



Leader advises incompetent hopefuls not to run for parliament **2**



U.S. must stop the wrong maximum pressure policy **2**



Iran win two golds at Karate1 Premier League **15**



UNESCO to commemorate Farabi, Attar in 2020, 2021 **16**

'Political pressures not to harm Iran-EAEU trade'

See page 4



Eurasian Economic Commission Trade Minister Veronika Nikishina

Iran welcomes China's initiative to revive glory of ancient Silk Road

TEHRAN — Iran's tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan has said Iran backs China's initiative for reviving the glory of ancient Silk Road, which existed for thousands of years, passing through many different empires, kingdoms, reigns and societies throughout history.

As one of the countries under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),

Iran enables cultural communication between the East and the West.

"The BRI tightly connected many amicable countries along the Silk Road, and I am very glad that Iran could join in the initiative because it is helping to restore the glory of the ancient road," the Global Times quoted Mounesan as saying on Friday. **→10**

Iran investigating cause of unrest-related deaths: general

TEHRAN — Commander of the Tehran division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Mohammad Reza Yazdi, says investigations are underway to clarify the cause of death of those who lost their lives during the recent unrest across Iran.

"In the same way that people diverge from rioters, those who innocently lost

their lives also diverge from those who wanted to damage public property," Yazdi said on Sunday, ISNA reported. He said some security forces were shot as well.

General Yazdi acknowledged that the people are entitled to demand better living conditions, and said wanting better living conditions is a legitimate demand. **→3**

Iraq protesters burn Hakim shrine entrance in holy city

Iraqi protesters set fire to the entrance of a shrine in the southern holy city of Najaf and security forces fired tear gas to disperse them, police and a demonstrator at the scene said.

The demonstrator sent a video to Reuters of a doorway to the Hakim shrine blazing as protesters cheered and filmed it on their mobile phones. Reuters could not immediately verify the footage.

The incident took place during one of the bloodiest weeks of Iraq's anti-govern-

ment unrest, which erupted last month. On Friday, Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi promised to quit to try to stem the violence and public anger.

Demonstrations continued elsewhere including the southern city of Nassiriya where protesters earlier surrounded a police station and in Baghdad. But there were far fewer reports of casualties than on the previous two days, when scores were killed nationwide in the Iraqi capital and the south in clashes with security forces. **→13**

Will Riyadh end its invasion into Yemen?

By Farzad Farhadi

TEHRAN — A military coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the U.S., has launched a war against Yemen since March 26, 2015. The war has so far failed to meet its desired goals.

Along with the news about the Yemen war, borrowing a loan from banks around the world by Saudi Arabia has attracted the attention of observers.

In January 2018, Reuters quoted the Saudi debt management office as saying that Riyadh has asked banks for proposals to refinance its \$10 billion international syndicated loan and to help the sovereign raise funds through other means.

The office said the refinancing of the loan, which was raised in 2016, will include a repricing of the facility and the extension of its maturity

to 2023 from 2021.

The Saudi war against Yemen has caused a lot of military, political and economic pressure on Riyadh. According to media reports, due to the war, Saudi Arabia has lost all of its cash and non-cash reserves.

A way to take Riyadh out of Yemen quagmire

Saudi Arabia has been caught in the military, political and economic quagmire of the Yemen war. The war, which Mohammad bin Salman did not expect to last more than three years, has been raging for nearly five years and putting unbearable pressure on the Saudi economy. That is why Riyadh is looking for a way to take itself out of the trouble. Mahdi al-Mashat, chief of the

Houthi political office, put forward the solution that the Saudis needed.

On September 20, al-Mashat announced a conditional ceasefire, calling on the coalition to halt the war and seize the opportunity of ceasefire.

According to military experts, the Yemeni conditional peace plan was presented at a time when Yemen was at the height of its power, the most important proof of which was the strikes on the Aramco oil facilities.

The strikes were so severe that prompted various reactions internationally.

The important point of the plan is that it was presented by the Supreme Political Council, which is currently the most powerful organization in Yemen.

Hadi a spent force as Saudis directly engage Houthis

Yemenis loyal to former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi are deeply sidelined by Saudi Arabia's direct talks with Houthis.

According to London-based Middle East Eye (MEE) news portal, Riyadh does not discuss its existing engagement of the Houthis with the "weak" pro-Hadi regime.

"Saudi Arabia is trying to find an exit from the trap it fell into," Mohammed Ali, a journalist and commentator from the southwestern city of Ta'izz, told MEE.

Riyadh has admitted having an "open channel" with the Yemeni movement to negotiate an end to the conflict.

Last month, the Associated Press reported that Saudi Arabia and the Houthis have been holding "indirect, behind-the-scenes talks" mediated by Oman.

The talks reportedly began in September after a Houthi attack on the world's largest crude oil facility in Saudi Arabia temporarily impacted nearly six percent of daily global production.

The Houthis reportedly offered to stop launching attacks on Saudi targets if the kingdom ended its airstrikes in Yemen. They later unilaterally released hundreds of prisoners, while the Saudis freed 128 Yemenis on Thursday.

The Hadi regime is apparently incensed, thinking that the communication between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis is aimed at ending attacks on the kingdom.

According to an unnamed Houthi source in Sana'a cited by the Middle East Eye, the current talks are not part of the UN-brokered Stockholm agreement.



ARTICLE

Ebrahim Fallahi

Tehran Times journalist

Clash of titans: Is OPEC+ deal nearing its end?

Only a few days is left before the unveiling of a big decision which will mostly determine the future of oil market in the upcoming year. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies including Russia (known as OPEC+) are going to gather in Vienna during December 5-6 for the 177th Meeting of the OPEC Conference and the 7th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting, to discuss the oil market and reach a decision regarding the next step for the OPEC+ cuts deal.

Many experts and analysts expect OPEC+ to decide on extending the current pact rather than deepening the cuts, however contrasting signals from the groups' two major policy-makers indicate that the situation doesn't seem to be unwinding toward such a decision.

Saudi Arabia and Aramco IPO

After two years of postponing and speculation, Saudi Arabia has finally announced that the kingdom is going to officially offer 1.5 percent of its oil-giant's stakes on December 5, allowing institutional investors to submit their initial offers. Interestingly, Aramco's initial public offering (IPO) is concurrent with the 177th gathering of OPEC.

For years, the Saudis have been announcing that they will sell about five percent of Aramco's stock in foreign and domestic stock exchanges; and since they valued the company at \$2 trillion, it was estimated that Saudi Arabia would make \$100 billion on its initial offering, and will use the proceeds to build on the foundations of the crown prince's 2030 vision for an oil-free economy.

However, in spite of the many years of advertising and effort, Aramco's IPO didn't receive the attention and praise that the kingdom expected. Therefore, they reduced the IPO to 1.5 percent and it seems that they have even abandoned their dreams of attracting large-cap funds from foreign exchanges, at least for the time being.

So, Aramco's initial offering is going to be only in their domestic stock exchange, and the IPO is likely to only generate over \$25 billion in revenue for Saudi Arabia. **→5**



ARTICLE

Hana Saada

Journalist from Algeria

'No to foreign interference': Algerians dissipating disaccord in face of European Parliament's resolution

Algeria, "free and sovereign" in its decisions, accepts no interference or diktat and submits to no bargaining whoever the parties," this is how responded Algeria's lieutenant general, chief of Staff of the People's National Army, to the non-binding resolution, adopted by the European Parliament, on Thursday, November 28, 2019 on the so-called the grim reality of human rights in Algeria, calling on the North African country to put an end to the criminalization of dissent, arbitrary arrests, and violations of minority rights.

MEPs "deeply worried about the state of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Algeria," read a summary of the EU body's stance.

"[MEPs] strongly condemn the arbitrary and unlawful arrest and detainment of, attacks on and intimidations of journalists, trade unionists, lawyers, students, human rights defenders and civil society and all peaceful protesters taking part in the Hirak demonstrations."

They also "urged the Algerian authorities to desist from judicial and legislative harassment, criminalization and arbitrary arrest and detentions."

For its part, the Algerian government firmly condemned and rejected "in substance and form" the European Parliament's "blatant" interference in its internal affairs and reserves the right to conduct an overall review of its relations with all the European institutions.

"Algeria is still deeply committed to the rejection in principle of all foreign interference in its internal affairs, whoever the instigators and whatever their intentions, often, if not always, using human rights as an excuse, an argument that is most of the time diabolically politicized," pointed out Algeria's Head of State Bensalah. **→11**



ISNA / Mohammadali Ghasemi

International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated in Tehran

TEHRAN — A ceremony was held in Tehran on Sunday to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities, ISNA news agency reported.

Annually held on December 3, International Day of Persons with Disabilities was first proclaimed in 1992 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3. It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. **→12**

Lawmaker terms reduction of JCPOA undertakings as Tehran's

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Rapporteur for the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said on Saturday that Iran's stance in modification of obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a correct decision.

Touching upon Iran's 4th step in reducing its commitments under the JCPOA, Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said, "The strategy to scale back the nuclear obligations was a "correct" one and should have been adopted sooner."

"The purpose of steps to reduce the JCPOA obligations is to change the behavior of the other party, and the reason for taking these steps is to protest the other party's failure to fulfill its obligations, (however) it has had no effect on the other party (the European signatories to the deal) so far as it has fulfilled no commitment (under the deal)" he said.

Iran has started to gradually reduce its commitments under the JCPOA in response to the abrogation of the deal by United States and a failure by the Europeans to honor their commitments



So far, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has taken four steps to cut back commitments in accordance with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which "allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance."

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran announced that its "strategic patience" is over and began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

In the first stage, Iran announced that it will not limit its stockpile of the nuclear fuel to 300 kilograms allowed under the deal. On that date (May 8) Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially Europeans, devise a mechanism to protect Iran from the sanctions' effect in the two-month deadline it will reverse its decision.

But since European parties missed the deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, thereby starting the second step.

Again, as Europe missed the second 60-day deadline, Iran moved to take the third step, removing a ban on nuclear research and development (R&D).

In the latest step, which was done on November 6, Iran started injecting uranium gas into 1,044 centrifuges at the Fordow nuclear site. It was done at the presence of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

This happened again after the Europeans failed to take concrete steps to save the JCPOA.

Iran has said lifting ban on its oil export and financial transactions are the main conditions to reverse its decision.

Blocking Iranian officials' accounts violates basic freedoms, democracy: expert

PRESS TV — Blocking accounts of top Iranian officials is a violation of freedom of information and freedom of expression, according to a British expert.

The U.S. State Department recently ordered major tech companies with popular media platforms such as Google, Facebook and Twitter to block the accounts of top Iranian government officials.

British political journalist and founder and editor of Politics First magazine, Marcus Steven Papadopoulos, told Press TV in an interview on Saturday that major tech companies with media platforms such as Google, Facebook and Twitter lacked independence and had very close ties to the U.S. government.

Papadopoulos said the U.S. government as well as the government of Britain did not really care about "freedom of expression and democracy."

"The Americans and the British merely pay lip service to the concepts of freedom of information or freedom of expression," he said, noting that these concepts were simply tools of western hegemony alongside military power and economic influence.

According to Papadopoulos, both countries were very selective about such concepts and there was no way the ruling group of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) would allow any company to threaten its expansionist policy and pursuit of global hegemony.

"Wasp America, and also Britain, proclaim themselves to the rest of the world as being guardians of Democracy and the Rule of Law, and Freedom of Expression."

At the end of the day, all that matters to the Americans and the British is not just safeguarding the western global hegemony, but expanding the western global hegemony," Papadopoulos noted.

Papadopoulos said the U.S. will attempt to throttle the independence of countries like Iran.

"Shutting down the accounts of Iranian officials ... they will have no moral compulsion in doing so. Because they do not sincerely care about freedom of expression or democracy," the British expert on politics pointed out.

He said Iranian officials who pursue an independent foreign policy, and don't bow down to the dictates of the Americans, will be targeted.

"The American government will do all in its means to stifle the opinions being expressed by those Iranian officials," Papadopoulos noted.

