing number of rooftop photovoltaic stations across the country, saying that SATBA is purchasing the additional electricity produced in such power plants.

According to Sadeqzadeh, all provinces in the country have the potential for installing rooftop solar power stations and even in Caspian Sea coast regions there is more sunlight than in many European countries.

The deputy energy minister noted that such systems



can be considered as the best type of electricity generation systems since there is no electricity losses due to the on-site consumption.

The capacity of generating electricity from renewable resources has reached 841 megawatts (MW) in Iran.

Currently, renewables account for nearly six percent of the total power generation in the country.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

Back in February, Sadeqzadeh announced that Iran plans to add electricity generated from renewable sources to the export basket and in this regard private entities active in this field can sell their produced electricity to the energy ministry on a guaranteed price.

Hot Sahara sun could ensure cleaner future

By Omar El-Huni

Harnessing the powerful sunlight over the Sahara Desert could provide renewable energy that reduces carbon emissions and provides fresh economic value to the largely deserted area, analysts said.

As global energy demand increases, scientists are looking more seriously at how to convert the scorching heat of the Sahara — which spans 9.2 million sq.km — into energy through large solar farms and then transfer it to the rest of the world.

Efforts to tap into solar energy from the Sahara have been in the works for decades and are now showing promise, scientists said.

In 2009, the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation started Desertec, a project designed to harness solar energy and transfer it via high-voltage direct current. While the project initially gained significant interest from energy firms and banks, it collapsed in 2014 because of prohibitive costs.

"Costs were very high and some companies said we're not that interested in the Middle East and North Africa," Desertec CEO Paul van Son later explained.

A similar solar power project is TuNur, which aims to open an energy corridor between North Africa and Europe by linking the Sahara-developed power to Europe's energy grid. The project is expected to reinvestigate

the energy market and stimulate the economy of Tunisia, a central partner.

■ Constructing underwater energy

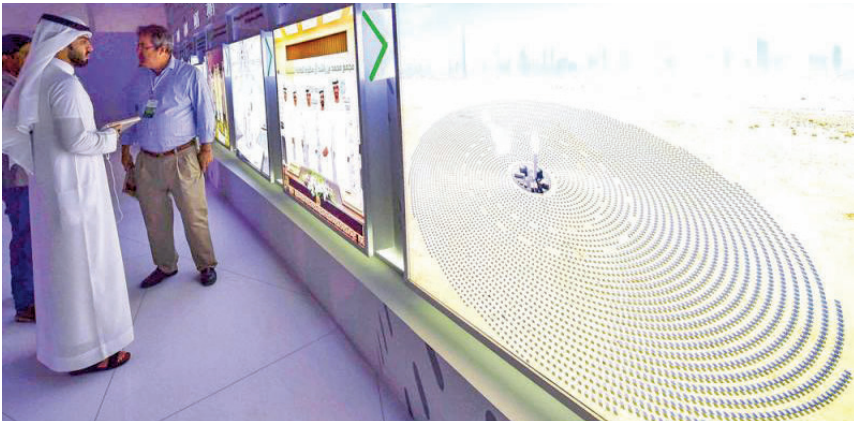
A parallel step came in April, when Tunisia and Italy reached a deal to construct an underwater energy line between Partanna, Sicily, and El Haouaria, Tunisia.

Solar energy can be turned into electricity through two main methods: the indirect use of concentrated solar power through reflective surfaces and, more commonly, photovoltaics, which converts sunlight to energy through semiconducting materials, such as solar panels.

Each technique delivers a large amount of energy to a specialized area but also has distinct drawbacks. Both methods, for instance, are highly vulnerable to sandstorms, which are common in the Sahara.

Photovoltaic technology has another problem in the Sahara, where temperatures routinely exceed 40 degrees Celsius — solar panels simply get too hot to function effectively. Concentrated solar farms are more frequently used in the desert.

Given the Sahara's size, experts agree it is a prime location for solar farms. Estimates from NASA and calculations by Amin Al-Habaibeh, of Nottingham Trent University, indicate the area produces more than 22 billion gigawatt hours of energy per year that could be harnessed.



This is equivalent to the amount of energy produced by 35 billion barrels of oil a day, meeting "7,000 times the electricity requirements of Europe, with almost no carbon emissions," Habaibeh said in May in an article for the Conversation.

Even after energy is collected, there are problems with transporting it. Previously, this was done through storage batteries but those were cumbersome and frequently lost energy.

Researchers from Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden are developing a "molecular solar thermal system" that stores energy as a chemical fluid, resulting in no

loss of the storage medium.

The "technique means that we can store the solar energy in chemical bonds and release the energy as heat whenever we need it," said Kasper Moth-Poulsen, who leads the research team. "Combining the chemical energy storage with water-heating solar panels enables a conversion of more than 80% of the incoming sunlight."

Despite continuing roadblocks, the Sahara Desert has remarkable potential to revolutionize the global energy market, providing an effective, renewable solution with a limited carbon footprint.

(Source: *theArabweekly.com*)

Big moves on the crude chessboards

By Syed Rashid Husain

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies often termed as the OPEC+, are scheduled to meet next month to decide on their next steps on the global energy chessboard.

The overall scenario continues to be difficult. Notwithstanding the OPEC+ output cut regimen, an oil glut is looming, underlines the Paris based International Energy Agency (IEA). "Unless there is very strong demand growth recovery, we will see a surplus," Keisuke Sadamori, the IEA's Director for Energy Markets and Security told CNBC in Singapore last Tuesday.

"Overall, we will continue to see a well-supplied market in 2020," Sadamori said, echoing the IEA's monthly oil report from earlier in October, which painted a rather gloomy picture of oil demand growth in the short term.

In a report earlier this month, the IEA cut its demand growth forecast by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) for both 2019 and 2020, to 1 million barrel per day and 1.2m bpd, respectively.

Markets thus continue to be faced with considerable headwinds.

To the detriment of the producers, crude prices continue to be under pressure. Last week was no exception. Weakening Chinese industrial output data and inventory gain in the U.S. once again pointed to a mellowing global crude demand.

Industrial output in China shrank for a sixth straight month in October while growth in the country's service sector activity was also at its lowest since February 2016, Reuters reported.

A protracted trade war between China and the United States has also been weighing on the crude outlook. Markets took a hit on reports from Chile, that due to the ongoing demonstrations in the country, the U.S. and the Chinese



leaders would not be able to meet and discuss ways to get out of the ongoing trade war.

■ The crude inventories

In the meantime, a rise in the U.S. crude inventories also dented the overall market psyche. As per the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA), in the week to October 25, U.S. crude inventories rose by 5.7m barrels, compared with analyst expectations for an increase of 494,000 barrels only.

Also, the rise in OPEC's October crude output, courtesy the swift Saudi output recovery from the September attacks on its oil infrastructure, also weighed in on the markets.

Markets thus slipped. OPEC+ actions have till yet been unable in stemming the rot.

What could the OPEC+ do in the circumstances? There is growing frustration in the market. Just rolling over the current output beyond March next, may not do the job. OPEC+ will have to go beyond, most now agree.

With the Aramco IPO under the spotlight, Saudi Arabia seems determined to do whatever it takes to stabilize the markets and push the crude oil market prices up. The King-

dom has signaled that it is prepared to cut its oil production even deeper than now, Nigerian oil minister Timipre Sylva told Bloomberg TV on Tuesday, citing a recent conversation he had with Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman. "He assured me that they are very ready to even cut deeper," Sylva, told Bloomberg.

■ The crucial OPEC meeting

As the crucial meeting of OPEC and its Russia-led non-OPEC partners in the deal draw closer, speculation is already rife that the allies will have little choice but to extend the cuts or go even deeper, considering the slowing oil demand growth and the persistent oversupply.

But Moscow continues to stay non-committal. Russia's Deputy Energy Minister Pavel Sorokin said earlier last week, it was too early to talk about a potential deepening of the cuts because the production cut mechanism is not limitless.

The "OPEC+ mechanism has shown that it is efficient, but it cannot be efficient forever," Sorokin said, noting that the OPEC+ coalition will monitor and take into account the slowing U.S. production growth at the December meeting. Russia's 'it's-too-early-to-say' position led ING analyst Warren Patterson to say "it does seem it is going to be a repeat of previous meetings, where there is uncertainty about where Russia stands regarding those cuts."

As per the ING, OPEC and its allies need to take further action in December to support prices and draw down inventories, but convincing all producers to cut even more could be a challenge.

The decision is not straight forward. There are ifs and buts to it.

OPEC and its allies will have to counter them — yet at the cost of market share. The issue of market share may not be a red herring at the moment, but in the longer run, OPEC+ cannot and should not continue to overlook it.

(Source: *dawn.com*)

Asian LNG price drops as floating storage starts unloading

Asian spot prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) slumped this week as floating storage cargoes started unloading into an already oversupplied market.

According to skystatement.com, the average LNG price for December delivery into northeast Asia LNG-AS was estimated at \$5.90 per million British thermal units (mmBtu), \$0.40/mmBtu down from last week.

Vessels floating with cargoes on board waiting for a higher price have started discharging, with most of the volumes expected to be unloaded this month.

This could further pressure prices, traders said.

The "November-December spread is not as wide as the spread between November and previous months was, so it doesn't make sense to hold cargoes for longer," one LNG trader said.

Floating cargoes were unloaded this week in Greece, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, India and Japan.

Some of the longest floaters are heading to terminals for unloading now. The Diamond Gas Sakura that loaded a U.S. cargo back in mid-August signalled Taiwan's Yongan as its destination this week.

The majority of the still floating cargoes is scheduled to reach various terminals in early November, while at least nine vessels are either not moving or do not have a confirmed destination yet.

At least two deals were done this week below or close to \$6/mmBtu, an LNG trader said. Russia's Sakhalin 2 project awarded a Dec. 11 loading cargo below \$6/mmBtu, the source said. The cargo was offered on a free-on-board (FOB) basis.

Japan's Tohoku Electric Power bought a late December cargo just below \$6/mmBtu, the source added.

There was a deal for end December at S&P Global Platts market on Close (MOC) window at \$6.10/mmBtu between Vitol and BP. The majority of bids in the window for December were below \$6/mmBtu this week.

■ The Dutch gas benchmark

Poland's state-run gas firm PGNiG has awarded its tender for five cargoes at a \$0.10-0.15/mmBtu discount to the Dutch gas benchmark, a source said. The cargoes are for delivery in the first quarter 2020.

JERA Global Markets has awarded its tender for the first quarter 2020 delivery at a \$0.10-0.15/mmBtu discount to the Japan Korea Marker (JKM), another source said. Five of eight cargoes were awarded to Shell, BP and Mitsui, a separate source said.

Spot LNG demand remained scarce this week.

Korea Gas Corporation (KOGAS) is facing a situation of full LNG storages, a source said. KOGAS might have bought up to 15 cargoes for January and February delivery, two trade sources said last week.

Growth of LNG demand in China in 2019 is expected to slow to 14%-17% from 41%-42% in 2018, according to analysts from Wood Mackenzie and IHS Markit.

But the domestic gas price in China is higher than the spot LNG price, so there could be some opportunistic buying, traders said.

In terms of tenders, Mexican state power utility CFE was seeking one cargo for mid-November delivery.

Highlight potential of offshore wind power in emerging countries

Eight major emerging markets have a technical potential for offshore wind energy that triples the installed electricity generation capacity of the European Union, said a World Bank (WB) study.

As per ewind.es, Brazil, India, Morocco, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Vietnam have, for this form of generation, with potentialities of 3.1 terawatts (TW): more than one thousand gigawatts (GW) in the case of fixed enclaves while that for floating projects the figure would exceed two thousand GW.

The analysis entitled 'Globalization: expansion of offshore wind energy in emerging markets', studies offshore areas within 200 kilometers of the coastline of each country.

While some countries, such as India, Sri Lanka and Turkey, have significant fixed offshore wind turbines potential in shallow waters, others such as the Philippines and South Africa require floating foundations to account for higher depths, up to a thousand meters.



The report is based on the establishment of a new program of the BM Group that aims to accelerate the expansion of offshore wind energy in developing countries, and provide technical assistance so that they can assess their potential and develop a portfolio of projects ready for investment.

According to the analysis, offshore wind energy now accounts for about 26 billion dollars in annual investments, or eight percent of the total invested in clean energy. This proportion will increase dramatically, with an estimated 700 billion dollars in investments for 190 GW of installed capacity by 2030, the WB added.

This industry, the investigation also showed, has grown almost five times since 2011, with 23 GW installed at the end of 2018.

A large volume of planned projects is in Europe, China and the United States, but there is also significant potential in emerging markets, he said.

For countries like Vietnam, which now has an installed capacity of just over 40 GW (less than 10 percent of its 475 technical potential for fixed and floating offshore wind power), this represents a significant opportunity for large-scale projects located nearby of areas of high energy demand, the WB considered.

Offshore wind construction is more complex and requires more time than its land counterpart, the analysis also highlighted.

The development of an offshore wind farm requires between five and ten years and demands between 10 and 50 million dollars in development costs and advance planning to link the energy generated to the ground grid.

Also, capital expenditures can go beyond two billion dollars and involve risks associated with the complexity of construction, which requires innovative financing, such as project management.

Israeli soldier gets slap on the wrist for murder of unarmed child

By Dave DeCamp

An Israeli soldier was convicted for the death of a 15-year-old Palestinian boy during the Great March of Return protests last year at the border fence that separates the Gaza Strip from Israel. This soldier is the first Israeli to be convicted of anything since the protests began in March 2018.

Not surprisingly, this soldier was only sentenced to one month of labor, demoted to private, and was not convicted for murdering the boy, only for doing so without permission. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) said in a statement, «The verdict indicates that on July 13, 2018, during a violent riot, the soldier fired at a Palestinian rioter who climbed the border fence opposite the Gaza Strip, without obtaining permission from his commanders while not following the rules of engagement or the instructions given to him earlier.»

A video of the incident was uploaded to Twitter. The video shows 15-year-old Othman Helles barely get his two feet on the fence before he is shot dead. Helles is clearly unarmed, and cannot be taken as a serious threat to a soldier with a rifle and full body armor. Since these protests began, children, paramedics, journalists, and disabled people have been killed by Israeli forces. The worst the protesters can do is hurl rocks across the fence or send burning kites, hardly a threat to the Israeli soldiers. This conviction could just be a sorry attempt to appease the UN and other critics of the way the IDF has handled these protests. Since the first day of the Great March of Return, the UN has called for investigations into the massacres.

In February 2019, the UN released a report on their investigation into the killings. The UN concluded that «Israeli soldiers committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law» and there was «no justification for Israel to shoot protesters with live ammunition.»

March 30th 2018 was the first day of the Great March of Return. That day, 15 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces. The next day the IDF tweeted, «Nothing was carried out uncontrolled; everything was accurate and measured, and we know where every bullet landed.»

The UN report details some of the injuries and killings from that first day of protests, like this account of a 17-year-old's slaying, «On 30 March, Israeli forces shot Ibrahim, a candy seller from Rafah, in the back of the head as he walked away, approximately 100 m from the separation fence, after he and his companion threw stones at Israeli soldiers. He died almost instantly.» Shooting a teenager in the back of the head was «accurate and measured» according to the IDF. On May 14th 2018, the U.S. Embassy officially opened in Jerusalem. Tens of thousands of Gazans marched at the border fence to protest the move, which turned into the deadliest day of the Great March of Return. 60 demonstrators were killed that day.

One of the most egregious killings happened the day of the embassy opening. According to the UN report, «Fadi, from Khan Younis, had had both legs amputated following an Israeli airstrike in 2008. On 14 May, Israeli snipers shot him in the chest at the Abasan Al-Jadida protest site, where he was sitting in his wheelchair with two friends approximately 300 m from the separation fence. He died immediately.»

The UN report is full of gut-wrenching stories like this. And the only conclusion to draw from this one soldier's conviction is that every other death, even the unarmed man in a wheelchair almost 1,000 feet from the fence, was done with permission from IDF commanders. The Great March of Return still goes on every Friday. Why are so many Gazans willing to risk their lives every week? The protesters are not only demanding freedom of movement but also an end to the blockade enacted in 2007.

The small territory is home to almost two million people, one of the most densely populated places in the world. The blockade has shattered Gaza's economy. By 2015, the GDP of the occupied territory had been cut in half. Currently, the unemployment rate is about 50 percent and around 70 percent for Gaza's youth. The UN has said Gaza might be unlivable by 2020, mainly due to a lack of drinkable water.

The Islamist political party Hamas is blamed for the blockade, and serves as an easy scapegoat for both US and Israeli politicians. Hamas was democratically elected in 2006. After the election, Elliot Abrams, who served on George W. Bush's National Security Council and is now President Trump's envoy to Venezuela, met with Palestinian businessmen and advocated for a «hard coup» against Hamas. Fatah, the political rival of Hamas, was armed by the US and Israel to overthrow the government of Hamas. Fatah failed in their coup attempt, but the real losers were the people of Gaza. The violence between the two parties was the excuse used to put the draconian blockade on the occupied territory.

The victory of Hamas in Gaza was not all bad for Israeli officials. A WikiLeaks cable from 2007 reveals that Amos Yadin, who was the director of the IDF's intelligence branch at the time, said, «Israel would be 'happy' if Hamas took over Gaza because the IDF could then deal with Gaza as a hostile state.»

The state of Israel would not be able to operate with such impunity without the undying support of the US government. Thanks to lavish lobbying campaigns, even questioning that support in the halls of Congress is considered anti-Semitic.