Papadopoulos said that the Iranians can counter the U.S. move by gaining self-sufficiency in their sphere of influence.

Countries that want to remain independent from western global hegemony need to become self-sufficient in operating their own global online platforms, the British expert said.

Papadopoulos added, given the true face of the West and its pursuit of imperialistic expansionist policy, there had to be other global online platforms operating in the world.

He suggested that Iran, Russia or China could create such platforms that would be protected from the censorship imposed by media tech companies like Facebook and Twitter that censor and delete posts or accounts according to U.S. hegemonic policy.

Larijani says U.S. must stop the wrong maximum pressure policy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Sunday that maximum pressure is a "wrong policy" and the United States must stop it.

"There has always been political will to solve issues and there is no dead end... The issue is that policy of maximum pressure is wrong and must be changed. We have not closed the door, however, the United States must come to the understanding that this policy is not right," he said in a press conference.

He noted that current U.S. officials should be "wise" enough to learn from the past experiences.

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions on Iran as part of "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

Many analysts and think tanks believe that the maximum pressure policy has failed to achieve concrete results.

■ 'Iran to respond if Europeans use snapback mechanism'

Larijani also said that Iran will respond if the Europeans use the snapback mechanism that returns UN sanctions against Iran.

"If the European states use the mechanism, Iran will also revise some of its commitments to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said on Wednesday that Paris is se-



riously considering triggering a mechanism within the Iran nuclear deal that could lead to UN sanctions.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Thursday that Le Drian's remarks were "irresponsible".

■ Larijani says he has no intention to run for president

Larijani also said that he has no intention to run for presidential post in the 2021

elections.

He also said that he will not seek re-election in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Parliamentary elections will be held on Feb. 21, 2020 with the approval of the Guardian Council.

■ 'Coordination council of senior officials is temporary'

Larijani also said the coordination council comprised of the heads of the three

branches of government is "provisional" and refuted claims that it intends to approve legislations or replace the parliament.

He said the coordination council was formed in a special situation, a reference to the abrogation of the nuclear deal and return of sanctions by the U.S. which resulted in an economic shock, especially in the devaluation of national currency.

"For example, the foreign currency crisis had to be contained and mechanisms should have been considered," Larijani stated. "But this issue (coordination council) is provisional and it never wants to replace Majlis and must never be so."

■ 'We consider Iraq as our natural ally'

The top lawmaker also said Iran is not worried about the situation in Iraq, noting dignified figures like Ayatollah Ali Sistani are fully aware of the situation in Iraq and can manage the situation.

"There are proficient political and religious figures like Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq who can resolve problems and there is no need for help," remarked Larijani who was born in the shrine city of Najaf.

He said Iran was anxious about the situation in Iraq when Daesh made rapid advances in the country in 2014 and Iran helped Iraqi forces in defeating them.

On whether developments in Iraq has any effect on Iran, he said, "Generally, we see Iraq as our natural ally."

Leader advises incompetent hopefuls not to run for parliament

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday advised potential parliamentary candidates not to run for the elections "if you don't have management capabilities."

The Leader criticized the way many people register for the elections, saying now that potential candidates can register for the parliamentary elections, a lot of

people go ahead and register without hesitation.

Every responsibility or position requires certain commitments, Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"You have to see if you can make that commitment," Ayatollah Khamenei said, according to Mehr.

On Sunday morning, Iran started registering candidates running for the

upcoming parliamentary elections, set to be held on February 21, 2020.

Candidates have until December 7 to register, Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

The elections will be held in over 200 constituencies across the country's 31 provinces.

The Guardian Council will vet parliamentary hopefuls for their qualifications and will release the names

of candidates deemed eligible to run by December 18.

Disqualified candidates will have four days to object to the Guardian Council, after which the council will study complaints and announce the final list on February 11.

The candidates will have 8 days to spend on the campaign trail, ending on February 19, and then the elections will be held on February 21, 2020.

E3 welcomes six European countries joining INSTEX

By staff and agency

France, Germany and the United Kingdom have issued a joint statement welcoming a decision by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden to join the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX).

"As founding shareholders of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX), France, Germany and the United Kingdom warmly welcome the decision taken by the governments of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, to join INSTEX as shareholders," read the statement published by website of the UK Foreign Ministry on Saturday.

It added, "This step further strengthens INSTEX and demonstrates European efforts to facilitate legitimate trade between Europe and Iran and is a clear expression of our continuing commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)."

The statement also noted that full and effective implementation of the JCPOA is of the utmost importance.

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden issued a joint statement on Friday announcing joining shareholders of INSTEX.

In a tweet on Friday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian welcomed the move.

He said that the six European countries made an important decision to join INSTEX.

The foreign minister also said that the Europeans are strongly committed to support the nuclear deal.

The statement issued by the six European countries says, "In light of the continuous European support for



the agreement and the ongoing efforts to implement the economic part of it and to facilitate legitimate trade between Europe and Iran, we are now in the process of becoming shareholders of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) subject to completion of national procedures. INSTEX was established by France, Germany and the United Kingdom in January 2019."

It added, "The nuclear agreement was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council and is as a key instrument for the global non-proliferation regime and a major contribution to stability in the region."

INSTEX has been designed by the European Union to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31 by France, Germany, and Britain, the three countries party to the nuclear deal.

It was introduced long after the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran and threatened to punish any country or company that does business with Iran.

On March 20, Iran's central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced that a mechanism similar to INSTEX has been registered in Iran, officially called the Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI).

World is responsible for implementing nuclear deal, Iran says

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's

Deputy Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA, is an international agreement and the world is responsible for implementing it.

"The JCPOA is an international achievement and the countries in the world are responsible for respecting, implementing and preserving it," he said during a joint press conference with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu in Beijing.

On Iran's decision to reduce JCPOA commitments, Araghchi said that the move is within the framework of the agreement.

Iran has started to partially reduce its commitments to the JCPOA in response to the United States which abandoned the landmark deal in May 2018 and reinstited sanctions.

So far, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has taken four steps to cut back commitments in accordance with paragraph 36 of the JCPOA which "allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance."

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran announced that its "strategic patience" is over and began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

In the first stage, Iran announced that it will not limit its stockpile of the nuclear fuel to 300 kilograms allowed under the deal. On that date (May 8) Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially Europeans, devise a mechanism to protect Iran from the sanctions' effect in the two-month deadline it will reverse



its decision.

But since European parties missed the deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, thereby starting the second step.

Again, as Europe missed the second 60-day deadline, Iran moved to take the third step, removing a ban on nuclear research and development (R&D).

In the latest step, which started on November 6, Iran began injecting uranium gas into 1,044 centrifuges at the Fordow nuclear site. It was done at the presence of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

■ Chinese official urges Europe to implement INSTEX

Ma, for his part, urged Europe to implement the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX).

He noted that multilateralism and rule of law are required to preserve the JCPOA.

INSTEX has been designed by the European Union to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31 by France, Germany, and Britain, the three countries party to the nuclear deal.

It was introduced long after the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran and threatened to punish any country or company that does business with Iran.

Omani FM due in Tehran to discuss Hormuz peace initiative with Zarif

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Omani Foreign Minister

Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah is scheduled to visit Tehran on Monday to discuss the Hormuz peace initiative with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif, ISNA reported on Sunday.

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

"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 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.

In a press briefing on November 25, the Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi called on certain Persian Gulf Arab states to abandon reliance on foreign forces for their security, saying dependence on foreigners is just an "illusion"

"We called on the countries to respond to Iran's peace-seeking call and abandon illusions. We have stressed that presence of foreign countries undermines security and stability. We hope this initiative of Iran would face with positive response," Mousavi stated.

Mousavi also said so far three regional states have decided to join the peace plan.



Registering candidates for parliamentary polls begins

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has started registering candidates running for the upcoming parliamentary elections, set to be held on February 21, 2020.

Candidates have until December 7 to register, Interior Ministry said on Sunday. Registration began on Sunday morning following an order by Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Mehr reported.

The elections will be held in over 200 constituencies across the country's 31 provinces.

The midterm elections of the Assembly of Experts will also be held on the same date in Tehran, Khorsan Razavi, North Khorasan, Fars and Qom provinces.

The Guardian Council will vet parliamentary hopefuls for their qualifications and will release the names of candidates deemed eligible to run by December 18.

Disqualified candidates will have four days to object to the Guardian Council, after which the council will study complaints and announce the final list on February 11. The candidates will have 8 days to spend



on the campaign trail, ending on February 19, and then the elections will be held on February 21, 2020.

The Iranian parliament has 290 members who are elected by the people for four-year terms.

Ali Larijani, the current speaker of the parliament, has announced that he will not run for the parliament.

Jamal Orf, who serves as the head of the Interior Ministry elections headquarters, said on Saturday that the elections headquarters has been trained for registration and related works.

"The entire staff, responsible for implementation of the elections, including 2,000 governors and district governors, have been trained... as our colleagues went to the provinces and trained relevant staff," he explained.

"On Thursday we staged an online executive exercise in the Interior Ministry and contacted the entire governorships to review and resolve their problems," Orf stated.

Iran reaffirms support for establishment of independent Palestinian state

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Reza Qaeabi, the deputy permanent representative of Iran in the Vienna-based international organizations, on Saturday laid emphasis on putting an end to occupation of Palestine by Israel, reiterating Tehran's full support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.



In a ceremony marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Qaeabi voiced concern over the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories.

He further stressed the need for a comprehensive and durable solution to the crisis created by the Israeli regime including violation of international law and commitment of war crimes against the Palestinians.

Putting an end to the occupation of Palestine, allowing its people to return to their homeland, and establishing an independent Palestinian state with Quds as its capital should be a part of the comprehensive solution, the diplomat stated.

Qaeabi went on to say that the annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an opportunity to renew "our commitment" to a comprehensive and durable solution to the Palestinian issue.

Expressing deep concern over the disturbing situation in the occupied territories, especially in the West Bank and the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip due to siege and economic sanctions, widespread Israeli military aggression and demolition of schools and homes, he called for an immediate and unconditional removal of the illegal siege of Gaza, reopening all border crossings in the region as well as putting an immediate end to mass punishment.

In relevant remarks in November, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in a telephone conversation with Palestinian Islamic Jihad Secretary-General Ziyad al-Nakhalah, denounced Tel Aviv's aggression against Gaza and praised the Islamic Jihad for standing against the occupiers.

26 riot leaders arrested in Najafabad and 25 in Kurdistan

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In separate reports issued on Sunday, police announced that 26 ring-leaders of the recent riots have been arrested in Najafabad, a city in Isfahan province, and 25 in the western province of Kurdistan.

The police have managed to identify 26 ringleaders and main culprits behind the riots after a series of sophisticated moves and arrested them in separated operations, Najafabad police chief Mohammad Hossein Babakalani said, according to Fars.

Babakalani said the suspects have confessed to damaging and setting fire to public properties and inciting people to disrupt the public order.

He added that the arrested individuals have been handed over to the judiciary.

General Ali Azadi, commander of the Kurdistan police force, also said 25 persons who were the main leaders of riots were arrested in the cities of Marivan and Sanandaj. Three guns and some white arms were confiscated from those arrested, Azadi explained.

The news came a day after the Intelligence Ministry said it had arrested those who implemented the Iran International TV's order to set fire to public and private property in different Iranian provinces.

In a statement, the ministry said the individuals were identified and arrested while trying to set fire to public and private property in order to intensify the unrest.

Protests erupted in some cities in Iran against increasing gasoline price. In certain cases, the protests turned violent as some rioters clashed with police, using knives and guns.

Rioters damaged public and private property and put banks and state buildings on fire.

Over 47,000 liters of smuggled fuel seized in southeast Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) — Some 47,000 liters of smuggled fuel have been seized in Nimruz County in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, a local police official said on Sunday.

The police chief of Nimruz Colonel Ali Mir said that Nimruz highway patrol officers suspected two tank-trucks and stopped them at the checkpoint of Nehbandan-Zahedan road.

The tank-trucks consisted of 47,470 smuggled diesel fuel were seized, he said, adding that the smugglers have been also arrested in the operation and handed to judiciary officials.

Although Iranian rial has experienced depreciation against international currencies in recent months, fuel prices have remained unchanged and this has multiplied the lucrativeness of fuel smuggling in Iran.

As reported in early June, Iran has launched a border market to sell diesel fuel to buyers in Pakistan and Afghanistan to counter smuggling of fuel at border areas.

U.S. unleashes rage as new NATO members join INSTEX



POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Washington feels angry as some new European nations member to NATO have decided to trade with Iran via the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX).

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden issued a joint statement on Friday announcing becoming shareholders of INSTEX.

Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway are among NATO members.

U.S. envoy to Germany Richard Allen Grenell, in a tweet on Saturday night, criticized the six European nations for deciding to join the financial mechanism.

INSTEX has been designed by the European Union to facilitate legitimate trade with Tehran. It was introduced on January 31 by France, Germany, and Britain, the three countries party to the nuclear deal.

It was introduced long after the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran and threatened to punish any country or company that does business with Iran.

INSTEX is supposed to be a financial channel and a special

mechanism for transferring money in spite of U.S. sanctions on Iran. Its objective is to facilitate Iran's transactions with European companies.

On March 20, Iran's central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati announced that a mechanism similar to INSTEX has been registered in Iran, officially called the Special Trade and Finance Institute (STFI).

According to the Guardian, Paris, London and Berlin on Saturday welcomed the six new European countries to the INSTEX barter mechanism.

"As founding shareholders of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (Instex), France, Germany and the United Kingdom warmly welcome the decision taken by the governments of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, to join INSTEX as shareholders," the three said in a joint statement.

The addition of the six new members "further strengthens INSTEX and demonstrates European efforts to facilitate legitimate trade between Europe and Iran," the joint statement said.

MP: 140 terrorist teams disbanded during recent unrest

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's intelligence forces succeeded to disband 140 terrorist teams in Iran during the protest rallies, an Iranian lawmaker has said, hailing the forces for ensuring security across the country.

The Intelligence Ministry and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Intelligence Organization busted 140 terrorist teams before and during the outbreak of the recent riots, Javad Karimi Qodoosi said, according to Tasnim.

Karimi Qodoosi, a member of parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, referred to the calls for President Rouhani's resignation or parliament's dissolution as a major plot hatched by Iran's enemies.

The same plot was carried out in Iraq, he said, referring to the recent protests in the neighboring Arab country which led to the resignation of Iraqi Prime Minister



Abdul Mahdi.

He said a number of lawmakers were going to resign in response to the protests, but Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's remarks nipped the enemy's plot in the bud.

On November 15, protests erupted in some cities in Iran against increasing gasoline price. In certain cases, the protests turned violent as some riot-

ers clashed with police, using knives and guns.

Rioters damaged public and private property and put banks and state buildings on fire.

The protests just lasted for a few days. Meanwhile, the way the price hike implemented has been widely criticized by many Iranian figures.

Head of Iran's Civil Defense Organization said on Saturday that the Intelligence Ministry is responsible for an investigation into a possible infiltration of enemies into the management system regarding the implementation of the rise in gas price.

The general said the plan was conducted very badly.

"The plan was implemented so badly that some people believe that the enemies had possibly have infiltrated into the country's management system."

Iran ranks third in the world in producing Oxygen 18 used in radio medicine

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran ranks third in the world in terms of producing Oxygen 18, which is utilized in production of radio medicine.

Technically speaking, in the radiopharmaceutical industry, enriched water (H₂ 18 O) is bombarded with hydrogen ions in either a cyclotron or linear accelerator, creating fluorine-18. This is then synthesized into FDG and injected into a patient.

"Iran is the third country that has managed to produce Oxygen 18," says MP Mohammad Ebrahim Rezayee, chief of the nuclear sub-committee in the parliament (Majlis).

The nuclear sub-committee acts under the leadership of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

Rezayee visited the Arak heavy water reactor along with some other senior MPs and advisors to the sub-committee on Wednesday. They were informed about the latest technical, engineering and productive developments in the facility. They visited research facilities that are relevant to production of very important isotopes including Oxygen 18 as well as the process of re-designing the Arak reactor.

The visit took place in line with a mission by the Ma-



jlis national security committee to prepare a report on the activities of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) during a six-month period since Iran decided to reduce its commitments to the JCPOA in retaliation for the abrogation of the deal by the Trump administration

Iran investigating cause of unrest-related deaths: general

1 → But, he continued, there were some elements among protesters who attended the protests just to foment chaos and disrupt security.

He explained that protests started peacefully but rioters harnessed the power of the protests to their benefit and began damaging and setting fire to public property.

Protests erupted in Iran on November 15 after the government announced an increase in the price of gasoline, a subsidized commodity that is still cheaper in Iran than other countries in the world.

The proceeds from the price increase are paid in the form of cash subsidies to 60 million Iranians, who account for

about 75 percent of the population.

The rationed gasoline, which is 60 liters per month, is priced 1500 toman (35 cents) and any amount beyond that is 3000 toman (70 cents).

The calculation is based on the official rate of 4200 toman per dollar. However, the value of the dollar, due to the U.S. president's strategy of "maximum pressure" against Iran, is almost 2.5 times higher in the free market.

Rioters damaged public and private property and put banks, gas stations, and state buildings on fire.

To control the situation, Iran blocked access to the internet for days. However, most of the country's internet access has



been restored.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Tuesday that 731 banks and 70 gas stations were set ablaze or damaged during the unrest in the country.

"The rioters torched 731 banks to create problems," Rahmani Fazli said. "Also,

they damaged and/or torched 140 public places, 70 gas stations, and 9 religious centers and burned 307 automobiles and 1076 motorcycles."

Jamal Orf, a deputy of the interior minister, said on Saturday that international statistics about the death toll of the recent unrest are not valid.

Orf said respected bodies will announce the death toll based on forensic statistics.

The international statistics are higher than the real number of deaths, he added.

Human rights watchdog Amnesty International has updated the number of confirmed deaths, putting the number at 161 on November 29.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	318670.5
IFX	4131.36

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,275 rials
GBP	54,320 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$60.49/b
WTI	\$55.17/b
OPEC Basket	\$63.94/b
Gold	\$1,465.85/oz
Silver	\$817.10/oz
Platinum	\$900.25/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Germany leads the way as banks might embrace crypto

Next year Germany is very likely to accept a law that will make it possible for institutional banks to offer crypto services, including bitcoin custodial wallets. Handelsblatt reported the news earlier last week. This would make Germany the first major European country to embrace cryptocurrencies at an institutional level, and likely more countries will follow. Because the Germans have been the leading force behind the European economy for decades.



The law is already approved by the Bundestag, and is now awaiting approval from the sixteen states of the Bundesrat. The law would implement the 5th Money Laundering Directive of the European Union. Members of the EU have until January 10th 2020 to implement the directive.

Once the law has been approved, it would allow banks in Germany to sell bitcoin and other crypto. And older version of the bill would require banks to work with special subsidiaries or external custodians for crypto assets. Under the new law this is

no longer the case.

At this moment there's only one company offering both traditional banking services and cryptocurrency wallets, and that's fintech startup Bitwala. They have integrated banking and crypto trading, and offer services to citizens of the European Union.

Germany has the biggest economy in the eurozone. They are responsible for over 25 percent of the continents export. With 83 million citizens they are also the biggest country in Europe, while many countries consider them their biggest trade partner. But the German economy isn't doing so great, as the economy shrank 0.1 percent in the second quarter. At the same time there's the trade war with the United States, which hurts export in many ways.

Major German companies

In addition car sales around the world are dropping, and major German companies like Siemens, Daimler, and ThyssenKrupp are under-performing. All these events influence the rest of Europe.

When Germany would start embracing cryptocurrencies on a banking level, it could pave the way for other countries to do the same. Banks want control over the money flow, and they can get that by joining the party.

European banks are already struggling with public opinion, as interest on savings has already become negative at some banks. Many European banks only offer 0.01 percent interest, causing doubt among their clients.

Amidst all talks about banks and cryptocurrencies, there's an important role for the European Central Bank. Not only should the ECB formulate plans for a digital euro, but also should it create a framework for national banks to follow. Accepting services involving cryptocurrencies would make sense, especially considering Germany already wants a digital euro. The German bank association (Bankenverband) believes that 'the economy needs a programmable digital euro'.

The digital system should fit within a state-determined system, where the state has the responsibility for the monetary system. The new law would have banks in Germany dip their toes into the crypto space, and perhaps have them discover it's not such a scary place after all.

The European Central Bank

On top of that some people within the European Central Bank are already in favor of both a digital euro and cryptocurrencies.

Benoît Cœuré emphasized earlier last week that initiatives from central banks in the cryptocurrency space shouldn't undermine other payment solutions. Bitcoin payments and other cryptocurrencies should be allowed as well, alongside a digital euro.

All over Europe there are initiatives that show that bitcoin payments can coexist together with traditional money. For example, Bitpanda is now offering a crypto payment service for utility bills. Much more prominent is an example from France, where major retailers like Foot Locker, Decathlon and Conforama will start accepting bitcoin in 2020.

The trend doesn't stop in France. Also major American brands are moving into crypto. Starbucks and Bakkt are working on a consumer-focused bitcoin payment app, allowing people to buy coffee using the number one cryptocurrency. The app is scheduled for a release in 2020. At the same time fintech startups have launch debit cards that can be topped up with cryptocurrencies. Wirex is one of the leading examples.

German banks offering cryptocurrency services will mean a lot for Germans. It allows mainstream users to get in touch with cryptocurrencies easier than ever before. On top of that the German law can serve as a blueprint for other European countries, which are all following the anti-money laundering directives from the European Union anyway. However, not everybody is happy. Some fear that banks will get greedy, and as a result they might not educate clients well enough.

(Source: nederob.nl)

‘Political pressures not to harm Iran-EAEU trade’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Political desk pressures and other countries' interferences will not stop implementation of the trade agreement between Iran and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the minister for trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission stressed on Sunday.

Veronika Nikishina made the remarks during a seminar on Iran's trade and cooperation with Eurasia organized by Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) and held at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds attended by senior officials from the both sides, Mehr news agency reported.

The EAEU's minister of trade further expressed the willingness of the union's member states' businesspeople for trade with Iran and said, "They were interested in trade with Iran even when there was not such a trade agreement on reduction of tariffs, in a way that the exports of Iranian products to these countries rose 27 percent in 2018."

The temporary free trade agreement between Iran and EAEU can be turned into a permanent one after three years, she commented.

The trade agreement between Iran and EAEU officially came into force on October 27.

Based on this agreement, about 840 commodity items are subject to preferential tariffs, which means tariffs on some goods



EAEU Minister of Trade (2nd R) and TPO Head Hamid Zadboum (3rd R) in a seminar on Iran's trade and cooperation with Eurasia held in Tehran on Sunday

are reduced and for some commodities tariffs are levied.

"EAEU members are prepared to expand economic and trade relations with Iran and their cooperation with this country is promising", Nikishina has previously noted.

Iran is a very important market in the region and development of ties with this country is of high significance for the EAEU

NIMA supplies over €1.2b for imports of goods, services in a month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA) has supplied over €1.258 billion for imports of goods and services during the past Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 23-November 21), IRNA reported.

Of the mentioned €1.258 billion offered through NIMA, €738 million were bought by the importers of commodities and services.

As previously announced, NIMA has supplied over €20 billion for imports of goods and services since it was launched in April 2018 up to October 20, 2019.

NIMA, which seeks to boost transparency, create competitiveness among exchange shops and a secure environment for traders, is a new chance for importers to supply their required foreign currency without specific problems and for exporters to re-inject their earned foreign currency to the domestic forex market. It was inaugurated to allow exporters of non-oil commodities to sell their foreign currency earnings to importers of consumer products.