Both the House and Senate have recently introduced legislation to ban the sale of crowd-control to munitions to Hong Kong law enforcement. Since June, massive protests have rocked Hong Kong. Although the protests have turned violent, no demonstrators have been killed by Hong Kong police. Yet, US lawmakers are quick to make legislation siding with the protesters. Imagine the reaction from Washington if police were slaughtering people in the streets of Hong Kong?

The people of Gaza will continue to march for their most basic human rights. The international community may cry foul, but as long as the premier empire supports Israel, they can operate without any real consequences. The one month sentence this soldier received is a slap in the face to the families of those murdered at the fence. What will it take to bring these families justice?

Notes: To see footage and hear from protesters at the Great March of Return, watch Abby Martin's new documentary Gaza Fights for Freedom.

Why those 'Endless Wars' must never end?

By Andrew Bacevich and Tom Engelhardt

Here's the strange thing for the self-proclaimed greatest power in history, the very one that, in this century, has been fighting a series of unending wars across significant parts of the planet: if you exclude Operation Urgent Fury, the triumphant invasion of the island Grenada in 1983, and Operation Just Cause, the largely unopposed invasion of Panama in 1989, Washington's last truly successful war ended 74 years ago in August 1945 with the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japanese cities. Every war of even modest significance since – and they've been piling up – from the Korean and Vietnam wars to the ones in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Libya, and elsewhere in this century (and the last as well, in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq) has either ended badly (Vietnam) or not at all (see above).

And if that seems a little strange for the greatest power in history, here's something hardly less so: the reputations of so many of the men and women who promoted or directed those failing wars and the generals who commanded them remain remarkably intact. And that's in a Washington that still promotes more of the same – with the exception of our bizarre president, notes TomDispatch regular Andrew Bacevich, author of the soon-to-be-published, aptly titled book, *The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory*. These days, it seems, you can't lose a reputation fighting a losing war for the United States. If you want proof of that, just check out the photo that Guardian columnist Julian Borger recently highlighted. It's a smile-a-thon of self-satisfaction that happens to include former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (think: Vietnam, Cambodia), former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (think: the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq), and former CIA director and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (think: America's twenty-first-century forever wars), among others. All three are still admired and have kept their reps in Washington, which should tell you what you need to know about what passes for American foreign policy and the top officials of the national security state in 2019.

While Donald Trump tends to refer pejoratively to that state within a state as “the deep state,” I prefer to think of it as the shallow state, not just because in these years so much of it is in plain sight, but because its thinking is anything but deep, as Bacevich suggests today.

■ Donald Trump and the Ten Commandments (Plus One) of the National Security State

Let us stipulate at the outset that Donald Trump is a vulgar and dishonest fraud without a principled bone in his corpulent frame. Yet history is nothing if not a tale overflowing with irony. Despite his massive shortcomings, President Trump appears intent on recalibrating America's role in the world. Initiating a long-overdue process of aligning U.S. policy with actually existing global conditions just may prove to be his providentially anointed function. Go figure.

The Valhalla of the Indispensable Nation is a capacious place, even if it celebrates mostly white and mostly male diversity. Recall that in the eighteenth century, it was a slaveholding planter from Virginia who secured American independence. In the nineteenth, an ambitious homespun lawyer from Illinois destroyed slavery, thereby clearing the way for his country to become a capitalist behemoth. In the middle third of the twentieth century, a crippled Hudson River grandee delivered the United States to the summit of global power. In that century's difficult later decades, a washed-up movie actor declared that it was “morning in America” and so, however briefly, it seemed to be. Now, in the twenty-first century, to inaugurate the next phase of the American story, history has seemingly designated as its agent a New York real estate developer, casino bankrupt, and reality TV star.

In all likelihood, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan would balk at having Donald Trump classified as their peer. Yet, however preposterously, in our present moment of considerable crisis, he has succeeded them as the nation's Great Helmsman, albeit one with few ideas about what course to set. Yet somehow Trump has concluded that our existing course has the United States headed toward the rocks. He just might be right. “Great nations do not fight endless wars.” So the president announced in his 2019 State of the Union Address. Implicit in such a seemingly innocuous statement was a genuinely radical proposition, as laden with portent as Lincoln's declaration in 1858 that a house divided cannot stand. Donald Trump appears determined to overturn the prevailing national security paradigm, even if he is largely clueless about what should replace it.

Much as Southerners correctly discerned the import of Lincoln's veiled threat, so, too, have Trump's many critics within the national security apparatus grasped the implications of his insistence that “endless wars” must indeed end. In the unlikely event that he ever delivers on his campaign promise to end the conflicts he inherited, all the claims, assumptions, and practices that together define the US national security praxis will become subject to reexamination. Tug hard enough on this one dangling



thread – the wars that drag on and on – and the entire fabric may well unravel.

■ The Decalogue Plus One

In other words, to acknowledge the folly of this country's endless wars will necessarily call into question the habits that people in and around Washington see as the essence of “American global leadership.” Prominent among these are: (1) positioning US forces in hundreds of bases abroad; (2) partitioning the whole planet into several contiguous regional military commands; (3) conferring security guarantees on dozens of nations, regardless of their ability to defend themselves or the values to which they subscribe; (4) maintaining the capability to project power to the remotest corners of the earth; (5) keeping in instant readiness a “triad” of nuclear strike forces; (6) endlessly searching for “breakthrough technologies” that will eliminate war's inherent risks and uncertainties; (7) unquestioningly absorbing the costs of maintaining a sprawling national security bureaucracy; (8) turning a blind eye to the corrupting influence of the military-industrial complex; and easily outpacing all other nations, friend and foe alike, in (9) weapons sales and (10) overall military spending.

Complementing this Decalogue, inscribed not on two tablets but in thousands of pages of stupefyingly bureaucratic prose, is an unwritten eleventh commandment: Thou shalt not prevent the commander-in-chief from doing what he deems necessary. Call it all D+1. In theory, the Constitution endows Congress with the authority to prevent any president from initiating, prolonging, or expanding a war. In practice, Congress has habitually deferred to an increasingly imperial presidency and treated the war-powers provisions of the Constitution as non-binding. This Decalogue-plus-one has been with us for decades. It first emerged during the early phases of the Cold War. Its godfathers included such distinguished (if today largely forgotten) figures as Paul Nitze, principal author of a famously unhinged policy paper known as NSC-68, and General Curtis LeMay, who transformed the Strategic Air Command into a “cocked weapon” capable of obliterating humankind.

During the 1960s, better-dead-than-Red began to fall from favor and a doctrine of “flexible response” became all the rage. In those years, as an approach to waging, and therefore perpetuating the Cold War, D+1 achieved maturity. At that very juncture, the search for fresh thinking to justify existing policies vaulted the likes of Robert McNamara and Maxwell Taylor into positions of authority as secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Vietnam War put the American military establishment's capacity for flexibility to the test. That test did not go well, with Secretary McNamara and General Taylor prominent among the officials whose reputations did not survive. Remarkably, however, amid the carnage of that war, D+1 did survive all but unscathed. Vietnam was surely a debacle, but as long as the Cold War persisted, asking first-order questions about the basic organization of “national security” appeared just too risky. So the Decalogue emerged with hardly a scratch. Notwithstanding the disappointing presidencies of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, so, too, did the Eleventh Commandment.

More striking still, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, D+1 persisted. Thirty years ago this month when the Cold War ended, everyone agreed that a new era of global affairs was dawning. The Soviet Union, the threat that had prompted the creation of the Decalogue, had vanished. Yet without missing a beat, a new generation of Nitizes and LeMays, McNamaras and Taylors devised an altogether different rationale for preserving their predecessors' handiwork.

That new rationale was nothing if not expansive. During the Cold War, the overarching purpose of D+1 had been to avert the ultimate disaster of Armageddon. Its revised purpose was to promote the ultimate goal of remaking the world in America's image. With a “sole superpower” now presiding over the international order, D+1 offered a recipe for simultaneously cementing permanent US primacy and securing the universal triumph of American values. So, at least, members of an intoxicated foreign policy elite persuaded themselves.

Yet in the wake of the Cold War came not peace and harmony but unprecedented US military activism. Here was the common theme of the otherwise disparate presidencies of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and

Barack Obama. During the quarter-century that elapsed between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the election of Donald Trump, the United States intervened in or attacked Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sudan, Afghanistan (again), Iraq (again), Libya, Somalia (again), Yemen, Syria, several West African nations, and, briefly, Pakistan. And given a presidential preference for employing Special Operations forces on highly classified missions, that list is almost surely incomplete. Simply put, reticence regarding the use of force vanished.

As for the Eleventh Commandment, it now achieved a status comparable to the doctrine of papal infallibility. After 9/11, Congress quickly passed an open-ended Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF), empowering the president “to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States.” Of course, “terrorism,” as we are frequently reminded by the likes of Benjamin Netanyahu, Vladimir Putin, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan is very much in the eyes of the beholder. In effect, Congress had simply handed the commander-in-chief a blank check.

That AUMF became law on September 18, 2001, following a unanimous vote in the Senate and with only a single member dissenting in the House of Representatives. In the 18 years since, it has shown both remarkable durability and elasticity. Best illustrating its durability have been the wars launched under its auspices. Best illustrating its elasticity was Barack Obama's “disposition matrix,” a secret procedure devised by his administration empowering him to order the killing of just about anyone anywhere on the planet deemed to pose a threat to the United States. All of this transpired with the cool deliberation and thorough consultation that was an Obama signature. Acting pursuant to the provisions of that AUMF, in other words, Obama codified assassination as an integral component of U.S. policy. In Washington, war thereby became a permanent undertaking that recognized no boundaries.

In or Out? Old or New?

Read the papers or watch cable news and you might conclude that the pivotal issue of our moment is the fate of Syria's Kurds, with the United States military deemed uniquely responsible for ensuring their wellbeing. Yet while such a conclusion may play well with our troubled consciences – and troubled they certainly should be – it is radically misleading.

True enough, Trump's abrupt abandonment of the Kurds qualifies as cruel, callous, and immoral. It also ranks as only the latest in a long string of such American betrayals, as various Native American tribes, Chinese Nationalists, Cuban exiles, South Vietnamese, and prior generations of Kurds (among others) can testify. So Trump has not exactly broken with past precedent. More to the point, the matter at hand relates less to the Kurds than to a far larger question: Should the United States perpetuate the military enterprise commonly but misleadingly referred to as the “global war on terrorism?” Or should the United States recognize that this so-called GWOT has failed and consider a different approach to policy? Given that the GWOT represents D+1 applied to the Greater Middle East, “different” implies a wholesale reexamination of basic national security policy. It's that prospect that worries the foreign policy establishment.

With the GWOT's 20th anniversary now within hailing distance, we are in a position to evaluate just what that war has actually achieved. Honest differences of opinion may be possible, but in my judgment the results rank somewhere between disappointing and catastrophic. This much is certain: we have not won and victory is nowhere in sight. Granted, Iraq's Saddam Hussein is gone, as is Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, both of them guilty of terrible crimes (although innocent of any direct involvement in 9/11). For the moment at least, the repressive Taliban do not rule in Kabul. And Osama bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi are dead. Proponents of the GWOT and of D+1 can point to these as positive achievements.

Yet widen the aperture slightly and the outcome appears less impressive. George W. Bush's much-ballyhooed Freedom Agenda came to naught. Regime change in Kabul, Baghdad, and Tripoli produced not liberal democracy but chronic instability, pervasive corruption, and endemic violence. In Afghanistan, the Taliban never admitted defeat and today threaten the Western-installed Afghan government. Rather than affirming American military mastery and

benign intentions, the reckless and illegal invasion of Iraq, advertised under the banner of Operation Iraqi Freedom, became a gift to our adversaries. If anyone can be said to have won the Iraq War, that honor must surely belong to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Worse still, by upending the existing regional order, U.S. forces created a power vacuum that facilitated the emergence of new terrorist movements like ISIS.

America's ongoing post-9/11 wars deserve to be called “endless” because, despite contributing to hundreds of thousands of deaths and squandering trillions of dollars over the course of many years, the United States has come nowhere close to fulfilling its declared political aims. The plight of the Kurds in Syria offers a small but telling illustration of the magnitude of that failure.

Now the president of the United States, acting pursuant to the authority granted him by the Eleventh Commandment, says he wants to call it quits. It's like Adam in the Garden of Eden: the one thing he's forbidden to do, he does – or in Trump's case makes a show of intending to do at least. In response, in a show of near-unanimity Democratic and Republican defenders of the Decalogue Plus One insist that President Trump may not do what he declares himself intent on doing. Recall that George W. Bush's doctrine of preventive war – sometimes disguised as “anticipatory self-defense” – elicited only modest opposition at best, largely along partisan lines. Much the same can be said of Barack Obama's self-appointment as assassin-in-chief. But Donald Trump's declared intention to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria as a preliminary step toward reducing our regional military presence has elicited bipartisan condemnation expressed in the strongest terms.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, typically the president's most stalwart defender, took to the pages of the Washington Post to denounce Trump's decision in no uncertain terms. Riddled with half-truths and hyperbole, his op-ed qualifies as a model of “fake news.” Yet credit McConnell with this much: he understands that, in the dispute between Trump and the foreign policy establishment, the fate of Syria's Kurds rates as no more than incidental. The real issue, according to McConnell, is preserving “the post-World War II international system” that, he asserts, “has sustained an unprecedented era of peace, prosperity, and technological development.” Furthermore, having created that system, the United States remains “its indispensable nation,” a phrase introduced by Madeleine Albright and Bill Clinton in the early 1990s. Preserving that system's benefits requires keeping faith with the Kurds, maintaining the U.S. military presence throughout the Middle East, and above all preserving the established framework of national security policy. In short, compliance with the Decalogue is mandatory. Even (or especially) presidents must obey.

Now, if you believe that the world we live in today does not differ in any significant way from the one that existed in the wake of World War II, McConnell's argument might just possess some merit. Yet back then, the American economy led the pack in every conceivable measure. America's European allies had been ravaged by war and desperately needed U.S. assistance. Both they and the defeated Axis powers, Germany and Japan, appeared vulnerable to the siren song of Communism.

To some observers, the Soviet Union appeared intent on taking over the world. China was poor, weak, backward, and divided. Imperial powers like Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands still clung to the illusion that they could keep a lid on demands for national self-determination in South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Nuclear weapons offered a source of reassurance rather than concern – apart from the United States no one had them. Finally, that a climate crisis attributable to human activity might one day cause grievous harm on a planetary scale was literally beyond imagining.

Time has rendered every bit of this inoperative. McConnell's “post-World War II international system” is now a fantasy about as relevant to contemporary reality as belief in the tooth fairy.

In what may be the sole redeeming feature of his otherwise abysmal presidency, Trump appears determined to blow the whistle on this charade. Sadly, his efforts do not extend much beyond making noise. Even the troop withdrawals that he announces with such fanfare tend to result in little more than repositioning within the region rather than redeployment back to the United States. Worse still, the motley band of mediocrities who surround the president consists almost entirely of believers in D+1. In his impulsive and ignorant way, Trump wants change; they oppose it. As a result, diplomatic initiatives that might actually open a pathway to ending endless wars – negotiating the restoration of normal diplomatic relations with Tehran, for example, or curtailing weapons sales (and giveaways) to nations that use U.S.-manufactured arms to create mayhem, or demonstrating leadership by declaring a no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons – don't even qualify for discussion. So Trump is left to flail about on his own, haplessly posing legitimate questions that he is incapable of answering.

The fears of the Decalogue's defenders are not misplaced: Syria is the loose tip of a dangling thread. Give that thread a good yank and the entire moth-eaten fabric of U.S. national security policy just might become undone. Yet it will take someone with greater determination, consistency, and strength of character than Donald Trump to perform this necessary task. Andrew Bacevich, a TomDispatch regular, is president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. His newest book *The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory* will be published in January.

Democrats' all-out effort to impeach Trump

Polls against controversial President

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The Democratic Party of America is doing its best to impeach US President Donald Trump. However, Democratic leaders are well aware that Trump will not be ousted, even in the event of impeachment. The House of Representatives and the Senate are unwilling to finally vote to oust Trump. While most members of the US Senate belong to the Republican Party.

However, the Democrats are trying to impeach the President of the United States for the purposes of the election. They believe Trump's impeachment will further reduce his popularity with American voters. Many independent voters have already agreed to impeach and even oust Trump. Some of these independent voters, however, had voted for Trump in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election.

Democrats take major step forward in impeachment effort against Trump

As Euro News reported, Democrats in the US have taken a major step forward in the impeachment process against President Donald Trump, approving rules for the next stage of the inquiry into his alleged attempt to have Ukraine investigate Democrat presidential hopeful Joe Biden and his son. The Democrat-controlled US House of Representatives voted by 232 to 196 to establish how to hold public hearings in Congress, which could be damaging for Trump ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

It was the first formal test of support for the impeachment probe and showed that Democrats have enough backing in the House to later bring formal charges, known as articles of impeachment, against Trump if they feel they have enough evidence.

House Democrats say Trump has abused his office for personal gain and jeopardized national security by asking Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to investigate Joe Biden, a former US vice president, and his son Hunter, who had served as a director for Ukrainian energy company Burisma. Biden is a leading candidate in the Democratic presidential nomination race to face Trump in the November 2020 election. "It's a sad day. No one comes to Congress to impeach a president," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said before the vote. Republicans have largely stuck by Trump, who responded to the news on Twitter.

Full House to Vote on Trump Impeachment Inquiry

VOA News reported that The full House of Representatives will vote this week on the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, addressing the White House argument that the probe has been illegitimate. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has scheduled a vote for Thursday, saying in a letter to fellow representatives that she wants to "eliminate any doubt" about the process.

Pelosi says the impeachment inquiry resolution will "affirm the ongoing and existing investigation ... establish the procedures for hearings that are open to the American people ... outlines procedures to transfer evidence to the Judiciary Committee ... and sets forth due process rights for the president and his counsel."