According to the Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati, establishing direct communication between importers and exporters has significantly increased the volume of exchanges in the NIMA system during the past few months.

In late May, CBI unveiled a directive package that provided the country's exporters with guidelines about how they should



re-inject their foreign currency incomes into the country's economy.

Based on the new directive, for the petrochemical sector, the exporters should present at least 60 percent of their foreign currency incomes into NIMA, and a maximum 10 percent could be injected into the financial system in the form of hard currency and the rest could be used for importing necessary goods.

As for other exporters, at least 50 percent of the total earnings should be presented at the NIMA system and a maximum of 20 percent could be distributed in form of hard currency and the rest can be used for imports.

The instructions aimed to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through NIMA, mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee to bring back to the country the

foreign currency amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

Government-private sector fruitful co-op required to tackle sanctions: TCCIMA head

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** —The head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) said that the government and private sector should create a fruitful and effective cooperation to tackle the sanctions that have made limitations for the country's economy.

Masoud Khansari made the remarks during a ceremony on Sunday to honor 15 exemplary economic units of Tehran Province in terms of complying with standards, TCCIMA portal published.

The ceremony was attended by a number of officials including the head of Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran, Standards Department of Tehran Province, and the governor general of Tehran.

TCCIMA head further lamented the government's approach toward the private sector and said while the sanctions have impeded trade for Iran, internal limitations and problems are another factor harming domestic economy; the problem is that the government sees no



TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari speaking in a ceremony to honor exemplary economic units of Tehran Province on Sunday

need to receive the viewpoints of the private sector.

"Iran's economy is in need of flourishing production with the main focus on export-bound products. Boosting exports to neighbors are on agenda and it is something seriously in need of removing export limitations, and removing these limitations requires a good cooperation between government and private sector. In this way the sanctions can be turned into opportunity", Khansari stressed.

economy, and last week's weak data gives them added reason to continue pushing for growth.

The "weak numbers emphatically underscore the need of policy focus on growth," said Shubhada Rao, chief economist at Yes Bank Ltd. in Mumbai. "We are expecting the RBI to execute another rate cut of 25 basis points at its next meeting."

Last quarter's growth slump showed a contraction in manufacturing and subdued investments. It was only government spending that bolstered the economy, with private

members, the official underscored and said that signing a free trade agreement between Iran and this union has laid the ground for the expansion of cooperation.

"We believe that trade ties with Iran should be increased and all sides should benefit from the created condition", Nikishina commented.

Iran a reliable partner for EAEU

Addressing the same seminar, Iranian

Iranian banks to sell over \$4b worth of excess assets

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand has announced that over 170 trillion rials (about \$4.04 billion) worth of Iranian banks' excess properties have been put for sale as part of a plan to reform the country's banking sector, IRIB reported.

Speaking on Saturday in a ceremony for unveiling a website designed for this purpose, Dejpasand said the plan is a step toward liberalizing the banks' resources to provide facilities for the country's productive sector and to create more jobs.

Mentioning the fact that the excess assets of the country's banks are much more than what has currently been offered for sale, the official noted that in this phase only 170 trillion rials of such properties will be offered for sale.

"The mentioned assets could also be auctioned in collaboration with the stock exchange," he said.

Some of the mentioned properties include 1,246 factory units and more than 277 livestock production units which investors can purchase or manage based on their expertise and experience.

According to the official, the proceeds from this plan will be injected into the banks again and the government won't be the beneficiary in any case.

Back in October, Dejpasand announced

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian, who is the chairman of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, said his country is a reliable trade partner for EAEU, IRNA reported.

The minister mentioned Iran's location as a linking path for the Persian Gulf states and the country's enjoying huge resources of energy, and said Iran is the way of access to a large market.

"Iran and EAEU reached the free trade agreement after several years of negotiations and we are planning for the permanent agreement after three years", the official stressed.

Dollar should be omitted from Iran-EAEU trades

Stressing the requirement for deleting dollar from trades between Iran and EAEU member countries and using the national currencies instead, Iranian deputy industry minister said Iran has already started deleting dollar in trade with some countries including Russia and it could boost trade transactions rapidly.

Making the remarks during the seminar on Iran's trade with Eurasia, Hossein Modares Khiabani also said that the value of trade between Iran and this union can boost to over \$30 billion through establishment of required infrastructures in banking, insurance, customs and transportation sectors.



that a one-year program is underway for 10 government-owned banks (including the biggest lenders) to relinquish the excess assets—mostly real estate – and increase their cash reserves.

Speaking in a meeting with the CEOs of government-owned banks, he noted that the ministry will follow up on the provided solutions in the program through relevant authorities until it reaches a conclusion.

Iran's banking industry is suffering, among other things, from issues such as poor balance sheets, capital inadequacy, inability to recover non-performing loans to the tune of billions of dollars, arcane rules, and dubious operations of illegal credit institutions that have been punishing the economy for years.

In late August, Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati said the bank has been working hard to reform the banking system long grappling with mismanagement and financial indiscipline.

22nd ACI Iran Chapter Annual Convention slated for late Dec.

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The 22nd Edition of American Concrete Institute (ACI) Iran Chapter Annual Convention and the national earthquake conference are due to be held on December 25-26, Tasnim news agency reported quoting an official with Iran's Concrete Research Center (ConREC) as saying.

According to the head of the center, the events are aimed to enforce mandatory national regulations and standards in order to improve the quality of concrete and increase the durability of concrete constructions against natural disasters such as earthquakes, explosions, fires and floods.

"Given the fact that various regions in the country, especially Tehran, are placed on earthquake faults, it is necessary to plan carefully for the crisis management in the event of an earthquake in such regions," Mostafa Ahmadvand said.

The 21st Edition of the convention was organized last year, by Iran's Concrete Research Center in cooperation with Aria University of Sciences and Sustainability. As reported, 58 teams from different



universities competed in nine specialized fields during the event from which one team was awarded the wining prize.

Founded in 1904 and headquartered in Farmington Hills, Michigan, USA, the American Concrete Institute is a leading authority and resource worldwide for the development, dissemination, and adoption of its consensus-based standards, technical resources, educational and training programs, certification programs, and proven expertise for individuals and organizations involved in concrete design, construction, and materials, who share a commitment to pursuing the best use of concrete.

Rahul Bajoria, a senior economist at Barclays Bank Plc. in Mumbai. He expects the central bank to cut the repurchase rate by 40 basis points over the remainder of the fiscal year.

In the interest-rate swap market, investors are betting the repurchase rate -- which is currently at 5.15 percent -- will be 5 percent in the next 12 months, while economists are forecasting it at 4.75 percent by the end of March as growth remains subdued in coming months.

(Source: business.stanmdard.com)

India's deepening economic slowdown opens the door for more rate cuts

India's deepening economic slowdown is likely to throw open the door to more monetary policy easing last week.

The Reserve Bank of India will meet days after a report showed growth collapsed to 4.5 percent in the July-September quarter, the first time it's been below 5 percent since 2013.

Led by Governor Shaktikanta Das, the RBI already has cut interest rates by 135 basis points in five moves this year, the most by any Asian central bank. Policy makers have had their focus squarely on reviving Asia's third-largest

consumption still fairly low key.

A slew of high-frequency indicators suggest the slowdown extended into October. The central bank may be pushed to lower its growth forecast for the fiscal year through March 2020 from 6.1 percent, with economists in a Bloomberg survey already predicting expansion of just 5.6 percent.

"We expect the central bank to take note of the downward surprises in the data versus forecasts and acknowledge a deeper-than-expected slowdown in economic activity," said

Iran indigenizes technology for 85% of oil industry equipment

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Chairman of the Board of Directors of Iranian Association of Manufacturers of Oil Industry Equipment said nearly 85 percent of the country's oil industry equipment are produced based on indigenized knowledge and technology, IRNA reported.

Speaking in a press conference on Sunday, Sirous Talari said 65 percent of the oil industry equipment is currently based upon domestic knowledge and technology while 20 percent is indigenized through reverse engineering, that means a total 85 percent of the oil industry's required technology and knowledge is available inside the country.

The official noted that Iran has a capacity to export over \$5 billion worth of oil industry equipment and knowledge every year and the government should invest on such a great potential.

Talari further said that there is no country all around the world which could be able to supply all its industrial needs on its own,



because industry is like a chain and being self-sufficient doesn't mean being able to produce everything on your own.

He said that on average the need for foreign

raw materials in Iran's oil industry is below 30 percent and over 70 percent of the manufacturers are supplied by domestic sources and the country's oil, gas and petrochemical

industry has undergone a revolution.

Earlier in August, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) announced that many of the company's contracts with domestic manufacturers of oil industry equipment had reached over 70 percent of physical progress.

NIOC has been signing deals with capable domestic companies for manufacturing all kinds of oil industry equipment, including down hole tools and equipment, pumps, types of drill bits, all kinds of control and safety valves, and accessory equipment, as well as various pipe types, explosion-proof electro motors, turbines, compressors, alloy steels, drilling measuring tools, and etc.

Following the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions and the problems caused by high volatility and rising exchange rates in the country's currency market, Iran's oil ministry was faced with some problems regarding the supply of necessary equipment in the oil industry, so it applied new strategies to focus more on domestic production.

Clash of titans: Is OPEC+ deal nearing its end?

1 → So far, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are the only foreign countries that are ready to participate in Aramco's IPO, and there are no major investors from Europe or the United States.

With all that said, and considering the fact that after holding the IPO Saudis would not need high oil prices in the short-run, it seems that the kingdom is no longer eager for shouldering other OPEC+ members' delinquencies regarding the oil production cuts.

Preparing for the IPO in the past year, Saudi Arabia turned a blind eye to the OPEC+ group members' violations from the agreed production levels by major producers like Russia and Iraq and shouldered the burden by cutting its own output more than agreed to offset the over-production.

However, new signals are emerging which indicate that the kingdom is no longer willing to undermine its production for the sake of higher oil prices.

Last week, Bloomberg reported that Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, Saudi's new oil minister who replaced Khalid Al-Falih in September, is not going to follow his predecessor's footsteps

and is expected to voice the kingdom's intolerance regarding the violation of the cuts deal.

■ Russia and the OPEC

It has been more or less three years since Russia and some other oil producers joined hands with the 14-member OPEC to balance the oversupplied oil market and prevent the oil prices from further fall which was costing their economies a great deal.

Russia, as one of the world's top oil producers and exporters, has been consistently voicing its support for a deal reached between OPEC and non-OPEC allies for volunteer production cuts to support the oil prices, however statistics show that the country itself hasn't been doing much in this regard.

According to Bloomberg, Russia's shipping data for 2019 indicates that the second pillar of the OPEC+ deal has conformed to the agreed production levels only for three months, namely May, June and July and even the production cuts in those three months doesn't seem to be voluntarily since it was during the disruption of the key Druzhba oil pipeline.

Other signatories of the deal haven't been much helpful in this regard, Iraq, for exam-

ple, was supposed to pump about 4.51 million barrels per day (bpd), but has produced on average about 4.8 million bpd. Kazakhstan accepted a 1.86-million-bpd limit, however it has produced close to 1.95 million barrels of oil and finally Nigeria agreed to a quota of 1.68 million bpd, but has regularly pumped more than 1.8 million.

These constant violations have clearly pushed the Saudis to their limit, and now with the Aramco IPO going to be no longer a motive for Saudi to offset the excess production by OPEC+ members, Russia seems to be rethinking the worth of remaining in the OPEC+ pact.

Russian officials have been recently showing some vague signals, indicating a possible abandoning of the OPEC+ deal.

Tass news agency recently quoted Russia's oil minister as saying that his country favors postponing any decision-making regarding the new supply caps until April, which is the pact's due.

The discrepancy between the views of OPEC+ titans has prompted some experts to speculate on the possibility of a breakup of the cuts deal; a speculation which seriously affected the oil



market in the end of this month trades.

On Friday, which was the last day of November trades, U.S. crude oil fell by nearly \$3, or 5 percent, to about \$55 a barrel. Brent crude also experienced a \$2.8 or 4.4 percent drop and returned to the \$50 range.