Trump and his Republican supporters have called the impeachment probe illegitimate because it is being held behind closed doors and the full House never voted for it. Pelosi says that argument "has no merit."

There is no law saying the entire House has to approve an investigation and the majority party in control — currently the Democrats — set out the rules for an impeachment process. FILE - Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is joined by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff at a news conference as House Democrats move ahead in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump, at the Capitol, in Washington, Oct. 2, 2019.

FILE - Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is joined by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff at a news conference at the Capitol, in Washington, Oct. 2, 2019. Ahead of the vote, hearings in the impeachment inquiry continue Tuesday with the House Intelligence, Foreign Affairs and Oversight committees set to hear from Alexander Vindman, an Army lieutenant colonel who is part of the National Security Council.

Vindman says in a prepared opening statement obtained and shared by numerous media organizations that he was among those who listened in on the July 25 call in which Trump pushed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy for "a favor." Trump urged Zelenskiy to investigate alleged Ukrainian meddling on behalf of



Democrats in the 2016 U.S. election and allegations of corruption by 2020 Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, who worked for a Ukrainian natural gas company.

"I was concerned by the call. I did not think it was proper to demand that a foreign government investigate a U.S. citizen, and I was worried about the implications for the U.S. government's support of Ukraine," Vindman says. He also described a meeting two weeks before the call in which he says Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, "started to speak about Ukraine delivering specific investigations" in order for the Ukrainians to secure a meeting between Zelenskiy and Trump.

"I stated to Amb. Sondland that his statements were inappropriate, that the request to investigate Biden and his son had nothing to do with national security, and that such investigations were not something the NSC was going to get involved in or push," Vindman says.

On Monday, Former Deputy National Security Adviser Charles Kupperman, who also listened in on the phone call, balked at testifying before the House committees. When the White House ordered Kupperman to ignore a House subpoena, Kupperman filed a lawsuit Friday asking a judge to decide whose demand he should honor — the congressional subpoena or the White House. House Democrats sent Kupperman's lawyer, Charles Cooper, a letter over the weekend contending that the lawsuit lacked merit and had been coordinated with the White House. Cooper said the lawsuit had not been "even discussed" with the White House.

"It would not be appropriate for a private citizen like Dr. Kupperman to unilaterally resolve this momentous constitutional dispute between the two political branches of our government," Cooper responded. Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff calls White House efforts to stop Kupperman's testimony another example of Trump's obstruction of justice and another possible reason to draw up articles of impeachment. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy speaks during talks with journalists in Kyiv, Ukraine, Thursday, Oct. 10, 2019...

FILE - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy speaks with journalists in Kyiv, Ukraine, Oct. 10, 2019.

Phone call
Democrats are investigating whether Trump withheld badly needed aid to Ukraine in exchange for Zelenskiy's public promise to investigate Democrats and the Bidens. Trump insists there was no quid pro quo between him and Ukraine and has called his telephone call with Zelenskiy "perfect."

But U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine William Taylor testified last week the release of \$391 million in U.S. military aid to Ukraine was directly linked to its willingness to open the U.S.-related political investigations Trump wanted. Trump alleges that when Biden was U.S. vice president, he threatened to hold up loan guarantees to Ukraine unless a prosecutor stopped a corruption investigation into the gas company where Hunter Biden worked. No evidence of wrongdoing by the Bidens has surfaced, and the allegations of Ukrainian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election was based on a debunked conspiracy theory.

Trump impeachment: Five takeaways

from 'explosive' testimony

Anthony Zurcher, North America reporter of BBC reported that Acting US Ambassador to Ukraine Bill Taylor spoke to Congress behind closed doors for more than nine hours on Tuesday, providing testimony alternatively described as explosive or inconclusive, depending on who was doing the talking. Although Taylor didn't appear in front of television cameras, his 15-page opening statement was quickly leaked to the Washington Post, providing the veteran diplomat's unfiltered take on his connection to the rapidly unfolding story of the Trump administration's Ukraine policy machinations. The picture Taylor paints isn't a positive one for the White House, bolstering Democratic claims that his testimony was more bombshell than dud. Here are five takeaways from Taylor's opening statement, which reportedly took more than an hour to deliver and elicited sighs and gasps from those in attendance.

1. Trump the 'businessman'

At this point there's little question that Donald Trump, whose background is in real estate and reality television, has made for an unconventional president.

Supporters have touted this as a strength — something US Ambassador to the EU Gordon Sondland leaned into during an 8 September phone conversation detailed by Taylor.

Sondland — who was part of what Taylor described as an "irregular, informal channel of US policy-making" that included Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani — was explaining how Trump wanted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to make a public statement about opening investigations that could potentially be damaging to Democrats.

Media caption How are Republicans responding to impeachment?

According to Taylor, Sondland said Trump was a businessman, and "when a businessman is about to sign a cheque to someone who owes him something... the businessman asks that person to pay up before signing the cheque."

Taylor balked at this, insisting that Ukraine didn't "owe" the US anything.

Much of the controversy around Trump's back-channel US-Ukraine policy has centred around whether there was a "quid pro quo" — a promise of Ukrainian action that could be politically beneficial to the president in exchange for releasing US military assistance and giving Zelenskiy a coveted White House visit. It doesn't take a working knowledge of Latin to figure that the "businessman deal" Taylor describes is exactly such an arrangement.

2. The mystery budget woman

There have been multiple reports that the order to suspend US military aid to Ukraine came directly from the president. Taylor's statement corroborates this, in a somewhat unusual fashion. Media caption Chaotic scenes as Republicans storm impeachment deposition

He describes an 18 July National Security Council video-conference in which the topic of the delayed military aid came up. A woman who said she was from the White House budget office (OMB) — Taylor could not tell who because she was off-screen — said that "her boss" had instructed her not to approve any additional security money

to Ukraine "until further notice".

That boss would be Mick Mulvaney, head of the budget office and the president's acting chief-of-staff. The unidentified woman went on to say that "the directive had come from the president to the chief-of-staff to the OMB".

"In an instant," Taylor testified, "I realised that one of the key pillars of our strong support for Ukraine was threatened."

Democrats are probably already scouring the OMB staff list to determine the identity of the mystery woman — although they may have little luck getting her to testify. Other officials in the agency have already refused Democratic subpoenas to appear before the impeachment inquiry.

3. Ukraine under siege

Taylor detailed the strategic significance of Ukraine, underlining that he viewed Trump's decision to delay military aid as one that put lives at risk.

In one of the most dramatic passages of Taylor's opening statement, he describes a visit to the eastern front of Ukraine's civil war, where he stared across a river at Russian-led military forces. He relayed his unease as the Ukrainian military commander thanked him for military support Taylor knew was being delayed.

"Over 13,000 Ukrainians had been killed in the war, one or two a week," Taylor testified. "More Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without the US assistance."

Taylor bookended his opening statement by emphasising the importance of US support for Ukraine and the heroism of the Ukrainian people, who he said were standing up to Russian aggression and yearning for a "more secure and prosperous life".

Media caption What we know about Biden-Ukraine corruption claims

"If we believe in the principle of sovereignty of nations on which our security and the security of our friends and allies depends, we must support Ukraine in its fight against its bullying neighbour," he said. In Taylor's opinion, the stakes were too high for what he saw as the administration's back-channel efforts to use Ukraine as a pawn in an US political game; it was more than a political controversy, for Ukrainians it was a matter of life or death.

4. Tim Morrison, check your messages

A key figure emerging from Taylor's opening statement has yet to appear before Congress — Tim Morrison, Eurasia expert on the National Security Council staff.

Some of the most damaging details about White House efforts to pressure Ukraine were relayed to Taylor from Morrison. For instance, on 1 September, Taylor says Morrison attended a meeting in Warsaw between Sondland and a Ukrainian official, Andrey Yermak, in which the EU ambassador directly tied security assistance to opening an investigation into the Ukrainian energy company with ties to the Bidens. Morrison also attended a meeting in Warsaw between Zelenskiy and Vice-President Mike Pence, and reportedly listened in on the fateful 25 July phone call between Trump and Zelenskiy during which the US president asked for investigatory "favours" from his counterpart. House impeachment investigators have already requested that Morrison appear before Congress. That request will take on additional urgency — and may turn

into an official subpoena — with Taylor's testimony in the books.

5. An independent voice

In a statement released by the White House after Taylor's congressional appearance, press secretary Stephanie Grisham suggested the 72-year-old ambassador was part of a far-left "smear campaign" by Democrats and a group of "radical unelected bureaucrats waging war on the Constitution".

Such an assertion is difficult to square with Taylor's long record of public service, however. A West Point military academy graduate and Bronze Star-awarded Vietnam War veteran, Taylor worked as a low-level congressional staffer for New Jersey Democratic Senator Bill Bradley before becoming a diplomat in the Bill Clinton, George W Bush and Barack Obama administrations. Media caption Mr Giuliani is alleged to have sought to dig up dirt on Democrat candidate Joe Biden

He served as US ambassador to Ukraine from June 2006 to May 2009 and was convinced to return to the job earlier this year by Trump's own secretary of state, Mike Pompeo. Taylor's opening statement was methodical and meticulous, corroborating previous revelations and fleshing out key details. He reportedly has taken extensive notes that could supplement his testimony, as well, if Democrats can get the State Department to hand them over. It is in the White House's interests to undermine Taylor's authority and credibility, particularly if he publicly testifies at some point, but doing so will be no easy task.

Americans split on impeaching, removing Trump from office: poll

The Hill reported that Americans remain sharply split over the question of whether President Trump should be impeached and removed from the White House, with about half supporting the step and another half opposing it, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll released Friday.

The survey, which was released on Friday, found that 49 percent of American adults endorse impeaching Trump and removing him from office while 47 percent of Americans say the president should not be impeached. Four percent of respondents said they had no opinion on the matter.

The figures are similar to a Post-ABC News poll from early October, which found that 49 percent of respondents backed impeaching and removing Trump. However, at that time, only 38 percent of respondents said that they were against beginning impeachment proceedings.

The survey released Friday showed respondents split heavily along partisan lines. Eighty-two percent of respondents identifying as Democrats said they support removing Trump from office, while just 13 percent oppose the move. Among Republicans, 82 percent said they disapprove of impeaching and removing Trump while 18 percent said they would support the president's removal.

Among independents, 47 percent said Trump should be impeached and removed from office, while 49 percent said he should not. The findings come as the House moves forward with an impeachment inquiry focusing on revelations that the president sought to pressure a foreign nation to investigate 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, over unfounded allegations of corruption. On Wednesday, the House passed a resolution establishing rules for open hearings and the questioning of witnesses by House committee members and staff. The vote marked the first time members of the lower chamber voted on matters pertaining to the Trump impeachment inquiry. Regardless of their views on impeachment, 55 percent of those surveyed said that Trump did something wrong in his dealings with Ukraine. Just 35 percent say that Trump did not commit any wrongdoing. The Post noted that about 1 in 10 respondents believe that Trump did something wrong, but are against impeachment.

Meanwhile, just 38 percent of Americans say they approve how Trump has handled his job as president, a figure that matches the president's job approval from a survey conducted in September. The Post-ABC News poll was conducted between Oct. 27-Oct. 30 among a national population of 1,0003 adults. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. AP-NORC poll: 61% say Trump doesn't respect democratic norms

AP reported that A majority of Americans say President Donald Trump has little to no respect for America's democratic institutions and traditions, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The issue

strikes at the heart of the House impeachment inquiry into Trump, which is focused in part on whether he used his office to seek a foreign government's help for personal political gain. Sixty-one percent of Americans, including 26% of Republicans, say Trump lacks respect for democratic norms. Similar shares of Republicans are also critical of the president's honesty and his discipline.

Yet the majority of Republicans — 85% — are supportive of Trump's job in office. Overall, 42% of Americans approve of Trump's handling of the job, in line with where he has been throughout his tenure. Just 7% of Democrats have a positive view of Trump as president.

Trump's job approval rating and other markers in the survey underscore the deeply divisive nature of his presidency, with Republicans largely favoring his actions and Democrats overwhelmingly disapproving. As Trump eyes his reelection campaign, it suggests his path to victory will hinge on rallying higher turnout among his core supporters as opposed to persuading new voters to back his bid for a second term. The president has leaned into that strategy during the impeachment process, casting the investigations as politically motivated and repeatedly disparaging his opponents, often in biting personal terms. It's the same strategy he's used to buoy his supporters throughout his nearly three years in office.

"The Democrats will not let the president do his job," said Robert Little, a 73-year-old Republican from Kannapolis, North Carolina. "Ever since he's been in office, he's done a lot of good things for the United States, but the Democrats' only agenda is to get rid of Trump."

The biggest bright spot for Trump remains the economy, which has continued to grow despite warning signs of a downturn. Fifty-four percent of Americans approve of Trump's handling of the economy, including a quarter of Democrats. Trump inherited a growing economy from his predecessor, Barack Obama, and the trajectory has remained positive, with the unemployment rate hovering below 4%. But economists have warned that Trump's push to levy tariffs on China puts economic gains at risk, and a majority of Americans, 55%, disapprove of Trump's handling of trade negotiations with other countries. Americans are more critical of Trump's handling of foreign policy, with 59% disapproving of how he's handling that issue. The public is also skeptical that Trump's actions as president have been good for America's standing in the world; 46% said his policies have done more harm than good, while 39% said they have had a more positive impact.

The poll was conducted almost entirely before Trump announced on Sunday that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had been killed in a U.S. raid in Syria.

Trump was elected in 2016 with low marks from voters on an array of personal attributes, including honesty, and those assessments haven't changed. Trump frequently repeats false statements and spreads conspiracy theories that have been debunked, including by members of his own administration.

More than half of Americans, 56%, said the word "honest" does not describe the president. Among Republicans, views are also mixed on Trump's honesty: Just about half say "honest" describes Trump very or extremely well.

Even fewer Republicans have a positive view on Trump's level of self-control, with just 39% saying "disciplined" is a very good way to describe the president, who often lashes out at critics and airs a myriad of grievances. Another 29% say it describes him moderately well, but about as many say it doesn't describe him well.

The result is an electorate with raw emotions about the president. Nearly half say Trump makes them feel angry. And 4 in 10 Americans, including about 2 in 10 Republicans, say the president makes them feel overwhelmed.

"It wears you down, it wears you out," said Bill Cathey, a 57-year-old independent from Charlotte, North Carolina. "And kind of dampens your spirit throughout the day."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,075 adults was conducted Oct. 24-28 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points. Respondents were first selected randomly using address-based sampling methods and later were interviewed online or by phone.

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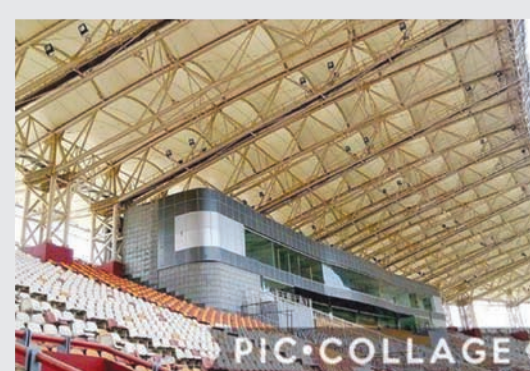
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New hot-charging lithium ion battery can charge an electric car in 10 minutes

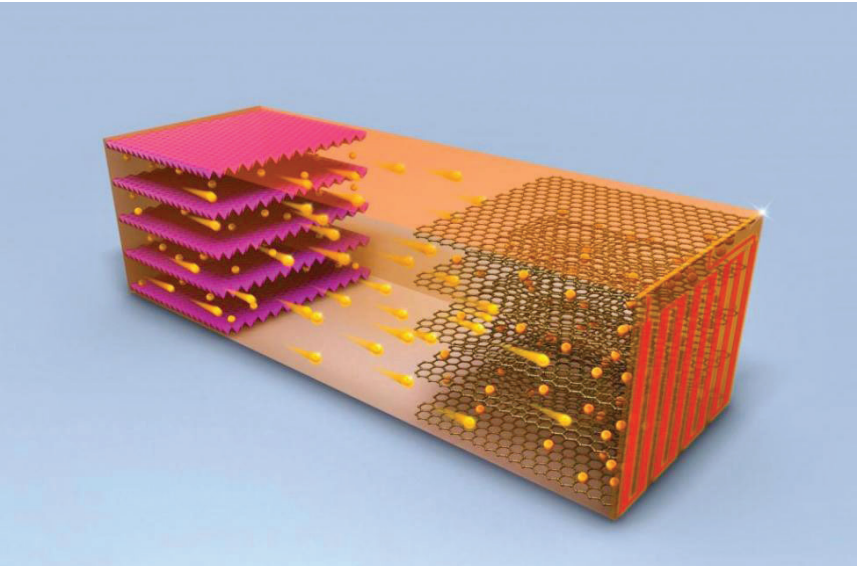
Engineers at Pennsylvania State University have developed a new lithium ion battery that can charge an electric vehicle in 10 minutes. The technology could offer electric cars an additional 200 miles of driving range, alleviating concerns of becoming stranded on long trips.

In order to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles by the average driver, electric vehicle makers have been trying to find ways to charge lithium ion batteries more quickly.

When the lithium ion batteries currently used in electric vehicles are charged at rapid speeds -- quickly taking on 400 kilowatts of energy -- they become vulnerable to lithium plating, the formation and growth of metallic lithium around the anode. Lithium plating diminishes the performance and shrinks the lifespan of lithium ion batteries.

Researchers at Penn State realized they could avoid this pitfall by charging batteries at elevated temperatures. Most batteries charge and discharge at the same temperature. In the lab, engineers charged batteries at a temperature of 60 degrees Celsius, or 140 degrees Fahrenheit. The batteries quickly cooled when discharged.

"In addition to fast charging, this design allows us to limit the battery's exposure time



to the elevated charge temperature, thus generating a very long cycle life," Chao-Yang Wang, a mechanical engineer at Penn State, said in a news release. "The key is to realize rapid heating; otherwise, the battery will stay at elevated temperatures for too long, causing severe degradation."

Wang and his colleagues described their new battery design this week in the Journal Joule.

To heat the battery, Wang and his research partners outfitted a lithium ion battery with a self-heating nickel structure. The casing can preheat in 30 seconds and works to uniformly

heat the battery. The higher temperature allows the battery to rapidly charge without triggering lithium plating.

In tests, researchers showed their hot-charging battery could last for 1,700 charge-discharge cycles without suffering degradation or performance loss.

"In the past, it was universally believed that lithium ion batteries should avoid operating at high temperatures due to the concern of accelerated side reactions," said Wang. "This study suggests that the benefits of mitigated lithium plating at the elevated temperature with limited exposure time far outweigh the negative impact associated with exacerbated side reactions."

Because the researchers built the new battery with all commercially available components, they estimate the technology is easily scalable. The researchers estimate the battery will be cheaper to produce, as the nickel structure eliminates the need for external heaters.

"We are working to charge an energy-dense electric vehicle battery in five minutes without damaging it," Wang said. "This will require highly stable electrolytes and active materials in addition to the self-heating structure we have invented."

(Source: UPI)

Cookies in space: Oven sent to ISS for baking experiments

A cargo craft containing the specially-designed "space oven" and baking ingredients took off from the US state of Virginia on Saturday.

Astronauts are set to test what impact high heat and zero gravity have on the shape and consistency of the cookies.

The experiment is being dubbed the first instance of baking in space.

Hilton's DoubleTree hotel chain, which provided the dough, said the "landmark microgravity experiment" was aimed at making long-duration space travel "more hospitable".

The Cygnus capsule was also loaded with other unusual equipment, including sports car parts and a vest to protect



against radiation.

ISS astronauts will test the safety vest to gauge its comfort, while Italian carmaker Lamborghini has sent up samples of carbon fibre used in its sports cars to examine the effects of direct space exposure.

The capsule also contains the equipment needed to complete a series of spacewalks this month to fix a key particle physics detector, as well as a range of research equipment and crew supplies.

The shipment, weighing about 8,200lb (3,700kg), is expected to reach the ISS on Monday.

(Source: BBC)

Worldwide observations confirm nearby ‘lensing’ exoplanet



Researchers using telescopes around the world confirmed and characterized an exoplanet orbiting a nearby star through a rare phenomenon known as gravitational microlensing. The exoplanet has a mass similar to Neptune, but it orbits a star lighter (cooler) than the Sun at an orbital radius similar to Earth's orbital radius. Around cool stars, this orbital region is thought to be the birth place of gas-giant planets. The results of this research suggest that Neptune-sized planets could be common around this orbital region. Because the exoplanet discovered this time is closer than other exoplanets discovered by the same method, it is a good target for follow-up observations by world-class telescopes like the Subaru Telescope.

On November 1, 2017 amateur astronomer Tadamasa Kojima in Gunma Prefecture, Japan reported an enigmatic new object in the constellation Taurus. Astronomers around the world began follow-up observations and determined that this was an example of a rare event known as gravitational microlensing. Einstein's Theory of General Relativity tells us that gravity warps space. If a foreground object with strong gravity passes directly in front of a background object in outer space this warped space can act as a lens and focus the light from the background object, making it appear to brighten temporarily. In the case of the object spotted by Kojima, a star 1600 light-years away passed in front of a star 2600 light-years away. Furthermore, by studying the change in the lensed brightness, astronomers determined that the foreground star has a planet orbiting it.

This is not the first time an exoplanet has

been discovered by the microlensing technique. But microlensing events are rare and short lived, so the ones discovered so far lie towards the Galactic Center, where stars are the most abundant. In contrast, this exoplanet system was found in almost exactly the opposite direction as observed from the Earth.

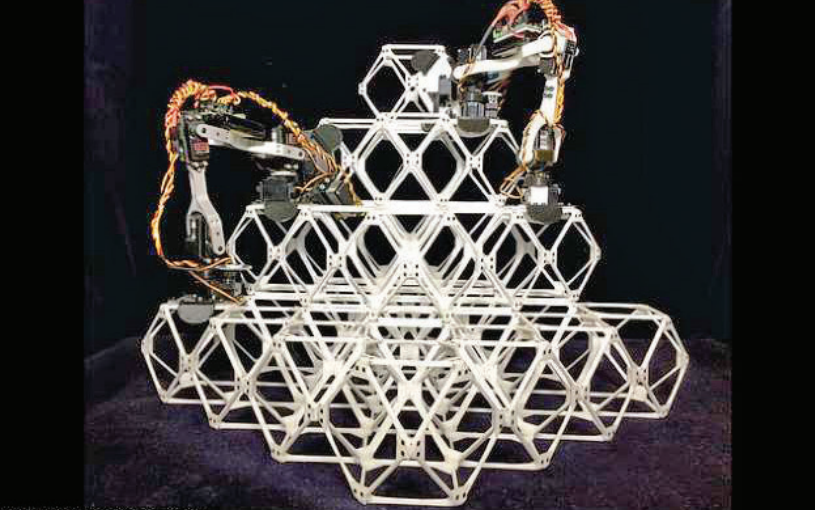
One team led by Akihiko Fukui at the University of Tokyo using a collection of 13 telescopes located around the world, including the 188-cm telescope and 91-cm telescope at NAOJ's Okayama Astrophysical Observatory, observed this phenomenon for 76 days and collected enough data to determine the characteristics of the exoplanet system. The host star has a mass about half the mass of the Sun. The exoplanet around it has an orbit similar in size to Earth's orbit, and a mass about 20% heavier than Neptune.

This orbital radius around this type of star coincides with the region where water condenses into ice during the planet formation phase, making this place theoretically favorable for forming gas-giant planets. Theoretical calculations show that this kind of planet has an a priori detection probability of only 35%. The fact that this exoplanet was discovered by pure chance suggests Neptune-sized planets could be common around this orbital region.

This exoplanet system is closer and brighter as seen from Earth than other exoplanet systems discovered by microlensing. This makes it a prime target for follow-up observations with world-leading telescopes like the Subaru Telescope or next generation extremely large telescopes like the Thirty Meter Telescope TMT.

(Source: Science Daily)

How homes will be built on Mars



By Stacy Liberatore

From space settlements to airplanes and homes on Earth -scientists have developed a new category of robots that could change the way we build high-performance structures.

The V-shaped machines, called Bipedal Isotropic Lattice Locomoting Explorers (or BILL-E), have two miniature arms that erect structures piece by piece.

These appendages allow robots to move around like inchworms, opening and closing their bodies in order to travel from one spot to the next.

The BILL-E robots were developed by a team at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which foresees these tiny robots designing everything from space settlements on Mars to airplanes and homes on Earth.

Professor Neil Gershenfeld in MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms said 'What's at the heart of this is a new kind of robotics, that we call relative robots.'

He continued to explain that historically there have been two broad categories of robotics — ones made out of expensive custom components that are carefully optimized for particular applications such as factory assembly, and ones made from inexpensive mass-produced modules with much lower performance.

The new robots, however, have birthed a third category of robots.

These bots are much simpler than the former, while much more capable than the latter.

The inchworm-like robots can put smaller 3D pieces together, which the MIT team calls 'voxels', to build the structures. The robots are basically two

connected small arms that are hinged in the middle with a clamping device at each end that they use to grip onto the voxel structures.

These appendages allow the robots to move around like inchworms, opening and closing their bodies in order to move from one spot to the next.

These components are made up of simple struts and nodes and can be easily fastened together using simple latching systems.

And because the voxels are mostly empty space, they are lightweight but can still be arranged to distribute loads efficiently.

Every time the robot takes a step onto the next voxel, it readjusts its sense of position to fit the structure it is currently standing on.

The underlying vision is that just as the most complex of images can be reproduced by using an array of pixels on a screen, virtually any physical object can be recreated as an array of smaller three-dimensional pieces, which can themselves be made up of simple struts and nodes.

As it works on assembling the pieces, each of the tiny robots can count its steps over the structure, explained.

'It's missing most of the usual control systems, but as long as it doesn't miss a step, it knows where it is,' Gershenfeld said.

'Ultimately, such systems could be used to construct entire buildings, especially in difficult environments such as in space, or on the moon or Mars.'

The main idea is to eliminate the need to ship large preassembled structures from Earth, as these robots could build what is needed on the space craft or planet using batches of tiny subunits.

New technologies promise sharper artificial vision for blind people

By Kelly Servick

In 2014, U.S. regulators approved a futuristic treatment for blindness. The device, called Argus II, sends signals from a glasses-mounted camera to a roughly 3-by-5-millimeter grid of electrodes at the back of eye. Its job: Replace signals from light-sensing cells lost in the genetic condition retinitis pigmentosa. The implant's maker, Second Sight, estimates that about 350 people in the world now use it. Argus II offers a relatively crude form of artificial vision; users see diffuse spots of light called phosphenes. "None of the patients gave up their white cane or guide dog," says Daniel Palanker, a physicist who works on visual prostheses at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. "It's a very low bar."

But it was a start.

He and others are now aiming to raise the bar with more precise ways of stimulating cells in the eye or brain. At the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience here last week, scientists shared progress from several such efforts. Some have already advanced to human trials—"a real, final test," Palanker says. "It's exciting times."

Several common disorders steal vision by destroying photoreceptors, the first cells in a relay of information from the eye to the brain. The other players in the relay often remain intact: the so-called bipolar cells, which receive photoreceptors' signals; the retinal ganglion cells, which form the optic nerve and carry those signals to the brain; and the multilayered visual cortex at the back of the brain, which organizes the information into meaningful sight.

Because adjacent points in space project onto adjacent points on the retina, and eventually activate neighboring points in an early processing area of the visual cortex, a visual scene can be mapped onto a spatial pattern of signals. But this spatial mapping gets more complex along the relay, so some researchers aim to activate cells as close to the start as possible.

Palanker's team has designed a retinal implant of about 400 photodiodes or "pixels" that replace some of the retina's spatial map. A video stream of the outside world is shown on the inside of a pair of glasses in near-infrared light, which the implant's pixels convert into electrical signals to stimulate the retina's bipolar cells. The Paris-based company Pixium Vision is testing the device in five people who have the photoreceptor-destroying disease macular degeneration. At last week's meeting, Palanker presented videos showing that participants who had been implanted with the prosthesis for about 1 year could recognize objects on a table and read printed or on-screen letters. The artificial vision is good enough to make out the title of a book, Palanker says, though not the words on its pages. His team is now working to shrink the photodiodes—creating finer pixels and sharper vision—without losing too much signal strength.

To push to higher precision than electrical stimulation of the eye can achieve, other teams are turning to optogenetics, a technique for activating cells with light. In a clinical trial by Paris-based GenSight Biologics, researchers have injected a harmless virus carrying the gene for a light-sensitive protein into the eyes of five people with retinitis pigmentosa. Retinal ganglion cells that take up the gene can then respond to red light projected into the eye. Whether the trial participants will gain useful vision should become clear next year, says José-Alain Sahel, an ophthalmologist and neuroscientist testing the technology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in Pennsylvania and the Vision Institute in Paris.

But therapies targeting retinal cells won't help people who have lost much of their eye to injury or have severe damage to the optic nerve from conditions such as glaucoma.

Second Sight aims to treat these patients with Orion, an implant of 60 electrodes that sits directly on the visual cortex and feeds the brain signals from a glasses-mounted video camera. Four of five blind patients who have had the implant for about 1 year could better locate a roughly fist-size white square on a black screen. All five were better able to detect the direction in which a white bar moved across the screen. "We're encouraged," says Jessy Dorn, director of scientific research at the company in Sylmar, California.

Electrodes that sit on the brain's surface have drawbacks. Because it takes a relatively strong current to activate the target neurons in the tissue below, activating multiple electrodes at once risks triggering a seizure. And activating neighboring electrodes can stimulate the tissue between them, fusing two discrete visual points into a blob. But at the meeting, Second Sight's collaborators at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, presented evidence that the 60 electrodes could create phosphenes at more than 60 locations. The scientists employed a technique known as current steering, which is already used to enhance pitch perception with cochlear implants.

Electrodes that penetrate deeper into the visual cortex could get closer to target neurons and use a lower current to activate smaller, more precise points in the tissue. Last week, Xing Chen, a neuroscientist in Pieter Roelfsema's lab at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience in Amsterdam, presented tests of implants containing 1000 of these penetrating electrodes in two sighted monkeys. The animals could distinguish between different letters the researchers flashed into their visual field by activating 10 to 15 electrodes at a time. Roelfsema hopes to start human trials by 2023.

Stephen Macknik, a neuroscientist at the State University of New York's Downstate Health Sciences University in New York City, cautions that the brain will eventually form a scar around implanted wires, walling them off from their target neurons. Such implants are "ruining the cortex for all other implants in the future," he says, "and at best, [the user is] not going to see much." He contends that optogenetics promises sharper vision, making penetrating electrodes unethical. At the meeting, Macknik presented plans for a technology called OBServ, which would add a light-sensitive opsin gene to neurons that reach into the visual cortex from a signal waystation at the base of the brain. Those cells, he explained, could be activated with light shined from the brain's surface.

Cortical optogenetic systems such as OBServ won't reach the clinic anytime soon. Researchers still need to demonstrate that a virus can safely and reliably endow particular neurons with an opsin gene that sticks around for years. They'll also need to implant a highly precise, yet compact, device under the skull that flashes light into the brain while reading out neural activity to calibrate stimulation on the fly.

But one of the biggest barriers to beaming ultraprecise vision into the brain, many researchers say, is much more fundamental: discovering which stimulation patterns the brain will be able to interpret. "We don't think that just because you had, say, a million electrodes or perfect spatial optogenetic activation, everything is just solved," says Baylor neuroscientist William Bosking. "We need to learn how to talk to the cortex."

Scientists have retracted a study that appeared to show people may live shortened lives if they carry a DNA mutation that reduces their chance of HIV infection.

The study focused on people who carry a specific mutation in both copies of a gene called CCR5. It was published in

June in the journal Nature Medicine and covered by news outlets including The Associated Press.

In a retraction notice published by the journal last month, the authors said they had learned of a technical flaw in the data they analyzed. As a result, they say the conclusion of

their June paper is invalid.

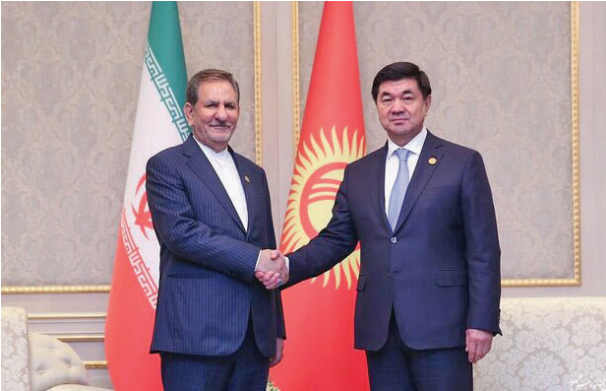
The notice was signed by Rasmus Nielsen, senior author of the original paper, and co-author Xinzhu Wei. Both are from the University of California, Berkeley.

(Source: AP News)

Scientists retract study suggesting mutation shortens life

Tehran ready to relax visa policy for Kyrgyz tourists

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran is ready to ease visa regulations for Kyrgyzstani nationals in a bid to boost tourism, First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri has said. He made the remarks on Saturday as he sat down for talks with Kyrgyz Prime Minister Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev on the sidelines of the 18th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Mehr reported.



Iran's First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri (L) shakes hands with Kyrgyz Prime Minister Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev during his visit to Bishkek, November 1, 2019.

Jahangiri emphasized the need to further cement ties between the two countries in different areas such as banking and tourism, noting that the two countries' economies can complement each other.

Religious, historical, and cultural commonalities between Kyrgyzstan and Iran can pave the ground for enhancing bilateral ties, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jahangiri said that Iran's access to the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman, as well as its infrastructure including railways, can be used as a way to transfer Kyrgyz goods to the world.

For his part, the Kyrgyz PM said that Iran has been among the first countries to recognize Kyrgyzstan's independence and that bilateral ties have seen a growing trend since then.

He put the volume of bilateral trade at \$20 million, noting that the figure is not satisfactory considering Iran's great potentials in different sectors, including oil and gas.

Abylgaziev said that Bishkek supports Iran's admission to Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Atlanta airport briefly stops flights for security check

Flights at the world's busiest airport in Atlanta were briefly stopped Saturday morning after a threatening note was found onboard an American Airlines flight bound for Dallas, authorities said.

The note was discovered while the plane was still at the gate at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, said Atlanta police spokesman Carlos Campos.

"The passengers were disembarked and re-screened at the gate, and (police are) on scene to conduct a security sweep of the plane," Campos said in a statement. "A temporary ground stop that had been in effect has been lifted and operations at the airport are back to normal."

The airport said there were no significant travel delays. No emergency landings were required, said American Airlines spokesman Joshua Freed.

"There was a non-credible threat. But out of an abundance of caution, law enforcement searched" an aircraft, Freed said. (Source: CNN)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Archaeological ruins at Mohenjo-daro

The ruins of Mohenjo-daro bear a rich history of the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished between 2,500-1,500 BC.