Considering the oil markets current status, it seems that we are going to witness a very tense OPEC+ gathering in Vienna this week. One can only wait to see how the situation is going to unwind.

However, the most expected outcome would be that Russia and Saudi Arabia will agree to extend the pact for another few months to buy time in order to assess the market's situation in the New Year and then decide how to proceed.

Is the world ready to end the coal era and embrace clean energy?

Access to electricity has transformed the world, helping countries to develop their economies, and lifting millions out of poverty. However, this success has come at a great cost: the energy sector, heavily reliant on fossil fuels, is responsible for some 40 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions – one of the so-called greenhouse gases, which trap heat in the atmosphere and warm the Earth – and almost two-thirds of these emissions come from coal.

But, despite the United Nations calling urgently for an end to fossil fuels, hundreds of new coal-fired power stations are still being built, and hundreds more are in the pipeline. Is the world ready for a new era of clean, cheap and accessible energy for all?

The UN chief has called for taxes to be placed on carbon emissions, an end to the trillions of dollars' worth of estimated subsidies for fossil fuels, and for the construction of coal-fired power stations to be halted by 2020, if we are to stand a chance of ending the climate crisis.

Many countries, particularly developed economies, are starting to heed the UN's message. However, Southeast Asia, one of the fastest-growing economic regions in the world, appears to be stuck on fossil fuels as the answer to its energy needs: In November, Mr. Guterres told a meeting of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) group in Thailand that coal "remains a major threat in relation to climate change", adding that countries in Southeast Asia are some of the most vulnerable to climate change.

According to studies by the International Energy Agency, the region is expected to become a key driver of world energy trends over the next 20 years. Millions of people in Southeast Asia have gained access to electricity since 2000, and the region is on the way to achieving universal access by 2030.

The UN-backed Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), has compiled data showing that the region has the third-highest number of coal power plants in the pipeline after China and India. Indonesia, Viet Nam and the Philippines have the largest coal plant pipeline of all South East Asian countries, with Malaysia and Thailand not far behind.

■ Sources of funding for coal plants

The wealthier Asian countries are also bankrolling coal beyond their borders: State-owned financial agencies in China, Japan, and South Korea are now, respectively, the largest sources of funding for coal plants in other countries: research from SEforALL shows that China was the largest international source international source of finance for coal, committing more than \$1.7 billion in 2015/2016.

Nevertheless, the world, as a whole, is slowly moving in the right direction, and the number of plants currently being planned is falling. The amount of permits of new coal plants has dropped to record lows, and over a thousand have been cancelled, a reflection of a tougher economic climate for coal plant developers, and the growing consensus for the need to limit global warming, and protect human health.

In November 2019, four years after the Paris Agreement, a key UN climate conference at which countries committed to step up efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures and boost climate action financing, the UN Secretary-General convened a Climate Action Summit in New York, where many nations announced beefed-up measures to combat the climate crisis, including putting limits on the amount of electricity produced from coal-based sources.

The UK, for example, is expected to completely phase out coal in the next few years, Germany – one of the world's biggest users of coal – has agreed to stop by 2038, and eight other European Union countries have announced that they will put an end to coal use by 2030. Chile has pledged to close all of its coal-fired power stations by 2040, and South Korea will close 10 plants by 2022.

A "Powering Past Coal Alliance", made up of 32 countries, 25 regional, provincial and municipal level governments, and 34 business members, announced new members, including Germany and Slovakia, at the conference, committed to speeding up the transition from coal-based to clean energy, and to lead global efforts to curtail coal use.

In addition, more and more countries, and businesses,

acknowledge that the use of renewable energy is not only the right thing to do for the planet, it also makes economic sense.

Technology already exists to enable the world to transition away from coal, and other fossil fuels; and also to connect the 840 million people who still don't have access to electricity to clean, renewable energy sources. And it's affordable.

■ Renewables the cheapest form

SEforALL research shows that renewables are now the cheapest form of new electricity generation across two thirds of the world – cheaper than both new coal and new natural gas power – and, by 2030, wind and solar will undercut coal and gas almost everywhere.

However, even with the decline in coal use, and growth in the use of renewables, the transition to clean energy is not taking place quickly enough, and there is still a big gap between countries' climate commitments, and their planned production of fossil fuels, as demonstrated by the 2019 Production Gap report, the first of its kind, from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and research partners.

The gap is largest when it comes to coal: countries are currently planning to produce 150% more coal in 2030, than would be consistent with limiting warming to 2°C, and almost three times more than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C.

Governments' continued support for coal, oil and gas extraction is a big part of the problem. We're in a deep hole, and we need to stop digging. Mans Nilsson, Executive-Director, Stockholm Environment Institute

"Despite more than two decades of climate policy making, fossil fuel production levels are higher than ever," Mans Nilsson, head of the Stockholm Environment Institute, one of the organizations that produced the study, said in a press release. "This report shows that governments' continued support for coal, oil and gas extraction is a big part of the problem. We're in a deep hole, and we need to stop digging."

(Source: news.un.org)

By Kate Leaman

Crude oil markets have pulled back a little bit during the trading session on Friday, but they have been in a huge range for some time. Currently, one should keep in mind that the volume for the week has been relatively light, especially over the last couple of sessions, as traders will have focused more on Thanksgiving than anything else. That being said, it's very likely that Monday will bring in more as we start to focus on the meeting in Vienna.

Beyond that, we have the U.S.-China trade talks going on and there is a creeping optimism about that situation. That's because even though Donald Trump just signed the so-called "Hong Kong Bill", which expressed the U.S. support for Hong Kong

protesters, the Chinese complained, but have yet to retaliate. That is a sign that perhaps things will continue to progress on that front. This could drive up demand for crude oil, or at least that's the thought process.

The meeting in Vienna by OPEC plus will take place on December 5 and 6 and will be closely watched by traders around the world. This features all of the OPEC members and some of its closest compatriots, including Russia. There is a certain amount of thought that this meeting should produce some type of continuation of the overall production cuts, and therefore it will put a little bit of a floor in the commodity.

If they were to not extend the production cuts that are already in place, this would be very negative for crude oil, and

likely cause major issues for the market. It is because of this that a production cut extension is almost a given. After all, the market has been struggling to break out to the upside even with this production cut, and of course the increased output of crude oil by the United States has not helped the situation.

■ The market in one direction

That being said, expect a lot of algorithmic trading relatively soon, as headlines coming out of that meeting will be parsed by machines, perhaps sending the market in one direction suddenly. Alternately, we could simply see OPEC sit on its hands beyond expanding production cuts. That means that the market will then shift its focus from OPEC to the U.S.-China trade situation almost exclusively.

Expect a lot of choppy and sideways trading between now and the meeting, and you should always keep the range between \$50 on the bottom and \$60 on the top in your mind, as it has been relatively reliable. It is very unlikely that the market will break out of this range between now and the meeting, but the meeting could cause things to happen.

If they do not choose to extend the production cuts, oil will almost certainly test the \$50 level for a potential breakdown. On the other hand, if the production cuts are not extended, oil could test the \$60 level above. The same can be said if the United States and China come together on a trade deal, as it should drive up demand for petroleum.

(Source: topratedforexbrokers.com)

Greener LNG is vital to Asia's sustainable development

Asia struggles with the world's worst air pollution. Delhi hit the headlines in November 2019 as levels spiked to such hazardous levels that a public health emergency was declared. Flights were diverted, schools were closed, and the images of streets shrouded in smog filled newfeeds around the world.

This wasn't an isolated incident. Air pollution is a widespread and persistent issue across the Asia Pacific region, due to a combination of dust, agricultural clearance fires and particulates from fuel and coal. A report from the Climate & Clean Air Coalition found that 92% of the population are exposed to air pollution that poses a significant risk to health, with the highest numbers living in south and east Asia.

This is, rightly, having an impact on energy policy. Coal-to-gas switching continues in China. South Korea is restricting coal use in summer, and Gujarat has mandated that the ceramics industry replace coal with gas. But while gas has earned its place as a transition fuel of choice, there is an important shift in perception underway.

The switch from coal to gas is a significant step in the battle against air pollution. Gas burns significantly cleaner than coal and oil. Meanwhile, LNG's full life cycle CO2 emissions, from production to transportation and final consumption, are significantly lower than even highly efficient coal plants, or alternative sources of gas supply such as long-distance pipelines.

We've already seen what gas can do in China. It may be that coal is still king in Southeast Asia's power market, but there have been significant steps taken in recent years to replace coal and diesel in Beijing. Efforts were stepped up in 2017 with a series of government measures that included replacing coal boilers with gas-fired CHP in Beijing, and 27 other northern Chinese cities.

My presentation at the 2019 Wood Mackenzie Energy & Commodities Summit included a chart that shows how the city's fine particulate matter (PM2.5) readings improved, while gas demand increased. Fill in the form at the top of this page for a complimentary copy.

■ Asia's total gas demand

Of course, meeting Asia's expected energy demand growth is crucial to its sustainable economic development. We predict that Asia's total gas demand will increase from around 700 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2018 to 1,200 bcm by 2035.

LNG will meet around 60% of this growth, with demand growing by some 200 million tons per annum.

Gas compares well against other fossil fuel options as Asia continues its journey towards decarbonisation. But complacency isn't an option. LNG's green credentials are under increasing scrutiny as stakeholders seek to measure and compare its environmental impact. And, given how quickly the climate debate is moving, it will almost inevitably come under increased investor pressure.

We're seeing this pressure already. In November 2019 the European Investment Bank (EIB) launched a new energy lending policy that states: the "EIB will no longer consider new financing for unabated, fossil fuel energy projects, including gas, from the end of 2021 onwards."

Measuring and understanding the impact of different resource themes is vital. On a full life cycle basis, LNG beats coal. But our carbon emissions study highlights that in some cases the emissions intensity of LNG is relatively high. Upstream companies may be judged on emissions up to the point of sale – so before oil is refined or consumed, and on this metric LNG can look less attractive.

LNG's poor performance here can be partly attributed to it being further along its life cycle than oil. The liquefaction process also plays a key role. It requires that all CO2 is removed before cooling, which can result in substantial additional emissions from venting.

With investor pressure growing, companies are looking at how the emissions intensity of LNG can be reduced. Three approaches stand out.

■ Linking LNG projects with CCS

The high emissions from liquefaction projects can be partly offset by linking LNG projects with CCS. By storing rather than venting total emissions can be reduced by around 25%, but until there's a global carbon price venting remains the cheapest option. As it stands, of the 75 LNG projects in existence or under construction, only Snohvit and Gorgon include CSS.

However, Qatar is making proactive plans to take this approach – potentially getting ahead of shifting buyer sentiment.

A variety of proposed solutions include the use of renewables for driving electric turbines in liquefaction plants.

Shell sold the first carbon-neutral LNG cargoes this year, using offsets from land management programs. And one buyer, Tokyo Gas, is offering consumers the option of buying carbon-neutral gas. This type of shift in buyer expectations could have a profound impact on suppliers, regardless of government policies or the lack of a global carbon price.

Buyers, such as European and Japanese utilities, will demand more visibility on carbon intensity. Sellers will act to provide it, either proactively or reactively, as bankers impose more stringent lending criteria.

Industry solutions for existing projects will increase. We'll see more carbon offsets, CCS and updated turbines. We may also see more rapid decommissioning of carbon-intensive projects before backfill is considered.

(Source: hellenicshippingnews.com)

First Announcement

Public Call for Qualitative Evaluation of Tenderers to Identify the Contractor for Construction of the Islamic Republic of Iran Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai



By virtue of the written authorization No. H 56272T/157382 dated February 16, 2019 by the Cabinet of Ministers, the Islamic Republic of Iran International Exhibitions Company invites companies that have the necessary external qualifications detailed in call documents (Tenderers Evaluation Enquiry) and are authorized to perform construction work in Dubai, UAE, for the construction of Islamic Republic of Iran Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. Tenderers may refer the company website or visit the company in person at the address below to read the call documents, and deliver their documents for evaluation to Iran International Exhibitions Company Secretariat at Welfare Bldg. (Bldg. No. 2), Iran International Fairground, Chamran Highway, Tehran, against a receipt.