Built entirely of unbaked brick in the 3rd millennium BC, the site lies on the right bank of the Indus River in Larkana District of Pakistan's Sindh Province.



The discovery of Mohenjo-daro in 1922 revealed evidence of the customs, art, religion and administrative abilities of its inhabitants. The well planned city mostly built with baked bricks and having public baths; a college of priests; an elaborate drainage system; wells, soak pits for disposal of sewage, and a large granary, bears testimony that it was a metropolis of great importance, enjoying a well-organized civic, economic, social and cultural system.

Inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list, Mohenjo-daro comprises two sectors: a citadel area in the west where the Buddhist stupa was constructed with unbaked brick over the ruins of Mohenjo-daro in the 2nd century CE, and to the east, the lower city ruins spread out along the banks of the Indus. Here buildings are laid out along streets intersecting each other at right angles, in a highly orderly form of city planning that also incorporated systems of sanitation and drainage.

(Source: UNESCO)

A wild, remote adventure to tour Iran's giant dunes

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Shahdad, a major part of the UNESCO-registered Lut desert, has long been a destination for adventurers, nature lovers, off-roaders and trekkers.

Situated in southeastern Kerman province, it is home to giant dunes (locally called kaluts), shifting sands, salt plains, meteorite fields and rocky terrain, which offers visitors a breathtaking vistas and unparalleled serenity of the intact nature and wilderness.

If you are interested to hit heart of the desert bear in mind that such expeditions are usually carried out by teams on foot, with support and water supply from 4WD vehicles.

Over 5,000 foreign sightseers visited the UNESCO-registered Lut Desert in the barren heartland of Iran during the past Iranian calendar year (ended March 20, 2019), as Europeans, including people from Germany, Italy, Spain and France, constituting the highest number of arrivals.

Back in April, about 10 tour operators and planners ecotourism reporters visited natural attractions in the desert and its nearby cities, mulling over them to become new destinations.

However, local officials are seeking to define new tourist routes in compliance with the criteria for safeguarding a World Heritage in order to facilitate visits to various parts of a UNESCO site

The scorching desert is also being considered as one of the top areas in the world for finding meteorites, thanks to its unique parameters. In recent years, significant finds have been made, with the efforts of national and international teams of researchers.

Seven years of satellite temperature data analyzed by NASA show that the Lut Desert is the hottest spot on Earth. Based on the research, it was hottest during 5 of the 7 years, and had the highest temperature overall: 70.7°C in 2005.

The scorching Lut is also considered as one of the top areas in the world for finding meteorites, thanks to its unique parameters. In recent years, significant



People visit Shahdad, a touristic part of the UNESCO-registered Lut desert, in Iran's Kerman province.

finds have been made, with the efforts of national and international teams of researchers.

Meteorites, whether more iron-rich or "stony," are generally silvery or black, and therefore stand out in two major environments – sandy deserts, or icy realms. According to experts, the dry conditions of a desert help to preserve the space rocks in as original as condition as possible.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has long been a destination for globetrotters. Kerman has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Visits to North Khorasan's museums jump fivefold in H1

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Visits to historical and cultural heritage museums in North Khorasan province jumped by fivefold during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), compared to the same period last year.

"34,515 people toured historical and cultural heritage museums of the province during the first half of the year and the figure is five times more than that of the same period in the past year," provincial tourism chief Habib Yazdanpanah said Sunday, CHTN reported

With around 25,000 visits, Mofakham historical-cultural complex welcomed the highest number of visitors during the period, he said.

The [Qajar-era] complex [which is located in Bojnurd], was closed for restoration purposes for one year and a half after it was damaged by an earthquake [in May 2017], the official explained.

Some tour experts say that revival of



A view of the Mofakham historical-cultural complex in Bojnurd, the capital of Iran's North Khorasan province.

the complex may be a turning point for other abandoned buildings in the province to regain their former glory.

Lonely Planet says that most foreign tourists pass straight through North Khorasan in transit between Mashhad and Gorgan, but if you have time to explore, it's worth diverting south from the capital, Bojnurd, towards Esfarayen, famed for its wrestling tournaments, the remarkable citadel of Belqays and the partly preserved stepped village of Roein some 20km north.

"Although a lot of new building spoils the effect in parts of the village, Roein is considered Khorasan's answer to the well-known Masuleh and is a possible starting point for hikes to little-visited mountain villages."

"Currently some 130 eco-lodges are active across the province and 20 new ones will come on stream by the end of the current Iranian calendar year," a local tourism official said in July.

Britain's 'first city' rose near ancient spring on Salisbury Plain and its inhabitants built Stonehenge just a mile away, archaeologists say

Britain's first 'city' rose near an ancient spring on the Salisbury Plain and its inhabitants built Stonehenge, archaeologists believe.

Experts have uncovered more than 70,000 stone tools from a site at Blick Mead, just a mile away from the famous Wiltshire stone circle.

They also found a ceremonial platform which suggests the area held a ritual importance for prehistoric hunter-gatherers who lived there 10,000 years ago.

Nearby water sources and evidence of cattle roaming in the area that would have been a food source, suggests it could have been home to the people who built Stonehenge.

However hunter-gatherer populations don't tend to settle in one place leading Professor David Jacques from the University of Buckingham to believe the site may have been a permanent encampment for the elderly, children or those who were sick.

Professor Jacques told The Telegraph: 'At Blick Mead we found shed loads of stuff. Up until 2006 only 30 finds had ever been recovered from this period at any one site, and now we're up to more than 70,000, so it's been a total gamechanger.'

'This makes Stonehenge more interesting because it gives it a longer history, linking it back to people from the Mesolithic. Blick Mead really is the cradle of Stonehenge.'

He added that if you want to find the people who built Stonehenge, you have to look for their water source.

Blick Mead is a now small watercourse, but in the Mesolithic period it was in the middle of a flood plain.

A big river also ran through the site, providing a reliable water source throughout the year.

Archives also show it was an area inhabited by supersized extinct cattle called aurochs, leading archaeologists to believe that is why people settled there in the first place.

The skulls and bones of aurochs were also placed deliberately in ditches at Stonehenge, suggesting that its builders considered the animals as sacred.

It also provides a link between the people of Blick Mead and the builders of Stonehenge.

The results from recent excavations are shown in a new documentary, Lost Cities, airing on the National Geographic channel.

Scientist and presenter Dr Albert Lin said the site may even be one of the first manifestations of a human city.

Ground penetrating radar recently picked up evidence of a 30ft structure beneath the ground at Blick Mead which when excavated this summer. Beneath it auroch footprints were found.

However the site is in danger from plans to build a tunnel beneath Stonehenge which could harm areas waiting to be excavated.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Daylight Saving Time changes return to mess with your travel schedule

It's that time of the year again when we get to sleep in for an additional hour, reclaiming that lost 60 minutes of rest borrowed from March thanks to the controversial time change. Gaining an extra hour also works in travelers' favor this time of year, making us less likely to miss our flights due to the time change. (We're still on the hook for our own tardiness, of course.)

Benjamin Franklin first proposed the concept of "saving daylight" in a 1784 essay, which very reasonably stated that adjusting national time to mirror the sun's movements would significantly reduce candle use and expenses. (Unfortunately, researchers say Franklin was being satirical.) But in modern times when we no longer rely on candlelight, Daylight Saving Time often seems like more trouble than blessing. The biannual time change can wreak havoc on sleep schedules for parents

of young children, increase the odds of accidents, injuries and illness, and add additional complexity to travel time calculations. (It may, however, cut down on crime.)

Here are a few additional facts about "spring forward, fall back" season that you may not know:

The correct term is "Daylight Saving Time" — not "Daylight Savings Time."

The time change takes place at 2 a.m. because fewer trains run at that time.

In fact, Amtrak adjusts for Daylight Saving Time in a unique way: In the fall, Amtrak trains sit at stations for an hour until the clock "catches up," while springtime trains automatically fall behind by an hour and "attempt to make up the time."

The U.S. Department of Transportation is the federal entity responsible for regulating time zones and Daylight Saving hours.



As the DOT website solemnly states, "The oversight of time zones was assigned to DOT because time standards are important for many modes of transportation."

Hawaii and most of Arizona, as well as the U.S. territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and American Samoa, do not follow Daylight Saving Time.

Although you may be most familiar with

the main four time zones of the continental U.S., there actually are eight time zones that cover U.S. territory: Atlantic, Eastern, Central, Mountain, Pacific, Hawaii — Aleutian, Samoa and Chamorro.

Twin boys born on Nov. 6, 2016, unexpectedly found themselves in the Daylight Saving Twilight Zone. Older brother Samuel, officially born at 1:39 a.m. before the time change, looks younger on official birth certificates after younger brother Ronan was born at 1:10 a.m., immediately after the time change.

A number of countries observe Daylight Saving Time. Many others do not. Noteworthy outliers include: most tropical nations, where daylight hours don't vary much between seasons; parts of Australia; a few select nations in Asia including China and India; Iceland; and most African countries.

(Source: MSN)

Iran is correct to insist on the end of Israel – an invented state rooted in lies, bribes, blackmail and genocide – and the restoration of Palestine to the Palestinians. Similarly here in the USA we must insist on the death of the Deep State and its Zionist underbelly so as to restore of integrity to our Constitutional Republic. I will pray for the day that our President meets the Supreme Leader, in Tehran, to “make the deal.” Be assured of the coincidence of interest between patriotic American conservatives, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. We will win this fight, using ethical, legal, non-violent means, Insha’Allah. It helps us here in the USA if Iran and the Palestinians triumph in the Middle East – and vice versa. Iran and the USA have a common enemy: the Zionist state of Israel.

Winners for Mustafa Prize 2019 to be awarded

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The winners of the 3rd Mustafa Prize 2019 will be announced and granted awards during a ceremony on November 11, IRIB reported.

Held biennially, the Mustafa Prize is a science and technology award, granted to top researchers and scientists of the Islamic world.



During a press conference held on Sunday at the Institute of Culture, Art and Architecture in Tehran, the president of Mustafa Prize, Mehdi Safarinia, said that 90 scientists from 30 countries will attend the ceremony.

The award will be granted to two scientists in the field of biomedical science and technology and three scientists in all fields of science and technology whose names will be announced at the ceremony, he noted.

Along with the Mustafa Prize ceremony in 5 universities of the country, there will be scientific programs.

The winners will be granted cash prizes financed through the endowments and contributions made to the prize, he said, calling on the benefactors to participate in the event.

Hassan Zohoor, head of the Mustafa Prize Scientific Committee, for his part said that 5 scientists from Iran and Turkey will be awarded in the third edition of the event.

Pointing out that 202 research centers and 512 scientists have been invited to submit projects, he said that some 1,649 had attended the nomination process of 2019 Mustafa Prize.

The Mustafa Prize is awarded in four categories of information and communication science and technology, life and medical science and technology, nano-science and nanotechnology and all areas of science and technology.

All the nominees have been evaluated and elected with the participation of 500 jury members and 200 universities from 35 countries, he stated.

He went on to note that this year, after evaluating the cases, 10 files have been sent to the Mustafa Prize Policy Council, 5 of which were selected to receive the award, who are from Iran and Turkey.

In all specialized fields of the Mustafa Prize, the nominees should be Muslim and have high profile in scientific research. However, there would be no other limitations regarding gender and age, according to Zohoor.

Mustafa Prize, the Iranian version of Nobel Peace Prize, was launched in 2013 with the mission to promote science and technology in the Islamic world.

In 2015, the first edition of the prize was held in Tehran and professors Jackie Y. Ying and Omar M. Yaghi, were the two winners of the 2015 Mustafa Prize.

The Mustafa foundation seeks to encourage education and research and is set to play the pioneering role in developing regional relations between science and technology institutions working in member states of the Organization of Islamic Countries.

As the name of the event suggests, the Mustafa Prize is held biennially during the Islamic Unity week in Iran, which is annually celebrated between two dates of the birthday of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by Sunnis and Shia.

The prize will be granted to the works which are deemed to have improved human life and made tangible and cutting-edge innovations on the boundaries of science or have presented new scientific methodology.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Speight sentence commuted

(February 13, 2002)
Fiji coup leader George Speight has had his death penalty for treason commuted to life in prison by the country's president, Ratu Josefa Ilo Ilo. This report from Phil Mercer.
George Speight has been **spared** death by hanging and is now starting a life sentence in jail. It's been a day of high drama in Fiji: it started with Speight walking confidently into court at the start of his trial for **treason**. He immediately **pleaded guilty**, but broke down and wept as the presiding judge, Justice Michael Scott, **donned** a ceremonial black cap to order his execution by hanging.
Within hours the case was being reviewed by Fiji's mercy commission, headed by the attorney-general, which advises the president on issues of **clemency**. The government said last week it would introduce legislation to take the death penalty off the **statute books** and replace it with life in prison
It's two years since Speight's armed gang of nationalists stormed parliament. The target of the uprising was Mahendra Chaudhry, Fiji's first ethnic Indian prime minister. He was **accused** by Speight of dismantling the rights of the indigenous majority at the expense of the Indo-Fijian minority.
Speight may **appeal** the life sentence. The weeping figure with his head **bowed** as the earlier death sentence was passed, stood in stark contrast to the confident and **charismatic** man who brought down democracy in May 2000.

■ **Words spared:** if someone is spared, they are not punished
treason: the crime of betraying your country
pleaded guilty: stated in court that he had committed a crime
donned: put on
clemency: kind treatment from a person who has the authority to punish
statute books: the collection of laws that are in force in a particular country
accused: charged with committing a crime
appeal: to request someone in authority to change a decision
bowed: lowered, looking at the ground
charismatic: able to influence and inspire people by their personal qualities

(Source: BBC)

Tehran Golden Adobe Award announces winners

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The 4th Tehran Golden Adobe Global

Award ceremony wrapped up in Tehran on Saturday by announcing winners from among 512 urban management projects both from Iran and 27 other countries.

Tehran Mayor Pirouz Hanachi announced the winners and awarded the top projects.

The event was held on the occasion of the World Cities Day which is annually observed on October 31.

For the first time, the number of projects has increased by 100 percent this year, as 197 projects from the country and 322 projects from 27 countries worldwide were submitted, IRNA quoted Gholam Hossein Mohammadi, the director for international affairs at Tehran Municipality, as saying.

In total, 21 projects were chosen as the top projects and 21 others were also recognized to be honored, he highlighted.

He went on to say that the winners have been chosen in seven different categories of urban management and development.

Reza Karami Mohammadi, head of Tehran Disaster Mitigation and Management Organization, ranked the first in category of Resiliency, Livability and Sustainable Urban Development, introducing an earthquake alert system.

The award of Public Participation and Urban Social-Cultural Development category went to Nicaraguan Ambassador to Iran, Mario Barquero, for a project called Nicaraguan Women Cook with the Sun and Grow Organic Vegetables.



In Architecture, Urbanism, Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration category, Nasrollah Abadian, Tehran's District 11 mayor, won the award for museums of war and cigarettes project, and retrofitting 10 historical houses in the area.

The founder of MyTehran online system Mohammad Farjud won the award in Smart and Creative Human – Oriented Cities category.

Yusef Hojjat, the founder of Bi-dood bike sharing system in Tehran, also won the first prize in Development of Infrastructures, Public

Transportation and Urban Services category.

Adobe is the smallest unit in constructing a building in ancient Iranian architecture which dates back to some 7,000 years ago.

The Tehran Golden Adobe Global Award aims to recognize the importance of local government and urban management in promoting the socio-economic environments, the sustainability of cities and regions, and improving the livability of the citizens.

The third edition of the Award was held in 2016, after three years the fourth edition of the event was held focusing on «smart

city» and «urban resilience».

This year's award discussed issues of sustainable urban development, citizens' participation, cultural and social development of the city, architecture, urban planning, urban cultural heritage and regeneration, smart and creative human-centered city, resource allocation, investment, entrepreneurship, employment and the city's economy, infrastructure development, public transport and utilities.

■ **Urban infrastructure's influence on the emissions curve**

UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a message to commemorate World Cities Day 2019 said that “The choices that will be made on urban infrastructure in the coming decades – on urban planning, energy efficiency, power generation and transport – will have a decisive influence on the emissions curve. Indeed, cities are where the climate battle will largely be won or lost.”

Over half the world's population now lives in cities and this is projected to increase to over two-thirds by 2050.

Cities consume more than two-thirds of the world's energy, and account for more than 70 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.

While being the main cause of climate change, cities have great potential to provide solutions. Compact, walkable or cycling cities with good public transport can greatly reduce our carbon footprint, while greater energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources can substantially decrease the amount of carbon dioxide produced by homes and offices.

New WHO report to bolster efforts to tackle leading causes of urban deaths

A new report by the World Health Organization offers guidance and tools for urban leaders to tackle some of the leading causes of death in cities.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) - like heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes - kill 41 million people worldwide every year, and road traffic crashes kill 1.35 million.

“Over half the world's people live in cities, and the numbers are rising,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

“City leaders take decisions that impact on the health of billions, and for cities to thrive, everyone needs access to services that will improve their health – public transport, safe, clean and attractive outdoor spaces, healthy food, and, of course, affordable health services.”

The report, titled “The Power of Cities: Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases and Road Traffic Injuries” is geared towards mayors, local government officials and city policy planners.

Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, it highlights key areas where city leaders can tackle the drivers of NCDs, including tobacco use, air pollution, poor diets and lack of exercise, and improve road safety.

“By replicating the most effective measures on a global scale, we can save millions of lives,” said WHO Global Ambassador for NCDs and injuries, and three-term New York City Mayor, Michael R. Bloomberg. “We're working to raise awareness among city leaders and policy makers about the real gains that can be achieved when effective programs are in place.”

From anti-tobacco actions in Beijing and Bogor, to road safety initiatives in Accra and Bangkok, a bike sharing scheme in



Fortaleza, and actions to create walkable streets for seniors that have reduced elderly pedestrian deaths by 16% in New York City, the report aims to share knowledge between urban policy planners.

Of the 19 case studies cited, 15 are from developing countries, where 85% of premature adult deaths through NCDs take place, and over 90% of road traffic fatalities are recorded.

Over 90% of future urban population growth will be in low or middle-income countries, and seven of the world's 10 largest cities are in developing countries.

The initiatives cited in the report are similar to those implemented under the Partnership for Healthy Cities initiative, a joint WHO, Bloomberg Philanthropies and Vital Strategies initiative that brings over 50 cities together to share policies and plans on tackling NCDs and injuries. The network, led by Mr Bloomberg, has helped ensure 216 million people are covered by at least one intervention to protect them from NCDs and road traffic injury since 2017.

Some 193 countries have committed to reducing premature deaths from NCDs by a third by 2030, and halving road traffic deaths and injuries by 2020, through the Sustainable Development Goals.

(Source: WHO)

Sperm whale washed up on Wales beach had plastic sheeting in stomach

A baby sperm whale found washed-up on a beach in Wales had plastic sheeting and other marine rubbish in its stomach, experts have said.

The 22-foot long male calf washed up near Abersoch, Gwynedd, on Tuesday and is the first sperm whale to wash up on the Welsh coast in over 100 years.

A post-mortem examination found that the animal was malnourished and below a healthy weight.

Experts from the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) who conducted the post-mortem were perplexed as to how it had found its way to such shallow waters given the species generally lives in deeper southern waters which are hotter and where they feed on giant squid.

Rob Deaville, of the ZSL, said: “A large piece of blue plastic sheeting was found in the stomach and a relatively large mass of ropes ... [this] may have had some impact on the animal's ability to digest any ingested prey.”

“There was no evidence of recent feeding, although numerous squid beaks in the stomach indicated it was weaned and had been historically feeding.”

Experts are carrying out assessments to decipher how the animal – which is the second smallest sperm whale ever recorded in the UK – was washed up.

A spokesperson from the British Divers Marine Life Rescue, said: “Whales, dolphins and porpoises are mammals like us humans, and therefore able to carry serious diseases that can be transmitted between us.”

“We would advise members of the public to avoid all contact with the carcass



and any bodily fluids to avoid any risk of infection from them.

“There is the possibility that this may have been an animal that was already ill.”

It comes after a sperm whale spotted close to the Northumberland shoreline died after beaching itself earlier in the month – with the 30-tonne mammal attracting crowds when it was spotted in the shallows of the North Sea.

Director of the whale and dolphin charity Orca, Sally Hamilton, said: “It's tragic to see animals like this sperm whale dying on our doorstep. Until we can reduce our reliance on plastic and stem the flow of pollution into the oceans, we will see more marine wildlife affected by this increasing threat.”

Because the whale was so small it is thought it may have come from a matriarchal pod rather than rather than a bachelor pod.

The mother pods are found in warmer and tropical waters south of Britain while the male pods are found in colder waters north of the UK.

Sperm whales, which are the second deepest diving creature, have the largest brains on Earth – five times heavier than a human brain. They can live for more than 60 years.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ع

DOE not convinced to transfer water from Caspian Sea

Studies carried out so far has not yet convinced the Department of Environment (DOE) to transfer water from the Caspian Sea to central Iran, Parvin Farshchi, deputy director of the DOE for marine affairs has said.

Over the past few years Iran has faced recurrent drought spells and low precipitation and the value of water has become more tangible, Khabaronline quoted Farshchi as saying on Saturday.

She further explained that water transfer from the Caspian Sea to central Iran has been a matter of interest for some years now and in the [Iranian calendar year of] 1389 (March 2010-March 2011) various research and studies on the issue were conducted.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“extra-, extro-”

■ **Meaning:** outside or beyond

■ **For example:** Chris's behavior that morning was quite **extraordinary**.

PHRASAL VERB

Think back

■ **Meaning:** to think about things that happened in the past

■ **For example:** Thinking back, it amazes me how we survived on so little sleep.

IDIOM

Cool as a cucumber

■ **Explanation:** calm and composed, especially in times of stress

■ **For example:** Practicing meditation has helped me to be as cool as a cucumber in times of trouble.

Iraqi PM urges safety of protesters as unrest continues

TEHRAN — The situation in Iraq remains tense. Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi has gathered the country's security chiefs for a meeting, and called for measures to ensure the safety of protesters amid an ongoing wave of anti-government demonstrations.

Abdul-Mahdi held a meeting with the country's security chiefs as well as on Saturday night.

During Saturday night's meeting, which was also attended by Interior Minister Yassin Al-Yasiri, the participants reviewed the performance of security forces in line with their duties to ensure domestic stability, protect peaceful demonstrators, as well as safeguard the country's public and private property and vital installations.

On Sunday, the protesters spilled out into the streets of the capital Baghdad and several other cities, shutting down streets, schools and government offices.

According to Press TV, in Baghdad, university students parked their cars in the middle of main thoroughfares, blocking traffic. Police officers manning nearby checkpoints did not intervene.

Students took part in sit-ins at schools,



and the national teachers union extended its strike that was launched last week.

In Kut to the east, protesters blocked main roads and bridges, and most schools

were closed.

Protesters said they will not stop until the message gets to the government and corrupt officials are kicked out.

Further south in Hillah, Nasiriyah, Diwaniyah and the holy city of Karbala, most government offices were closed.

In the country's southern oil-rich port city of Basra, public schools were shut down for the first time since the demonstrations began last month.

At the start of October, street protests erupted in several Iraqi cities over unemployment and a lack of basic services. The rallies resumed on October 25 after a pause of about two weeks, but took a violent turn.

The prime minister has agreed to resign provided that a successor is designated.

It took more than six months of negotiations before Abdul-Mahdi was appointed a year ago. Finding a successor approved by all political factions will not be an easy task. President Barham Salih has promised to call for early elections.

Iraq's top Shia cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has appealed for calm, warning of the danger of Iraq plunging into a civil war.

Over 4,000 Sudanese militiamen slain in Saudi-led war against Yemen



TEHRAN — The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces says more than 4,000 Sudanese militiamen fighting alongside Saudi-led military forces against Houthi Ansarullah fighters have been killed and many more injured ever since the Riyadh regime and its allies launched a military aggression against Yemen.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital Sana'a on Saturday afternoon, Brigadier General Yahya Saree said 4,253 Sudanese militants have lost their lives in clashes with Yemeni forces, noting that the total number of the Saudi-paid Sudanese mercenaries killed in Yemen since the beginning of the current year stands at 459.

According to Press TV, Saree pointed out that 185 Sudanese militiamen have been killed and tens of others wounded in battles against Yemeni army forces and allied fighters from Popular Committees during the past few months.

He said 5,000 Sudanese fighters are

now present in the al-Khobe area of Saudi Arabia's southern border region of Jizan, located 967 kilometers (601 miles) southwest of the capital Riyadh, in the name of the so-called Fifth Brigade.

Saree highlighted that 2,000 Sudanese militants are stationed in the al-Majazah area of Asir region, while another 600 are deployed in Saqam area in Narjan region.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces added that 1,000 Sudanese forces are deployed in Yemen's southern provinces of Aden and Lahij, and that they are present in Ra's al-Abbas area, Aden International Airport and al-Anad Air Base.

Saree noted that Sudanese mercenaries have perpetrated various crimes and abuses, most notably cases of rape, during the past two years, and that the involvement of Sudanese child soldiers in battles against Yemeni forces is among the crimes and violations committed by the Saudi-led coalition of aggression.

UN chief 'deeply concerned' over Rohingya crisis



TEHRAN — United Nations chief Antonio Guterres has expressed "deep" concern over the plight of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees, urging Myanmar to assume responsibility by dealing with the "root causes" of their flight and work towards their safe repatriation.

According to Al Jazeera, a brutal army campaign in August 2017 forced more than 740,000 members of the mostly-Muslim minority to flee Myanmar's Rakhine state, most seeking refuge in overcrowded camps across the border in Bangladesh. During its crackdown, which was launched in response to attacks by an armed group, the military carried out mass killings and gang rapes with "genocidal intent", according to United Nations-mandated investigators.

Speaking at the start of a meeting in Thailand with the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Guterres said on Sunday

Myanmar was responsible to "ensure a conducive environment for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation of refugees".

Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi was present at the summit, sitting expressionless as Guterres spoke.

Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingya as citizens.

The country says it welcomes back those who agree to a bureaucratic status below full citizenship, and if they agree to live under tight guard after their villages were incinerated.

Only a few hundred Rohingya have returned to Myanmar so far, with many fearing further persecution in the Buddhist-majority country.

Guterres also called on Myanmar "to ensure humanitarian actors have full and unfettered access to areas of return".

A leaked ASEAN report earlier this year said the repatriation effort could take a further two years.

Thailand says new Asian trade deal to be signed in 2020

TEHRAN — Thailand said on Sunday that Southeast Asian nations are committed to signing a pact by February 2020 on forging what could become the world's largest trade bloc, even after new demands by India dealt a blow to the process backed by China.

Going into this weekend's summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Bangkok there had been hopes of finalizing negotiations this year on the 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

But the ASEAN chairman's final statement released on Sunday night said the 10-nation grouping welcomed a "commitment to sign the RCEP Agreement in 2020".

"This will significantly contribute to an open, inclu-

sive and rules-based international trading system and expansion of value chains."

According to Reuters, new impetus to reach agreement has come from the U.S.-China trade war, which has helped knock regional economic growth to its lowest in five years.

"The early conclusion of RCEP negotiations will lay the foundation for East Asia's economic integration," said a statement from China's foreign ministry after Premier Li Keqiang met Southeast Asian leaders.

But Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not even mention the RCEP talks in opening remarks at a meeting with Southeast Asian leaders and instead spoke only of reviewing the existing trade agreement between

ASEAN and India.

Nor did Modi mention the trade bloc, whose 16 countries would account for a third of global gross domestic product and nearly half the world's population, in Twitter posts after meeting Thai and Indonesian leaders.

An Indian foreign ministry official later told a media briefing "Let's take all the RCEP questions tomorrow."

Southeast Asian countries had hoped at least a provisional agreement could be announced on Monday.

But India has been worried about a potential flood of Chinese imports. A person with knowledge of New Delhi's negotiations said new demands were made last week "which are difficult to meet."

Hezbollah slams Twitter for 'politicized' suspension of TV channel accounts

TEHRAN — The Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah has slammed the U.S.-based social media website Twitter for its decision to suspend pages related to the group, saying it came under political pressure.

Hezbollah's TV channel Al Manar said on Saturday that most of its Twitter accounts had been made unavailable.

It accused the Twitter of giving in to "political pressures", an apparent suggestion that the decision by the U.S.-based social

media platform had been influenced by the policies of the government in Washington.

The U.S. government has blacklisted Hezbollah, a popular group in Lebanon with huge political influence, while government officials and lawmakers in Washington have consistently pressured others to cut or restrict their relations with the group despite the fact that it is represented in the Lebanese government and parliament.

Twitter's decision to suspend accounts run by Al Manar came after a series of

protests across Lebanon which led to the resignation of the cabinet led by Prime Minister Sa'ad Hariri.

It also comes amid a rise in the popularity of Hezbollah in Lebanon and in other countries in the Middle East, especially after the group managed to successfully help the government in neighboring Syria to win a years-long battle against terrorists.

A Twitter spokesman told the AFP news agency that the social media platform could not allow illegal groups to

operate on its website.

However, the same news agency said specific television shows with Twitter names of Al Manar were still available on the platform on Saturday.

The suspension of Al Manar's accounts on Twitter comes as the website and other U.S.-based social media organizations with vast global audience have repeatedly claimed that they are not influenced by the policies and decisions of the U.S. government.

Five candidates to vie for Algerian presidency

TEHRAN — Algeria's electoral authority has said the country's presidential election next month will be contested by five candidates - all part of the political establishment that has drawn the ire of months-long protests demanding the departure of the ruling elite.

The contenders are former Prime Ministers Abdelmadjid Tebboune and Ali Benflis, former Culture Minister Azzedine Mihoubi, former Tourism Minister Abdelkader Bengrine and Abdelaziz Belaid, head of the El Mostakbal Movement party.

According to Al Jazeera, Mohamed Chorfi, the head of the electoral body, told reporters in the capital, Algiers, on Sunday that the final list of candidates for the December 12 poll will be passed to the constitutional council for final validation.

An original 23 candidates had applied but only five made the final list, according to Chorfi. Rules for candidates included gathering 50,000 signatures from citizens on voting lists from at least 50 regions.

Observers expect a weak turnout.

In China, Macron wants to take Beijing 'at its word' on free trade

TEHRAN — French President Emmanuel Macron will seek to make China deliver on promises to grant more access to foreign companies, eyeing agribusiness and finance, advisers said ahead of his arrival in Shanghai for a giant import fair.

Macron, who will attend the fair along with other European officials including incoming EU trade commissioner Phil Hogan, would take China "at its word" that it aims to open itself up to trade, a presidential adviser said ahead of the Nov. 4-6 trip, Reuters reported.

"Since this fair is supposed to demonstrate China's openness, well, let's prove it with access to its agribusiness market and progress on the EU-China deals," the adviser added.

Macron will travel with a business delegation of 30 companies ranging from blue chips to small firms. He will seek greater access in the fields of finance and aerospace as well as fewer export restrictions for French poultry.

China has long been dogged by Western allegations of unfair trade practices, from forced tech transfers to protectionist market entry policy.

That has led to disputes with the United States in particular, which has slapped tariffs on Chinese exports. The French adviser said Washington was right to push for better behavior from the Chinese, even if France does not necessarily support President Donald Trump's trade moves.

"The United States ask the right questions, but don't necessarily have the right answers," the French adviser said.

Thousands rally in Lebanon in show of support for President Aoun

➔1 "General Aoun is a reformist and sincere man - not corrupt nor a thief," a supporter who gave her name as Diana told AFP news agency.

"There has been corruption in the state for 30 years. The president isn't responsible. He's trying to fight against graft," she said.

■ Berri supports Hariri reappointment

Meanwhile, Lebanon Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said he supports the reappointment of Saad Hariri as Prime Minister.

In an interview with Mustaqbal Web Berri said that his position regarding the designation of a new prime minister is known and that he has "informed the relevant parties."

According to Daily Star, a statement from Berri's office said that the comments published by Mustaqbal Web were not accurate without elaborating further.

Regarding government formation, Berri said he was in favor of a smaller government than the one currently in place.

"I am committed to representing the protest, but in this case the issue is political," he said.

Berri added that he had contacted the head of Parliament's Finance and Budget Committee, MP Ibrahim Kanaan, and that the next committee meeting will take place next Tuesday to start discussing the 2020 budget, expected to be completed and approved within a month.

In remarks published last week by local daily Al Joumhouria, Berri said he tried to persuade the caretaker Prime Minister not to resign.

Hariri submitted his resignation to President Michel Aoun last Tuesday, on the 13th day of nationwide protests and roadblocks against state sectarianism and corruption.

U.S. current political rancor is widely viewed as equal to civil war: Tillerson

➔1 The shift was the main topic during a private meeting on Wednesday by Senate Republicans, the report said, citing multiple people familiar with the session who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Republican Senator John Neely Kennedy of Louisiana argued that there may have been a quid pro quo but said that the U.S. government often attaches conditions to foreign aid and that nothing was illegal in Trump's doing so in the case of aid to Ukraine, the individuals familiar with the GOP meeting said.

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, who ran against Trump in 2016, echoed Kennedy's argument that such conditions are a tool of foreign policy and a quid pro quo is not illegal unless there is "corrupt intent."

The discussion underscores the dilemma for congressional Republicans as they frantically seek a new strategy to defend the president.

Roadmap by religious authority for Iraq's political future

➔1 Some political parties are seeking to use popular protests in their own favor to achieve their political goals. These parties, influenced by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, are pursuing other goals than pushing for reforms in the country.

The second point is the failure of efforts by some foreign countries to exploit protests in Iraq. Foreign media, especially those affiliated with the U.S., have worked

hard in recent days to show that the demonstrators have chanted slogans against the religious authority and even have attacked on some of their offices during the protests.

In addition, some Arab media are trying to show that there is a gap between the Iraqi people and the religious authority. But an examination of the position of the religious authority since the beginning of the protests shows that the religious authority urges the government to meet

people's demands and calls for peaceful protests by the demonstrators.

It should be noted that implementation of political and economic reforms will not take place without stability and security in any country. That is why Iraqi political groups should stop politicking and not be tempted to settle scores. Instead, they should join hands to do reforms until the country leaves this critical stage behind.

City boss Guardiola accuses Liverpool star Mane of diving

Pep Guardiola has accused Liverpool star Sadio Mane of diving as the Manchester City boss lit the fuse on next weekend's explosive clash between the Premier League title rivals.

Mane scored Liverpool's winner in the fourth minute of stoppage-time as the leaders scored twice in the final moments to escape with a 2-1 victory at Aston Villa on Saturday.

But the Senegal winger had been booked for simulation in the first half at Villa Park and that didn't escape Guardiola's attention.

Asked about Liverpool's comeback, Guardiola, speaking after City came from behind to beat Southampton 2-1, told BBC Sport: "It has happened many times, what Liverpool have done, in the last few years, it's because (Mane) is a special talent.

"Sometimes he's diving, sometimes he has this talent to score incredible goals in the last minute. He's a talent."

Liverpool remain six points clear of City ahead of their crucial showdown at Anfield on Sunday and Guardiola knows the European champions will be tough to catch given their relentless drive.