Notes:

1- Evaluation documents are to be presented and submitted no later than December 25, 2019.

2- Having the necessary qualifications from the competent authorities in Dubai to perform the work according to the description of the call.

Contact Details of the Principal

Secretariat Address: Welfare Bldg. (Bldg. No. 2), International Fairground, Chamran Highway, Tehran

Expo HQ Tel. No.: +98 21 22662473

Secretariat Tel. No.: +98 21 21912501

East Asia at the glance

U.S. can not cut off HK from the world



Kong,” which suggested that he won’t let his hands be tied by the Congress in dealing with China.

It is not the first time a US president has given leeway, as some of Congress’ legislations were somewhat ultra vires. Trump is no exception. He has suggested that he will exercise discretion in deciding whether and to what extent the bills’ provisions are implemented.

This reflected a phenomenon in US domestic political struggle — with the Congress and the White House mutually making compromises and concessions. It cannot be ruled out that the Congress and the president play a double act in the future, which is also a common practice of Washington. The Congress passes an egregious law and then administrative departments play the card in talks and consultations to coerce the other parties to give in.

It is a commonly seen trick of Washington when it is dealing with foreign affairs and China. For instance, during former president Bill Clinton’s tenure, the US linked so-called human rights affairs with China’s most-favored-nation-treatment. Going back further, the US enacted the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979 to keep meddling in China’s internal affairs. For years, Washington has mastered the trick to reap maximum gains.

It is bound to affect China-US relations as the US Congress uses a domestic law to intervene in China’s internal affairs, sanctioning Hong Kong and even threatening to revoke its special customs status. This will be a setback for Hong Kong as an international financial hub and affect foreign investment in the city, which also hurts US companies.

The act will have a far-reaching and harmful impact. But how effective the card is for Washington depends on various factors. If the unrest in Hong Kong calms down in a short time, US evaluation of “the government of Hong Kong’s autonomous decision-making” or “application of sanctions” will lose its “legitimacy” and rationality. If China-US tensions prevail, the Hong Kong card will be repeatedly used. If the China-US relations can go back to normal, the White House will at least think twice before using the card, as it has to weigh the costs and benefits. Otherwise, relations between the two countries may tank and affect the trade consultations.

To sum up, Trump has signed another evil law that intervenes in China’s domestic affairs and violates the country’s sovereignty by using Hong Kong as a stick. However, in deciding how to use the stick and whether it will take the US where it wishes, Washington has to think carefully because the move would probably backfire.

■ India needs to change neighborhood policy

The emergence of China is challenging some of the existing norms of the international system. These norms found place in the system during and immediately after the Cold War. US political scientist Francis Fukuyama has been forced to modify his theory of “end of history.” South Asia is adapting to the new reality. But India is looking backward.

The countries on the Indian subcontinent are looking at China not only as a facilitator of infrastructure development and economic partnership but more as a security provider and source of political stability in the region. Much of Indian strategic thinking revolves around winning back estranged neighbors without seriously pondering over the causes of the estrangement.

India being alienated by some neighbors is not only due to China’s rise, but also because of New Delhi’s handling of ties. Instead of engaging in counterbalancing Beijing, New Delhi must rethink its neighborhood policy,

not lose the geostrategic advantage in the region and trusted partners, so as to fulfill the common aspiration of an economically prosperous and peaceful region.

In the political sphere, New Delhi must learn from Beijing the art of engaging in dialogue and partnership with the government of a country, rather than a party. A simple study of India’s neighborhood policy reveals that New Delhi is more comfortable with a particular party and when the opposition forms the government in a neighboring country, India finds itself in an embarrassing situation. For example, the victory of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka’s presidential election on November 16 has made the Indian establishment cautious as his party is believed to tilt toward China. In Bangladesh, India is at ease with Sheikh Hasina’s Awami League while being hostile to the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

Entrusting all its support and confidence in one party or person is not a guarantee of their favorable treatment or policies toward New Delhi. India’s military intervention to protect Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of Maldives did not oblige him from favoring China. Thereby, India must respect the mandate of the people and build a sustainable partnership with the government of a neighbor.

The smaller neighbors are interested in forging a security partnership with China based on their security assessments. New Delhi needs to deeply contemplate over changed strategic thinking of neighbors to reset its policy directions and priorities. No amount of economic assistance or aid, which is mostly considered by Indian neighbors as alms, can persuade them to trust the Indian establishment.

Infrastructure development and economic connectivity are new tools in diplomacy. South Asian countries are deprived of good infrastructure and economic growth. Under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing is helping them build new highways, railways and other infrastructure necessary for economic growth. New Delhi, too, is bargaining with Beijing to attract investments. But at the same time, New Delhi’s push for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the Indo-Pacific Strategy are putting these small countries in dilemma to choose from multiple options. Therefore, these countries are now taking a leaf out of India’s foreign policy during the Cold War, which advocated nonalignment but hedging to maximize national interests. New Delhi must not push these countries to choose sides but let them decide what is right for their people and country.

New Delhi’s dwindling commitment to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in the backdrop of a tense relationship with Pakistan further eroded the credibility of India as a genuine and responsible actor in the region. Thereby, rejuvenating SAARC will go a long way in restoring faith and confidence in the regional leadership of India.

People-to-people exchanges as well as cultural and geographical proximity have their own disadvantages. Speaking the same language quickly disseminates hate messages across the border, instilling and deepening existing hatred. Therefore, political leaders and media must desist from provocative statements. In case of China-India tensions, some messages are lost because of the language barrier. Translations have a minimal impact unless they are not issued in a common language, English.

In a nutshell, India’s neighborhood policy should be independent of any power game in the region to win over its neighbors but to formulate a common strategy under SAARC to bring shared prosperity in the region.

■ Foreign specter on Latin America militaries

Exactly one year ago, reputed Professor of international relations Shi Yinong gave a lecture on China-US relations at Renmin University of China’s campus in Suzhou, East China’s Jiangsu Province.

For some reason, the lecture was also being attended by several military personnel from all over the world who were in China to participate in exchange programs. There were some military men from Latin America. Most Latin American people have this feeling of being part of a common identity no matter which country we come from. So, when we come across someone from the region, we always exchange words.

I struck a conversation with a Bolivian guy. He was not white, not indigenous, probably a “mestizo” mixed. I was curious about what he thought of young Bolivian military personnel in China. After over 10 years since Evo Morales assumed office as the president of Bolivia in 2006, I was expecting him to come out with his impression of a more progressive military, considering he was clearly neither white nor rich, as the major traditional elites in Bolivia are. But his answer was exactly the opposite, and I soon realized it was better not to go deeper into the talk and said a diplomatic goodbye.

After reaching home, I wrote to a good friend who was for years the minister of autonomies of Bolivia and the founder of an anti-imperialistic school for the armed forces, “I found one of your countrymen from a military exchange program in China. I was surprised with the degree of cipayism (the indigenous people who worked in the military to serve France, Portugal, and the UK to fight the Spanish empire) and his uncritical devotion for the US... I hope that the graduates of the anti-imperialist school have at least slightly transformed their world views!”

He answered, “Oh, don’t tell me... Surely there are still many soldiers who long for the guidelines of the US. If they have a higher degree [of education], they are more pro-US. Petty officers and cadets are more oblivious to these imperial influences.”

At that time, for most Latin American people, and for both of us, it was impossible to think of a coup d’etat in the 21st century, and less so in a stable country like Bolivia. The Southern American country was economically growing, fighting strongly against poverty, and uplifting indigenous people that were considered, since colonial times, second or third class citizens. Morales was the first indigenous leader in Bolivian history to make it to the presidency, which sounds surprising considering that 60 percent of the country’s population is indigenous. After the coup on November 10, Morales and former vice president ?lvaro Garc?a Linera went into exile in Mexico.

Recently, Garc?a Linera said that “for me, democracy isn’t just elections - I’m talking about a deeper conception of democracy. Democracy is equality, the broadening of rights, the de-racialization of authority and the rights that people enjoy. For this reason, there can be no transformation process if it is not democratic,” in an interview with Jacobin, a New York-based magazine, adding “What happened is that the traditional middle classes saw themselves as being ‘invaded’ by popular and indigenous layers who now had university education and savings, and now had greater capital of various kinds to take on public posts.”

Right after the coup, the illegitimate “provisional government” of Jeanine A?ez (a white congresswoman who comes from a party with less than 4 percent of the votes) and the cipayist armed forces came to power. It is worrying that they exonerated the armed forces of any crime

committed in the “defense” of this process, enabling an uncontained repression by the military against the population.

The “due obedience” is against the law. This assault on the democratic process in Latin America by the military had been common in the 20th century. The support and training to the militaries by the US is well documented.

These assaults have been interrupting the development process of the region and adding more problems to the already complex situation. Most of the heads of the governments were defending foreign interest, leading to rising foreign debt, and attacking the national industry.

However, in the 21st century a repetition seemed a distant possibility. In the early 2000s, new forms of intervention were more common in the region as the political impeachments and the lawfare - the use of the legal system to act against the political opponent, combining the judicial system and the media directing public opinion for damaging or delegitimizing one’s rivals.

Nevertheless, it seems that the recent release of former Brazilian president Luiz In?cio Lula da Silva from jail after a highly questionable judicial process, and after electing Alberto Fernandez and Cristina Kirchner as president and vice president in Argentina, this “soft-intervention” encountered some limits. Military repression against the people is increasing in some countries.

It seems that the region, once again, will need to pay attention to the military and their connection with foreign powers.

■ Hong Kong society needs to jointly resist US provocation

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. This amounts to typical US interference in China’s Hong Kong affairs.

Being part of China, Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy under the country’s governance. Washington has no jurisdiction over Hong Kong, but the legislation tries to legitimize its right to affect Beijing’s policies on the city, which is a clear violation of Chinese sovereignty. Imagine if China takes action to interfere in the US presidential elections or adopts a policy regulating how Canberra should treat its ethnic minority groups, will there be a strong backlash?

It is clearly not the time for China to reason with the US, but to be rational in China-US conflicts. We must prevent more Hongkongs from being misled by US craftiness, which will eventually harm their interests.

Washington is determined to turn Hong Kong into a new front to strategically pressure Beijing. Some beguiled Hongkongs have been taken over by the illusion that the law could help their city gain a higher degree of autonomy, as they imagine Beijing would be deterred by the US legislation, and thus make major concessions that are not in line with the Basic Law.

China’s key countermeasure against the law is to further clarify the fundamental rules of the “one country, two systems” principle, completely dispel Hong Kong radical opposition’s pipe dream to realize “absolute universal suffrage,” correct their misunderstanding of the principle, and firmly repulse US assessments of the high degree of autonomy in Hong Kong.

We must leave no room for collusion and interaction between Hong Kong’s radical opposition and the US government. They may act alone and bear the costs, but shall never dream of jointly coercing Beijing.

It is the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress that holds the power of interpreting the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Facing the US’ potential move to cancel Hong Kong’s special trade status with this law, Hong Kong society needs to behave in accordance with the Basic Law on major issues and co-operate with the central government to offer no pretext for the US to use this law. If the radical opposition interprets the Basic Law in an unconstitutional manner, mainstream society in Hong Kong must stand up against them and stop them.

If Hong Kong society has force strong enough to resist constitutional arrangements, thus helping the US resort to its law and causing further damage to the city’s business environment, it will be Hong Kong society’s misfortune. The city will suffer some pain and make necessary adjustments to its economic structure.

Hong Kong’s special trade status is stipulated by the Basic Law, rather than awarded by the US. As long as the society sobers up and works hard with the motherland’s support, no external forces can truly wield influence over its destiny.