"If it's one time, two times, 'we were lucky, we were lucky', but it happened in the last two seasons many, many times. They have a special character to do that," Guardiola said.

"We look at ourselves, we know which team we face, I think they have won 10 and drawn one. Next week we go to Anfield to try to play them."

(Source: Mirror)

We're not in a great place with VAR, says Chelsea boss Lampard

Frank Lampard believes the Premier League are setting a dangerous precedent with the use of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) after technology intervened to give Watford a late penalty in Chelsea's 2-1 win at Vicarage Road.

Lampard's Chelsea moved up to third in the league with victory on Saturday but they endured some nervy moments in the closing stages after Gerard Deulofeu converted an 80th-minute penalty for the hosts.

Deulofeu went down under slight contact from Chelsea's Jorginho and after initially pointing for a goal kick, referee Anthony Taylor was advised by the VAR to overturn his decision.

"We're not in a great place with it," the Chelsea manager told reporters after the match.

"I know (using screens) is a bit contentious, I know it could mean every fan might call for it and there might pressure on the referees.

"But if we are overturning decisions because one referee somewhere else thinks it was more of a penalty than the referee on the pitch, then I think we are in a really dangerous place. You're going to be tossing a coin every week."

At the start of the season, the Premier League decided that it would only use technology for "clear and obvious" errors by on-field referees.

Not a single penalty or red card was given by VAR in the opening nine rounds of the competition, but last weekend it made headlines by overturning five key decisions.

Lampard feels there has been a change in policy despite receiving guidance at a meeting earlier this week.

(Source: Reuters)

Ashleigh Barty wins richest prize in tennis at WTA Finals

World No.1 Ashleigh Barty set the seal on a memorable 2019 by claiming the biggest prize in tennis history with a 6-4 6-3 win over defending champion Elina Svitolina in the title match of the WTA Finals in Shenzhen Sunday.

Australian tennis superstar Ash Barty has made history in beating defending champion Elina Svitolina at the \$14 million WTA Finals this morning.

It wasn't an easy victory, as Barty was tested further in the second set, but ran out the eventual winner 6-4, 6-3.

Barty had won two of her round robin matches before the final, so she pocketed a cool \$6.4 million - of that, a massive prize of \$3.4 million for the final win. It is the biggest ever prizemoney awarded in men's or women's tennis.

If she had lost, Barty would have only received \$3 million in total, which would still have been quite the prize after claiming over \$10m in prizemoney throughout the season.

The 23-year-old's latest triumph capped a dream regular season in which Barty also landed her maiden grand slam crown at the French Open in June.

It also completed her perfect preparation for next week's Fed Cup final against France in Perth, where Barty will bid to lead Australia to glory for the first time since 1974.

Svitolina, as she won all her matches in the round robin stages, would have pocketed \$6.8m for the win, but still won \$3.5m for finishing runner up.

(Source: CNN)

Anger grows at Real Madrid over use of VAR

Real Madrid's hierarchy remain dismayed by the use of VAR in Spanish football after yet another incident on Saturday evening that they feel should have seen them awarded a penalty.

The ball quite clearly struck Zouhair Fedal's hand in the final stretch of the game but no action was taken.

"In phases of the game we've taken a step back and then there's a play involving VAR that we won't talk about anymore," Sergio Ramos said of the decision to not award the penalty.

"I saw it clearly, but the referee hasn't seen it."

It was a confusing incident that's open to interpretation, but the Betis defender's hand wasn't considered to be in an unnatural position and so the penalty wasn't given.

But those upstairs at Madrid believe the decision was something similar to not being awarded a penalty against Mallorca, similarly the foul on Vinicius Junior that wasn't called against Villarreal last season.

The club are furious again and feel as though they're fighting a losing battle.

(Source: Marca)

What can Tokyo 2020 learn from the Rugby World Cup?

In many ways, the Rugby World Cup was a mini dress rehearsal for Japan, as it gears up to host an even bigger sporting event next year: the Tokyo Olympics.

While there are many differences -- far fewer countries participated in the Rugby World Cup but it was spread out over 12 host cities -- there are some lessons Tokyo 2020 can learn from the tournament.

■ **Contingency planning may not be enough**

Rugby World Cup organizers spent hundreds of hours gaming out every possible scenario for what would happen if a typhoon, earthquake or volcano struck a venue in Japan, one of the world's most seismically active countries that is also battered by hurricanes each year.

In the end, even the worst-case scenario planning was insufficient as Hagibis, one of the largest and most powerful typhoons in recent years, reared up from the Pacific and took direct aim at Tokyo.

Changing venues was impossible as the storm covered practically the entire Japanese archipelago and organizers were forced to cancel three fixtures as Hagibis brought historic rains and ferocious winds that killed more than 80 people.

The Olympics are not being held during peak typhoon season (although the Paralympics are) but Tokyo is never safe from earthquakes and typhoons can strike most of the year round.

Tokyo 2020 has its own weather-related controversy to deal with as doctors have



warned against top-level competition at the height of the Japanese summer when the heat and humidity are unbearable.

■ **Japanese fans rock**

Tokyo 2020 already has no concerns about filling the stadiums -- tickets could have been sold several times over -- and the Japanese fans melted many hearts at the Rugby World Cup.

While they may not have been familiar with all the finer points of rugby, they cheered enthusiastically and fairly for all the teams, creating a sensational atmosphere remarked upon by all competing nations.

A unique feature of the Rugby World

Cup that could extend to Olympics events not familiar to Japan is how fans "adopted" another team.

Images of Japanese supporters gamely singing other national anthems -- including young children selected as mascots -- or trying the New Zealand haka war dance wowed the world and showed the "omotenashi" (Japanese welcome) Tokyo 2020 hopes to emulate.

Players responded, starting a trend of bowing deeply to the crowd as per Japanese tradition after every game.

■ **Foreign fans (mostly) rock**

Despite scare stories about rugby fans drinking Tokyo dry and flashing their tattoos

in Japanese baths (strictly forbidden), the vast majority of foreign fans were impeccably behaved at the Rugby World Cup and added to the festival atmosphere.

However, some videos of drunken fans cavorting on public transport went viral on Japanese social media, leading some to warn of "improper" behavior when the Olympics come around.

While rugby fans are well-known for a healthy thirst, Olympic organizers may also find a clash of cultures between foreigners and the ultra-reserved Japanese when it comes to public drunkenness.

And it's not just the fans. Some Uruguay players appeared to have let the side down by allegedly trashing a nightclub after losing their final match, sparking legal action from the owner to reclaim thousands of dollars in damage.

■ **Get the kit in**

If the Rugby World Cup is anything to go by, Olympic organizers should make sure they are fully stocked on memorabilia and replica clothing.

Spurred by the brilliance of the home team, sales of the Brave Blossoms replica shirts exploded, with long queues forming outside specialist clothing shops several hours before they opened.

Stocks quickly ran dry, leaving many disappointed. And it was not just Japan team shirts that proved popular but Japanese fans lapped up shirts from all the top teams -- the famous All Black jersey a particular favorite.

(Source: AFP)

Dominant Vinales storms to Malaysian MotoGP victory



Spain's Maverick Vinales stormed to a dominant victory in the Malaysian MotoGP Sunday as world champion Marc Marquez fought his way from near the back of the starting grid to finish second.

Ducati rider Andrea Dovizioso came in third but there was disappointment for French rookie Fabio Quartararo, who only managed a lacklustre seventh-place after starting from pole.

Vinales's second win of the season was a major boost following last week's Australian MotoGP, where he crashed out after leading for much of the race -- and compatriot Marquez went on to win.

The Monster Energy Yamaha rider said the victory felt "amazing" after his disappointing performance in Phillip Island.

"In Phillip Island, I felt like I had the victory in my hands but I made a mistake and I crashed," he told reporters at the Sepang circuit following the penultimate race of the season.

"Here all weekend I've been very consistent. I knew if I got first place I had a chance to push, push and push."

The 24-year-old surged into an early

lead at Sepang after starting second on the grid and never looked threatened.

By the halfway mark, he had opened up a two second lead over second-placed Marquez, and was over three seconds ahead of him when he crossed the finish line.

Marquez's performance was even more astonishing, however, after he started 11th on the grid following a terrifying crash in qualifying that saw him thrown from his bike.

Within a few laps the Repsol Honda rider, who was crowned world champion for the sixth time last month, had smashed his way through the pack and was trying to chase down Vinales.

While he did not manage to catch his compatriot, Marquez nevertheless opened up a sizeable gap with the rest of the field and cruised to a comfortable second place.

The 26-year-old said the first lap, which catapulted him to the front, was "incredible" and congratulated his team for the good result.

"We started from 11th, and we cannot forget that here normally we struggle a lot," he said.

(Source: Eurosport)

Union GK Rafa Gikiewicz confronts own fans in chaotic Berlin derby



Chaotic scenes marred Saturday's Bundesliga match between Hertha Berlin and Union Berlin that saw Union goalkeeper Rafa Gikiewicz confront his team's supporters who had stormed onto the pitch afterward.

The highly anticipated derby between the two Berlin sides -- their first in Germany's top flight -- was also briefly delayed after the first half when visiting Hertha fans threw flares onto the pitch at Union's Alte Forsterei stadium.

Match referee Deniz Aytekin opted to keep the players in the tunnel for five minutes before returning for the second half.

"It's just sad when something like this happens. I am just relieved that nobody was injured on the pitch. It has nothing to do with football," Aytekin told reporters after the match.

"The players' health stands above all. In accordance with the police, we decided to go through with the match because at the end of the day everyone's safety is the biggest concern."

Union won the match 1-0 when substitute Sebastian Polter converted a penalty in the 90th minute in front of the

home end.

Following the final whistle, Hertha fans lit fireworks in the stands and threw them onto the pitch. On the other end, several masked Union supporters broke through and reached the pitch.

But Gikiewicz raised his fists to fight off the Union supporters before they could reach the Hertha supporters.

"The people moved back to the stands. But we will definitely try to identify everyone," Union communication chief Christian Arbeit said. "That's also shows that we are a family. Here, our keeper prevented someone else from doing a stupid thing."

Flares were also sent toward Union's bench, but coach Urs Fischer praised Aytekin's effort to control the match.

"I didn't think it was so bad. [The players] all remained calm," Fischer said after the match. "And because it was so calm, nothing much happened. Thank god. But you shouldn't target those rockets at supporters."

Berlin police told ESPN FC that Hertha fans had also lit fireworks on their way to the stadium, with one minor injury reported.

(Source: ESPN)

Nadal's late-season injury jinx strikes again



I keep playing.

"I finished the tournament with (a) 28-millimetre strain, so have been a big, big thing after that.

"I remember (it) well because I couldn't play semi-finals of the Davis Cup against Israel... So for me, I took almost a month outside of the tennis court, so we don't want to repeat that."

■ **Long injury history**

Nadal's first injury-enforced absence from the ATP Tour came as a 16-year-old in 2003 when he hurt his elbow in a fall during training and had to miss the French Open -- an event he has gone on to win a record-breaking 12 times.

He has missed at least one tournament in every year of

his career since.

Nadal has enjoyed a fantastic 2019, winning both Roland Garros and the US Open to move to within one of great rival Roger Federer on the list for most Grand Slam titles.

But he has been far from an ever-present on tour.

The Spaniard handed Federer a walkover when they were set to meet in the Indian Wells semi-finals before pulling out of the following Miami Open with the same right knee issue.

A left wrist problem forced him to end his Laver Cup halfway through the event in September, and Paris was his first appearance since.

Many pundits consistently predicted Nadal would struggle to enjoy a long career due to his gruelling style of play and he has proved them wrong time and again since.

■ **"No, that's not an issue."**

Nadal said he would fight to be fit for the season-ending championships in London, which start on November 10, until it is "impossible", but will first head home to Mallorca to start his recovery.

Should he miss London, Davis Cup organizers, including Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique, will be desperate for Nadal to be ready for the inaugural finals of the team event, with Federer and Djokovic both skipping that week in Madrid.

It will also be a busy 2020, though, for Nadal, with the Tokyo Olympics wedged between Wimbledon and the US Open.

(Source: France24)

Iran eye third Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup title

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran look d e s k to defend title at the 2019 Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup in Dubai, the UAE.

Team Melli have been drawn in a tough group at the 9th edition of the competition.

The prestigious competition will be held at the Kite Beach in Dubai, the UAE from Nov. 5 to 9.

Defending champions are pitted against three-time winners Russia, Mexico and Egypt for the two semi-final spots from Group B.

Hosts the UAE will meet European powerhouses Italy and Spain and Asian champions Japan in Group A.

“We have recently won a bronze medal at the ANOC World Beach Games in Doha and some of players traveled to Turkey to participate in a beach soccer tournament. We know that we will have a difficult task in the competition because all participating teams play in the high level,” Iran coach Abbas Hashempour said.

“Russia are one the best teams in the world and Mexico and Egypt are also strong and want to qualify for the semis. Our goal is to reach the final and I believe in my players. We want to achieve what we’re aiming for,” he added.

The Intercontinental Cup is second only to the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup as the largest and most prestigious event on the international beach soccer circuit, featuring an exclusive assembly of the world’s very best national teams from each continent.

Since the World Cup is a biannual competition, this event is now the most important annual international beach



soccer tournament.
■ **Iran squad:**
Peyman Hosseini, Hamid Behzadpour,

Mohammad Ahmadzadeh, Amirhossein Akbari, Saeid Piramoon, Mohammadali Mokhtari, Mehdi Shirmohammadi, Mos-

lem Mesigar, Mostafa Kiani, Mohammad Masoumizadeh, Ali Mirshekari, Hassan Abdollahi

Iran handed tough group at Asian Handball C’ship



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran have d e s k been handed a tough group in the 2020 Asian Men’s Handball Championship.

The Persian are drawn in Group A with Bahrain and New Zealand.

Qatar, Japan and China are in Group B. Group C consists of South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Australia.

Host Kuwait are pitted with the UAE, Iraq and Hong Kong in Pool D.

The 2020 Asian Men’s Handball Championship will be the 19th edition of the championship held under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation.

The championship will take place at Kuwait City, Kuwait from January 16 to 27, 2020.

The competition acts as the Asian qualifying tournament for the 2021 World Men’s Handball Championship to be held in Egypt.

Iran take bronze at FISU 3x3 World Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** – Iran’s d e s k Azad University wom-

en’s team wrote their name in the history, winning the first-ever medal at the International University Sports Federation (FISU) University World Cup - 3x3 on Sunday.

The Iranian representative edged past ISEG Senegal 14-13 in Xiamen, China to win a bronze medal.

The gold medal went to Chinese team Tsinghua University who beat Austria’s

University of Vienna.

In the men’s tournament, Paulista University of Brazil defeated Chile’s University of Chile in the final match. Huaqiao University of China won the bronze medal.

The 2019 edition of the University World Cup - 3x3 was held in Xiamen, China, for a fifth year in a row.

The competition was hosted by Huaqiao University from Oct. 31 to Nov. 3.

Greco-Roman wrestlers claim two golds at U23 World

TEHRAN – Two Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers claimed gold medals at the U23 World Championships in Budapest, Hungary on Saturday.

Meysam Dalkhani and Aliakbar Yousefi seized two gold medals at the 63kg and 130kg, respectively.

Facing 2013 Cadet World bronze medalist Levani Kavjaradze from Georgia, Dalkhani fell to a 6-2 deficit in the second period, but with less than 30 seconds left, the Iranian put the Georgian to his back with a hip toss for four points and a 6-6 lead on criteria.

Kavjaradze’s corner challenged the call, but it failed, resulting in a point for Dalkhani and securing a 7-6 win.

At 130 kg, 2019 Junior World champion Yousefi picked up his second World gold medal of the year, winning by injury default over five-time World champion Zviadi Pataridze from Georgia.

(Source: UWW)

Iran to send three swimmers to Qatar’s Swimming World Cup

IRNA – Iranian three-member swimming team will depart for Qatar on Tuesday to take part at the 2019 FINA Swimming World Cup.

Mehdi Ansari, Benyamin Ghare Hassanloo and Alireza Yavari will represent Iran in the event.

The competition will be held in Doha’s Hamad Aquatic Centre from November 7-9.

The 2019 FINA Swimming World Cup is a series of seven three-day meets in seven different cities between August and November 2019. This edition is held in the long course (50 meter pool) format.

Thailand 2019 semi-finals line-up confirmed

With the AFC U-19 Women’s Championship Thailand 2019 group stage action coming to an end on Sunday, the tournament’s four semi-finalists have now been confirmed.

As the dust settles on 12 pulsating matches in Chonburi, Group A winners DPR Korea will now tackle Group B runners-up Korea Republic, while reigning champions Japan – who topped the Group B standings – are set to meet Australia after they finished second in Group A. Both matches are scheduled to be played on Wednesday.

In addition to Continental glory being on the line, the competition’s top three finishers are guaranteed places at next year’s FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup in Nigeria.

■ DPR Korea (Group A winners)

Son Sung-gwon’s talented charges recorded three successive victories to claim their place in the last four, scoring 11 goals in the process and conceding only twice.

With captain Ri Su-gyong impressing throughout, DPR Korea opened their account in fine style courtesy of a 5-1 win over fellow semi-finalists Australia, before going on to beat Vietnam 3-0 and then host nation Thailand 3-1.

No fewer than nine players have found the net for the East Asians at Thailand 2019 as they look at add a second title to the one they claimed in 2007.



■ Korea Republic (Group B runners-up)

Sunday’s narrow 1-0 defeat of Myanmar saw champions Korea Republic finish second in Group B after Hur Jung-jae’s side had been forced to wait until Matchday Three to confirm their progress.

That victory came after a taxing 2-1 win over China PR on Matchday One and a disappointing 2-0 loss to eventual group winners Japan on Matchday Two.

Korea Republic’s success at Thailand 2019 comes after they failed to progress from the group stage at the 2017 edition and some six years since their last AFC U-19 Women’s Championship triumph.

■ Japan (Group B winners)

Under the wily guidance of head coach Futoshi Ikeda, Japan breezed into the semi-finals as Group B’s top team after winning all three of their group stage matches.

Sunday’s hard-fought 2-1 victory over China PR came in the wake of similarly successful outings against Myanmar and Korea Republic who they beat 5-0 and 2-0 on Matchdays One and Two respectively.

The five-time champions have impressed thus far as they seek to not only retain their Continental crown but also go on to defend the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup title they claimed in 2018.

■ Australia (Group A runners-up)

A last gasp 1-0 win over Vietnam on Matchday Three helped Australia secure a second successive AFC U-19 Women’s Championship semi-final appearance.

Mary Fowler, who was sensational during the competition’s qualifiers, bagged her third of the tournament to seal the dramatic victory, one which came after an opening day loss to Group A winners DPR Korea and a far more encouraging 3-1 defeat of Thailand.

Australia are in their eighth AFC U-19 Women’s Championship appearance, with their best performance to date coming in 2006 when they finished third.

(Source: the-afc)

Renard: There is outstanding young talent in Saudi Arabia

After more than a decade in Africa, where he enjoyed very successful stints in Zambia, Côte d’Ivoire and Morocco, winning the CAF Africa Cup of Nations title twice and qualifying for the FIFA World Cup™, French coach Herve Renard decided to switch continents. His new destination is Asia, where he headed in July to take up the coaching reins of Saudi Arabia.

Despite a busy schedule and having little time to prepare for the ongoing FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ qualifying campaign, the coach took time out to talk exclusively to FIFA.com. “It was time for a new challenge, and I hope I’ll succeed in Saudi Arabia,” he said.

During the interview, the 51-year-old Frenchman discussed, among other things, his objectives with the Saudi national team, his memories of more than a decade in Africa, and why he likes to have a good relationship with his players wherever he goes.

■ **FIFA.com:** After a lengthy stay in Africa, what motivated you move to Asia and accept the Saudi offer?

Herve Renard: Life did. I think it’s important to seek new experiences and strive for success. Yes, I worked for more than a decade in Africa and feel I was successful there, but it was time for a change. I wanted to continue working with national teams and had received an offer from Saudi Arabia to take charge of the senior side. I know the Saudi team very well, as they took part in the most recent edition of the World Cup in Russia and are one of Asia’s heavyweights. You can’t turn down that kind of offer. After all, they are a big name within the game, and I think if we work hard, we’ll achieve what we’re aiming for.

■ **You’ve been here less than three months, so how did you get to know the players so quickly and what was your initial plan?**

The plan was to watch all the players. Luckily, the national league started and we had four teams playing in the AFC Champions League. During the first squad get-together over ten days, we got to know each other and established the foundation of our work. Over time, things improved and everyone just wanted to focus on playing. Things also got better off the pitch. The



players get on very well with each other. I told them that they must be happy in what they do; wearing the national team shirt is an honor for any player and you must work hard for it.

■ **What do you hope to achieve with Saudi Arabia?**

We’ve started the qualifying campaign for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. Our first goal is to finish top of Group D in order to progress to the final round. Another task is to bring fresh faces into the team, but that has to be a gradual process. There are many outstanding young talents here and we have to give them an opportunity. They won the AFC U-19 Championship and took part in the U-20 World Cup in Poland this year. We’re keen to include young players and hope they gain the necessary experience to help us build a strong team for the future.

■ **In your experience, what are the strengths of Saudi players and how would you rate the first three games of the qualifiers?**

Saudi players are very skilled, which allows them to compete at the highest level across the continent. Four Saudi teams took part in the AFC Champions League and we have seven players in the Al Hilal side

that just made it to the final. Obviously, we’re hoping they go on and win the title.

With the national team, we had one friendly against Mali, which was very physical, and then we went straight into the qualifiers. We’ve played three games so far, beating Singapore at home and drawing away to Yemen and Palestine. This proves that our group is far from easy, with all the teams expecting to win points. We hope to improve soon and start to show our potential in order to make the Saudi fans happy.

■ **Do you have a specific coaching philosophy or certain tactics you like your teams to adhere to?**

For me the most important philosophy is to play as a team. We use the width of the pitch to pass the ball and try to move around intelligently. As long as we do this, then we can develop technically and deploy different tactics depending on the game. Against Singapore, for example, we started with a 4-2-3-1 and the team looked very organized. We put in a good performance and won 3-0. As I said, as long as we have the talent, demonstrate technical maturity, and work as a team, then we can always get better.

■ **You then took Morocco to the World Cup finals for the first time in 20 years. How was that experience?**

It was very special. We set ourselves some goals and we achieved the most important one by qualifying for Russia 2018, where we put in very good performances. We didn’t have great results despite playing better than our opponents. At the personal level, my relationship with the players was excellent. The team spirit was there all the time. During international breaks, even our injured players wanted to come and stay with the team at our camp. I was very happy with the atmosphere.

■ **So, now you’d like to return to the FIFA World Cup only this time with Saudi Arabia?**

Yes, certainly. When you experience the atmosphere of a World Cup, you would want to get there again. Nothing beats participating in the world’s greatest football tournament. I’ll work very hard to lead Saudi Arabia to the 2022 finals.

(Source: FIFA)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

People's hearts are shy and timid, and turn to him who tames them and shows them affection.

Imam Ali (AS)

Turkish, Afghan ensembles to perform in Iran’s Regional Music Festival

By Samaneh Aboutaleb

TEHRAN — The 12th edition of Iran’s Regional Music Festival will host three ensembles from Turkey and Afghanistan, the director of the festival, Ahmad Sadri, said during a press conference in Tehran on Sunday.



The director of the 12th Regional Music Festival, Ahmed Sadri, attends a press conference in Tehran on November 3, 2019 to brief the media about the festival. (ILNA/Aliреза Khazrai)

Ganjali Khan Square and several other historical sites are the main venues for outdoor performances, while halls in universities and hotels in Kerman will host some performances.

Exhibition of musical instruments, photos and music books and CDs as well as workshops, meetings and seminars will be organized on the sidelines of the festival, which will come to an end on November 10.

“Am I a Wolf?” named best animation at DOK Leipzig

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — The Iranian short “Am I a Wolf?” by Amir-Hushang Moin won the Golden Dove for best animated film at the 62nd DOK Leipzig, a German festival for documentary and animated films, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The movie is about a group of children who perform the familiar story of the wolf and the yearlings in school as a puppet show. The nanny goat grieving for its yearlings and the angry wolf in its solitude face each other.

In the international competition for short documentary and animated films, “Puberty” by Elena Kondratyeva from Russia also received the Golden Dove for best documentary. “Asho” by Jafar Najafi from Iran won an honorable mention in this category.

“Exemplary Behavior” co-directed by Lithuanian filmmakers Audrius Mickevicius and Nerijus Milerius was awarded the Golden Dove in the international competition for long documentary and animated films.

The Golden Dove in the Next Masters Competition for long documentary and animated film went to “Safety123” by Austrian filmmakers Julia Gutweniger and Florian Kofler.

The Switzerland-based Iranian filmmaker Majid Movasseghi was a member of the Interreligious Jury at the 62nd DOK Leipzig, which took place in the German city from October 28 to November 3.

“Sleep No More” wins screenplay award at Rhode Island festival

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian screenwriter Iman Davari received first prize in the screenplay competition of the Flickers’ Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF) for his work “Sleep No More”, the organizers announced last week.

Kenneth Sanabria from Costa Rica won the grand prize of the festival in this section for his screenplay “Blood and Ash”, while “Yosemite” written by Daniel Talbott received the grand prize of the festival in the national section.

“Like a Secret” By Iranian writer Saeid Zamanian was also among the 42 finalists in the screenplay competition.

Turkish publisher Dogu releases anthology of Persian stories

C U L T U R E d e s k TEHRAN — An anthology of stories by Iranian writers has been published by the Turkish publishing house Dogu in Istanbul.

The book “Iranian Story Anthology” was released on Friday, Iranian translator of Turkish literature Behruz Dijurian, who is also the translator of the collection, told the Persian service of the MNA on Saturday.

The anthology carries stories by Sadeq Hedayat, Ali-Ashraf Darvishian, Rasul Parvizi, Jalal Al-Ahmad, Hushang Golshiri, Hashem Akbariani, Ali-Akbar Janvand, Yusef Alikhani and the translator.

“I hope that Turkish readers will like the collection. The publisher plans to support other collections of such stories from Persian writers if Turkish readers welcome the present anthology,” said Dijurian whose Turkish translation of the Rubaiyat of Baba Afzal Kashani, a book by the Persian poet who

lived during the 12th and 13th centuries, was released by the Okumuslar Publishing House in Istanbul in June 2018.

He also added that the Dogu Publishing House is interested in Persian literature and has published several books on the history of Iran, modern Iran, and relations between the Ottomans and Iran.

Dijurian spent the past year translating “Iranian Story Anthology” and his fellow writer Sadeq Hedayat’s “The Blind Owl”, which is scheduled to be published in Istanbul in the near future.

“I intend to provide a bridge between Turkish and Persian literature by my books,” he noted.

A Turkish translation of Iranian author Mehdi Yazdani-Khorram’s novel “I Love Manchester United” by Dijurian came out by Demavend Publications in Istanbul in 2015.

“Dandelion Season” filming begins in California



Maryam Pirband (L) directs Gohar Kheirandish in a scene from “Dandelion Season”.

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Filming has started on the co-production between Iran and the U.S. “Dandelion Season” by U.S.-based Iranian filmmaker Maryam Pirband in the American state of California, the Persian service of ILNA reported on Sunday.

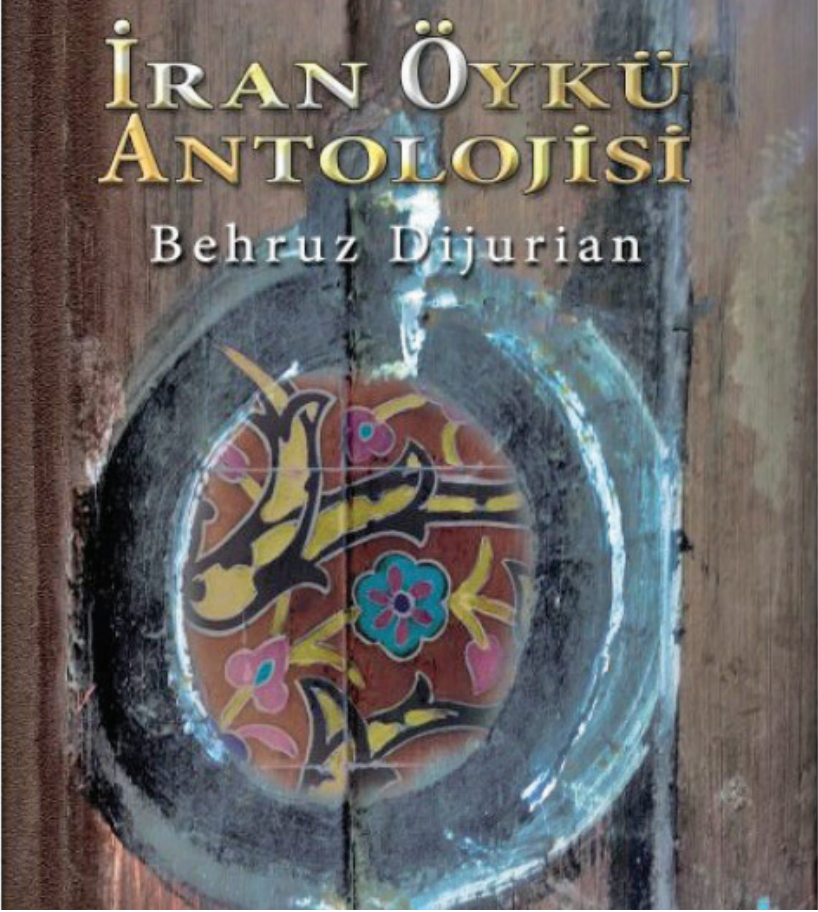
The latest edition of the Action on Film MEGAFest, a film and screenplay festival in the U.S., agreed to produce “Dandelion Season” after its screenplay written by Pirband was selected by the jury as a winner.

Iranian actors Gohar Kheirandish, Hamid

Razi, Reza Musavi and Nima Jafari along with American actors Rudy Youngblood, Sayed Badreya, Daniel Baldwin and Oscar Torre are starring in the movie.

Afshin Ahmadi from Iran and Stefano Milla from the U.S. are collaborating on the project as cinematographers.

“Dandelion Season”, which is Pirband’s debut feature film, is about an Iranian family that lives in Los Angeles. To solve some problems, each member of the family must find solutions for their own personal issues.



Front cover of “Iranian Story Anthology” released by the Dogu Publishing House in Istanbul.

“Last Fiction” picked as best at Epic ACG Fest



“The Last Fiction” by Ashkan Rahgozar.

A R T d e s k TEHRAN — Iranian director Ashkan Rahgozar’s award-winning movie “The Last Fiction” has been named best feature animation at the Epic Animation, Comics and Games Fest — Epic ACG Fest in Mountain View, California.

“The Last Fiction” is about Zahak’s treacherous rise to the throne in Jamshid in Persia. The young and naive hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian

mythology that reveals human nature. “Harvie & the Magic Museum” co-directed by Inna Evlannikova and Martin Kotik from Russia won the Grand Jury Prize in the feature competition, while “Tragic Magic” by Geoff Clark from the U.S. received the Grand Jury Prize in the short competition.

The award for best comic single went to “FAT” by Fangya Deng and Yalong Li, and the award for best original design in the games category was bestowed upon “Terran Resistance” by Shicong Hao.

Korean, Iranian artists unite for Tehran exhibit

By Manijeh Rezapoor

TEHRAN — A joint exhibition of Korean and Iranian art highlighting beautiful Korean landscapes and the revered art of Persian calligraphy opened at the residence of the South Korean ambassador in Tehran on Saturday.

The exhibition features works by Korean artists Kwak Suk-son, Chung Sung-tai, Chung So-yeon and Jin Li Ba, and Iranian calligraphers Ali Shirazi and Esrafil Shirchi.

The artists are members of the Korean Art Association and were invited through the association to the exhibit whose theme is the beauty of Korea.

“In Korea, there are specific types of paintings with their own special styles,” Suk-son told the Tehran Times at the opening ceremony.

“Paintings are divided into two types in Korea; one is made with black ink, which is considered the traditional painting of Korea. The other type is made with a distinct kind of Korean color, which is created on special varieties of papers with particular types of powder used for paintings,” he added.

In this exhibit, the participating Korean artists have displayed both types of the paintings, he noted.

Birth, life, dream, love, festival and mountain views are among the topics of the works on display in the exhibit.

Suk-son also said that the artists have created these paintings especially for the exhibit each in his or her own studio.

He also added that they don’t know much about Persian calligraphy but calligraphy is famous in Korea and they really



Korean artists Kwak Suk-son, surrounded by guests, does a painting at the opening ceremony of a joint exhibition by Korean and Iranian artists at the South Korean ambassador residence in Tehran on November 2, 2019.

want to learn more about Persian calligraphy.

“I believe calligraphy is the interaction of alphabets and forms, which look like paintings, and we believe if we attend this joint exhibit we could learn more from one another,” Suk-son noted.

However, Shirchi, who also attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition, said that there is one specific character that is reflected in the art, poetry, literature and music of the Far East.

“They have created this character with ink in black and white, which has an impressive impact on the visitors,” he added.

Movie “Harriet” tells a different story about U.S. slavery

NEW YORK (Reuters) — When director Kasi Lemmons started work on the first major movie about Harriet Tubman, the 19th century slave turned hero of the Underground Railway, she decided to focus less on the brutality of slavery and more on human stories.

“I really felt that I wanted to speak about a different kind of violence, which was family separation, which I hadn’t seen as much of but is very much the Harriet Tubman story and what she was motivated by,” said Lemmons. Lemmons co-wrote the screenplay for “Harriet”, which opened in U.S. movie theaters on Friday.

“This image of her sisters being taken away, her brother having to leave his wife right after childbirth, her sister saying, ‘no, I can’t leave my children.’ The choices that people had to make and the fact that she was motivated to go back to rescue her family,” Lemmons added.

Tubman was born into slavery in the early 1800s in Maryland. As a young adult, she escaped slavery by running nearly 100 miles through forests and fields. She then risked her life several times to return to Maryland and lead dozens of slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

The petite, 5 foot-tall (1.5 meter) Tubman is played by Cynthia Erivo, a London-born actress with Nigerian parents who won a Tony award in 2016 for her lead role in the Broadway revival of the musical “The Color Purple.”

The casting of a British actress to play a woman seen as an African-American icon has caused controversy in the United States, but Lemmons said she thought Tubman’s story “was big enough to share.”

Lemmons said she was struck by Erivo’s “physical stature and her athleticism and her singing voice and those cheekbones. ... I felt like, ‘Oh, I’m looking at somebody who

really, really could make me believe it.’ And I really think that that’s what it’s about. I think the most service that I can do to this character is to bring, help bring this perfectly realistic performance.”

Erivo said she worked hard to capture Tubman’s physicality.

“It was really about finding the map of her face,” she said. “So we would look at pictures, discuss, you know, her downturned mouth, her eyes, how she would hold them, her body, where the tension was, try to find her voice. Because I knew I didn’t want her to sound like me.”