In the meantime, the law also threatens to sanction Hongkongs who do not cooperate with the US. This will suppress neutral space for people with different ideas and further tear the city apart. The only way to maintain the solidarity of Hong Kong is to resist US provocation and prevent more people from joining hands with the opposition for fear of US sanctions. Efforts to fight the forces colluding with the US should be stepped up, and the corresponding laws need to be improved. There is no way to allow traitors to prevail and patriots to suffer.

“One country, two systems” is China’s independent constitutional arrangement and US intervention damages its external environment. Hong Kong society should be vigilant. To maintain “one country, two systems,” the Chinese mainland and the HKSAR need to work together. Anyone who colludes with external forces to undermine “one country, two systems” must pay a heavy price.

Britain's chief rabbi is helping to stoke Antisemitism

By Jonathan Cook

ANTIWAR — Chief rabbi Ephraim Mirvis has not only misrepresented the known facts about Labour and its supposed antisemitism crisis. He has not only interfered in an overtly, politically partisan manner in the December 12 election campaign by suggesting that Jeremy Corbyn — against all evidence — is an antisemite.

By speaking out as the voice of British Jews — a false claim he has allowed the UK media to promote — his unprecedented meddling in the election of Britain's next leader has actually made the wider Jewish community in the UK much less safe. Mirvis is contributing to the very antisemitism he says he wants to eradicate.

Mirvis' intervention in the election campaign makes sense only if he believes in one of two highly improbable scenarios. The first requires several demonstrably untrue things to be true. It needs for Corbyn to be a proven antisemite — and not just of the variety that occasionally or accidentally lets slip an antisemitic trope or is susceptible to the unthinking prejudice most of us occasionally display, including (as we shall see) Rabbi Mirvis.

No, for Mirvis to have interfered in the election campaign he would need to believe that Corbyn intends actively as prime minister to inflame a wider antisemitism in British society or implement policies designed to harm the Jewish community. And in addition, the chief rabbi would have to believe that Corbyn presides over a Labour party that will willingly indulge race-hate speeches or stand by impassively as Corbyn carries out racist policies.

If Mirvis really believes any of that, I have a bridge to sell him. Corbyn has spent his entire political career as an anti-racism campaigner, and his anti-racism activism as a backbencher was especially prominent inside a party that itself has traditionally taken the political lead in tackling racism.

Rising tide of nationalism

The second possibility is that Mirvis doesn't really believe that Corbyn is a Goebbels in the making. But if that is so, then his decision to intercede in the election campaign to influence British voters must be based on an equally fanciful notion: that there is no significant threat posed by antisemitism from the right or the rapidly emerging far right.

Because if antisemitism is not an issue on the right — the same nationalistic right that has persecuted Jews throughout modern history, culminating in the Nazi atrocities — then Mirvis may feel he can risk playing politics in the name of the Jewish community

without serious consequence.

If there is no perceptible populist tide of white nationalism sweeping Europe and the globe, one that hates immigrants and minorities, then making a fuss about Corbyn might seem to make sense for a prominent Jewish community leader. In those circumstances, it might appear to be worth disrupting the national conversation to highlight the fact that Corbyn once sat with Hamas politicians — just as Tony Blair once sat with Sinn Féin leaders — and that Corbyn's party has promised in the latest manifesto to stop selling weapons to Israel (and Saudi Arabia) of the kind that have been used to butcher children in Gaza. Mirvis might believe that by wounding Corbyn he can help into power a supposedly benevolent, or at least inoffensive, Tory party.

CR: "I am delighted to congratulate Boris Johnson on becoming the next leader of the Conservative Party & our next PM. May he be blessed with the wisdom to successfully navigate the political uncertainties we face & bring healing & prosperity to our great country." pic.twitter.com/OcyuMIhVXd

But if he is wrong about the re-emergence of a white nationalism and its growing entry into the mainstream — and all the evidence suggests he would be deeply wrong, if this is what he thinks — then undermining Corbyn and the Labour party is self-destructiveness of the first order.

It would amount to self-harm not only because attacking Corbyn inevitably strengthens the electoral chances of Boris "watermelon smiles" Johnson. It plays with fire because Mirvis' flagrant intervention in the election campaign actually bolsters a key part of the antisemitic discourse of the far right that is rapidly making inroads into the Conservative party.

Succor to white nationalists

White nationalists are all over social media warning of supposed Jewish global conspiracies, of supposed Jewish control of the media, of supposed Jewish subversion of "white rights". It was precisely this kind of thinking that drove European politics a century ago. It was arch-antisemite Arthur Balfour who signed off the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that sought to end Britain's "Jewish problem" by encouraging European Jews to move far away, to a part of the Middle East then known as Palestine.

That is, of course, why today's white supremacists love Israel, why they see it as a model, why they call themselves "white Zionists". In creating a tribal democracy, and one heavily fortified, land hungry, belligerent and nuclear-armed, Israel has done for Jews exactly what white nationalists hope



to do again for their white compatriots. The white supremacists' love of Israel is intimately bound up with their hatred and fear of Jews.

Mirvis has given succor to white nationalist discourse both because he has spoken out against Corbyn without offering evidence for his claims and because those entirely unsubstantiated claims have been echoed across the media.

There is good reason why the billionaire-owned print media and the Establishment-dominated BBC are happy to exploit the antisemitism smears — and it has nothing to do with concern for the safety of Jews. The corporate media don't want a Labour leader in power who is going to roll back the corporate free-for-all unleashed by Margaret Thatcher 40 years ago that nearly bankrupted the rest of us in 2008.

But that is not what those flirting with or embracing white nationalism will take away from the relentless media chorus over evidence-free antisemitism claims.

Mirvis' intervention in the democratic process will drive them more quickly and more deeply into the arms of the far-right. It will persuade them once again that "the Jews" are a "problem". They will conclude that — though the Jews are now helping the right by destroying Corbyn — once the left has been dealt with, those same Jews will then subvert their white state. Like Balfour before them, they will start thinking of how to rid Britain and Europe of these supposed interlopers.

This is why Mirvis was irresponsible in the extreme for meddling. Because the standard of proof required before making such an intervention — proof either that Corbyn is an outright Jew hater, or that white nationalism is no threat to the UK — is not

even close to being met.

The left's anti-imperialism

In fact much worse, all the evidence shows the exact reverse. That was neatly summed up in a survey this month published by The Economist, a weekly magazine that is no friend to Corbyn or the Labour party.

It showed that those identifying as "very left-wing" — the section of the public that supports Corbyn — were among the least likely to express antisemitic attitudes. Those identifying as "very right-wing", on the other hand — those likely to support Boris "picanninies" Johnson — were three and a half times more likely to express hostile attitudes towards Jews. Other surveys show even worse racism among Conservatives towards more obviously non-white minorities, such as Muslims and black people. That, after all, is the very reason Boris "letterbox-looking Muslim women" Johnson now heads the Tory party.

The Economist findings reveal something else of relevance in assessing Mirvis' meddling. Not only is the real left (as distinguished from the phony, centrist left represented by Labour's Blairites) much less antisemitic than the right, it is also much more critical of Israel than any other section of the British public. That is easily explained. The real left has always been anti-imperialist. Israel is a particularly problematic part of Britain's colonial legacy.

Elsewhere, the peoples who gained independence from Britain found themselves inside ruined, impoverished states, often with borders imposed out of naked imperial interest that left them divided and feuding. Internal struggles over the crumbs Britain and other imperial powers left behind were the norm.

But in a very real sense, Britain — or at least the west — never really left Israel. In line with the Balfour Declaration, Britain helped to establish the institutions of a "Jewish home" on the Palestinians' homeland. British troops may have departed in 1948, but waves of European Jewish immigrants were either encouraged or compelled to come to the newly created state of Israel by racist immigration quotas designed to prevent them fleeing elsewhere, most especially to the United States.

The west helped engineer both the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and Israel's creation to solve Europe's "Jewish problem". It provided the components necessary for Israel to build a nuclear bomb that won it a place at the international top table and ensured the Palestinians were made Israel's serfs in perpetuity. Ever since, the west has provided Israel with diplomatic cover, military aid and special trading status, even as Israel has worked relentlessly to disappear the Palestinian people from their homeland.

Even now, our most prized rights, such as free speech, are being eroded and subverted to protect Israel from criticism. In the US, the only infringements on the American public's First Amendment rights have been legislated to silence those seeking to pressure Israel over its crimes against the Palestinians with a boycott — similar to the campaign against apartheid South Africa. In the UK, the Conservative manifesto similarly promises to bar local councils from upholding international law and boycotting products from Israel's illegal settlements.

Rewarding war crimes

The real left focuses on this continuing colonial crime against the Palestinians not because it is antisemitic (a claim the Economist survey amply refutes), but because the left treats Israel as emblematic of British and western bad faith and hypocrisy. Israel is the imperial west's Achilles' heel, the proof that war crimes, massacres and ethnic cleansing are not only not punished but actively rewarded if these crimes accord with western imperial interests.

But ardent friends of Israel such as Mirvis are blind to these arguments. For them, one western antisemitic crime — the Holocaust — entirely obscures another western antisemitic crime: seeking to rid Europe of Jews by forcing them into the Middle East, serving as pawns on an imperial chessboard that paid no regard to the Palestinians whose homeland was being sacrificed.

In his state of historical and political myopia, Mirvis cannot begin to understand that there might be political activists who, in defending the Palestinian people, are also

defending Jews. That they, unlike him, understand that Israel was created not out of western benevolence towards Jews, but out of western malevolence towards "less-er peoples". The real left in Britain speaks out against Israel not because it hates Jews but because it holds dear a commitment to justice and a compassion for all.

Mirvis, on the other hand, is the Zionist equivalent of a little Englander. He prefers particularist, short-term interests over universalist, long-term ones.

It was he, remember, who threw his full support behind Israel in 2014 as it indiscriminately bombed Gaza, killing some 550 children — a bombing campaign that came after years of an Israeli blockade on the Palestinian population there. That siege has led the United Nations to warn that the enclave will be uninhabitable by next year.

It was Mirvis, along with his predecessor Jonathan Sacks, who in 2017 endorsed the fanatical Jewish settlers — Israel's equivalent of white supremacists — on their annual march through the occupied Old City of Jerusalem. This is the march where the majority of the participants are recorded every year waving masses of Israeli flags at Palestinians and chanting "Death to the Arabs". One Israeli newspaper columnist has described the Jerusalem Day march as a "religious carnival of hatred".

It was Mirvis and Sacks that encouraged British Jews to join them on this tub-thumping trip to Israel, which they suggested would provide an opportunity to spend time "dancing with our brave soldiers". Those soldiers — Israeli, not British — occupy West Bank cities like Hebron where they have locked down life for some 200,000 Palestinians so that a handful of crazed religious Jewish bigots can live undisturbed in their midst.

What is so appalling is that Mirvis is blind to the very obvious parallels between the fearful Palestinians who hastily have to board up their shops as a Jewish mob parades through their neighborhood and today's white supremacists and neo-Nazis in the west who seek to march provocatively through ethnic minority communities, including Jewish neighborhoods, in places like Charlottesville.

Mirvis has no lessons to teach Corbyn or the Labour party about racism. In fact, it is his own, small-minded prejudice that blinds him to the anti-racist politics of the left. His ugly message is now being loudly amplified by a corporate media keen to use any weapon it can, antisemitism included, to keep Corbyn and the left out of power — and preserve a status quo that benefits the few at the expense of the many.

Why U.S. inciting riots in Iran doesn't work

TEHRAN (FNA) — The US Congress has passed the so-called «Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019» to turn on a green light for atrocities and any attempt to incite violence to contain China. The problem is that just like in Iran, the US attempt to incite violence and vandalism won't work to give the desired result in China. The reasons are plenty. A large number of facts show that the United States has long been involved in Hong Kong affairs. The Congress proposed from 1984 to 2014 more than 60 bills concerning Hong Kong. WikiLeaks had disclosed that the US Consulate General has repeatedly published opinions aimed at interfering in Hong Kong affairs and frequently met with opposition figures.

From the various support provided by the US National Endowment for Democracy to anti-China elements in Hong Kong, to open meetings between US politicians and Hong Kong's pro-independence leaders; from some US media's biased reporting on the violence to attempts to implement the long-arm jurisdiction through the latest bill, the intentions of those US politicians to bring trouble to Hong Kong and contain China are clear. The international community has generally slammed and condemned the acts. Indeed, no country would ever allow violence to disrupt its society and undermine its economy. So the act is detrimental for the United States, and for the world, as well as for China.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi has said that the United States' violation of international norms through such acts will definitely cause serious damage to global stability. The United States has become a target of criticism for inciting violence for its own interests and that its attempt to intervene in Iran or in Hong Kong affairs is unpopular and doomed to failure. However, in the minds of some politicians in the United States, «riots» could be dealt with employing double standards. A riot happening inside the United States must be heavily suppressed. As a result, people have seen US police dealing harshly with the 2011 Occupy Wall Street campaign and the 2015 Baltimore riots in Maryland. When it comes to external riots in Iran or Hong Kong, the same politicians immediately change their tones and paint the «riots» as «a beautiful sight to behold».


They ignited and instigated riots, launched wars and «color revolutions», plunging many places in the world into chaos in order to seek political interests and safeguard US global



hegemony. In the past few decades, wherever the United States intervened, turmoil and poverty have been commonplace. That's why when some US politicians professed to stand with Iran or Hong Kong, many netizens ridiculed them. Thus is because when they stood with Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, they were all burned to the ground. A just cause attracts much support, while an unjust one finds little. By publicly supporting violence in Iran and Hong Kong, the politicians in the United States have seriously violated the basic norms of international law and international relations, and invited uncertainties to the future of their own country.

For example, the United States ignited war and turmoil in the Middle East, which has helped brew a large-scale refugee crisis, and had a tremendous impact on the social order of the Western countries. Its wrong policies and interventions in Latin America have contributed a major role in triggering major flow of illegal immigration into the United States.

Iran is not a kite in the hands of some Americans who could pull it as they wish. Iran's resolve to implement its Islamic-democratic principles and resist any outside interference in its internal affairs is unwavering. Any attempt to incite violence to contain Iran's progress is simply not going to work. The same could be concluded about China's rise.




Agricultural Support Services Company

INVITATION OF ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

55/98/21454

02/12/2019



Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 2×30000±5% MTS of Granular Potassium Sulphate (GSOP) in bulk through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Monday dated 02/12/2019 until Tuesday dated 10/12/2019 (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of I.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 3580397822635006500000000000006.

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Wednesday dated 08/01/2020 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Saturday dated 11/01/2020 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bid bond value should be €352000 or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on exchange rate of CBI on 07/10/ 2019 for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% in bank guarantee.

– The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 30000 MT ± 5% will be IR 16233000000, which must be only submitted by the bidders.

- After approval of ASSC 's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & Intel Affairs Dept. of Agricultural Support Services Company (ASSC)

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt in Farmanieh
4th floor, 140 sq.m
3 Bdrs., fully furn, equipped
kitchen, modern style, parking
\$1800
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Niavaran
3th floor, 240 sq.m 3 Bdrs. unfurn
spj, balcony, roof garden, elevator
lobby storage, parking
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Elahieh
270 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., unfurn
spj, billiard table, cinema saloon
parking, **\$3000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Zafaranih
2nd floor, 155 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
furn, equipped kitchen, 3 bath
rooms, yard, 2 parking spots
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Mirdamad
180 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., fully furn
equipped kitchen, parking
\$1500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Fereshteh
278 sq.m, 2 master bedrooms
2 Bdrs., unfurn, spj, mountain
view, city view, elevator renovated
parking
\$4000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa

Triplex Villa in Zafaranih
260 sq.m, 2 master rooms
2 rooms, modern design
fully furn, 60 sq.m, terrace
parking spot, **\$5500**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Aqdasieh
duplex, 750 sq.m land, 500 sq.m
built up, 5 Bdrs., nice garden
indoor swimming pool, sauna
3 parking spots, **\$6500**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Triplex Villa in Fereshteh
540 sq.m built up, unfurn
good light, completely renovated
yard, parking
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Triplex Villa in Zafaranih
1700 sq.m land, 600 sq.m
built up, 10 Bdrs., furn / unfurn
outdoor swimming pool
2-side entrances, **\$13000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Triplex Villa in Seoul
brand new, 175 sq.m land
330 sq.m built up, 3 Bdrs.
storage, parking, **\$3500**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Triplex Villa in Velenjak
1000 sq.m land, 700 sq.m built up
5 Bdrs., unfurn, very clean sauna
outdoor swimming pool
servant quarter, fire place
green yard, parking, **\$7000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156



Holder of

ISO 9001:2008

ISO 10004:2012

ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation
Best Services, Best Result**

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

Hot Line: 28141

info@parsdiplomatic.com

www.parsdiplomatic.com

Building & Office

Office in Mirdamad
administrative office license
4 offices, each office 600 sq.m
elevator, 32 parking spots
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Mahmoodieh
4 floors, 240 sq.m land, 600 sq.m
built up, 11 Bdrs., unfurn
lobby, 4 parking spots
Suitable for embassies
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Office in Zafaranih
brand new, 4th floor, 200 sq.m
2 Bdrs., furn, 2 parking spots
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Pasdaran
600 sq.m land, 5 floors, 5 units
each units 300 sq.m, roof top
30 parking spots, **\$27000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in
Saadat Abad
administrative office license
brand new, 5 floors, each floor
4 units, 20 units between 115 sq.m
to 142 sq.m, 60 parking spots
\$27000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole building in
Shahrak Qarb
apts, 220 sq.m built up 4
from 75 sq.m to 150 sq.m
elevator, 6 parking spots, **\$4000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Ideal Offers

Apt in Valiasr - Park Way
almost new, 3th floor, 130 sq.m
3 Bdrs., furn, spj, elevator
storage, parking, **\$1000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Elahieh
8th floor, 45 sq.m, 1 Bdr.
furn, spj, nice view, parking
\$800
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Mahmoodieh
1st floor, 90 sq.m, 2 Bdr.
furn, spj, beautiful yard
\$1000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Zafaranih
2nd floor, 90 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
furn, beautiful design, parking
\$1500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in North Shariati
4th floor, 75 sq.m 2 Bdrs.
furn, good light, elevator parking
\$700
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Jordan
5th floor, 150 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
fully furn, parking
\$1300
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Tajrish
brand new, 4th floor, 130 sq.m
2 Bdrs., furn, balcony, elevator
storage, parking, **\$1200**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان،
ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسپارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیر مبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات
شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالکین محترم

ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران
شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران
نیازمندیم.

SHANON
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
+989121907875
Tel : 88510081

Jordan Villa (\$3000) 1000sq.m, 5bdrs, S/p, & yard

Velenjak Villa (\$5000) 1300sq.m, 7bdrs, S/p, & yard

Niavaran Villa (\$6000) 2000sq.m, 7bdrs, S/p, & yard

Elahieh Apt (\$2000) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, & F.F

Jordan (\$1200) 140sq.m, 2bdrs
pkg, Fully Furn

Darrousbldg (\$12000) 5stoery, 15bdrs
S/p, pkgs, balcony

1ST CHOICE
REAL ESTATE

Mr. Ghanizadeh
Nobody does it better

LOOKING FOR RENTAL PROPERTY?
Call: 22041212 – 09121081212
Visit: WWW.FIRSTCHOICECO.COM
E-mail: property@firstchoiceco.com
مسکن انتخاب اول – غنی زاده 1987 Since

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily

Advertising Dept

Tel:
021 - 430 51 450

Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME

Real Estate
Member of DELTA Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

TEHRAN
INTERNATIONAL DAILY
TIMES

Explore a Brand New Market
in Iran for Goods & Services

French educated
man, DEA in
international law from
the University of NICE-
FRANCE, specialiste in
banking law, is looking
for job

09121759636
02122346062

NASA is losing its patience with its misbehaving Mars mole

NASA's InSight lander is really starting to give scientists a headache. Most of the lander's high-tech sensors and systems are working just fine, and it's already returned some interesting data on rumbles that researchers suspect are "Marsquakes," but one instrument, in particular, is failing to meet expectations.

The self-hammering "mole" probe which was supposed to dig deep within the planet to return temperature data has been unable to dig as deep as it's designed to. In fact, it hasn't even gotten close to reaching its maximum depth of 16 feet, only managing to push itself about a foot into the surface before stalling out.

InSight's mission team initially believed it was simply failing to get a grip on the looser-than-expected Martian soil. To solve that problem, the lander removed a protective shroud from around the mole and used its robotic arm to pin the mole against the side of its hole. This gave it a bit more traction and, for a moment, it appeared to work.

Unfortunately, after digging itself about an inch deeper, the mole was pushed back



out of the hole. As NPR reports, the InSight team thinks it knows why that happened, but it didn't make it any less disappointing. Troy Hudson, an instrument system engineer on InSight, explained that the hole likely filled up with loose material after the lander's robotic arm backed off from its pinning technique.

"When it does that, loose soil in front of the mole can infiltrate in front of the tip, filling up the space that occurs whenever it bounces," Hudson explained. "Then it's just 'bounce, bounce, bounce, bounce,' and more material fills in and it ends up backing out of the ground."

Hudson, who said he was "very distraught" when he saw that the progress the mole made had been undone, says the team is now using the lander's arm to physically push the mole into the hole. However, that will only work for so long, and once the mole's body is completely beneath the surface they're going to have to invent a new way to ensure it continues to dig.

(Source: msn)

Brain scans show our bad dreams might actually help us face fears in real life

By Carly Cassella

Even when our dreams are scary or distressing, new research suggests they could work like "overnight therapy", recalibrating our brains so they cope better with fear the next day.

By mapping human brain activity during sleep, the findings reinforce the idea that rehearsing bad events as we dream prepares us for the real thing. Researchers found those people who reported more bad dreams also had stronger fear inhibition during wakefulness.

"For the first time, we've identified the neural correlates of fear when we dream and have observed that similar regions are activated when experiencing fear in both sleep and wakeful states," says neuroscientist Lampros Perogamvros from the University of Geneva.

Human sleep is still very much a mystery, but anyone who's woken up on the wrong side of the bed knows from personal experience that mood and sleep are closely intertwined. Exactly how is hard for scientists to say, although the idea that shut-eye can regulate our emotions is nothing new.

Similar to when we're awake, we humans also experience emotions in our dreams, and this could impact how we feel when we wake up.

Today, it's tentatively thought that rapid eye movement somehow stabilizes our negative emotions and memories. But whether that emotion can seep into our dreams is another matter.

Already, preliminary evidence suggests emotional centers in our brain, like the amygdala, are active during sleep. And when these areas are impaired, they've been shown to lessen the emotional intensity of our dreams.

Still, these could simply be correlations, and all we have so far are theories about the relationship. Under the so-called 'threat simulation theory', our brains are said to deal with fear in life by 'rehearsing' threatening events in our dreams.



Meanwhile, other models suggest a night of shut-eye somehow resolves emotional conflict, lessening negative moods the next day.

Both theories agree, on principle, that experiencing fear in our dreams leads to better responses in wakefulness; they just disagree on the 'how' part.

Now, these new results throw even more weight behind the simulation theory.

"Dreams may be considered as a real training for our future reactions and may potentially prepare us to face real life dangers," suggests Perogamvros.

Using high-density electroencephalography (EEG) on 18 participants, researchers tracked brain activity during sleep. Each time the participants were woken up, which happened several times throughout the night, they were asked about their dreams and if they felt scared.

Analysing the results, the researchers noticed two brain regions implicated in fear: the insula and the cingulate cortex. Like the amygdala, which is involved in fear conditioning,

the insula is also triggered by distress and is involved with evaluating emotions during wakefulness. Meanwhile, the cingulate cortex is a part of our brain that gets our bodies ready for the event of a threat.

To find out more about these regions and their roles, neuroscientists gave a week-long dream diary to 89 participants, who were asked each morning upon waking to note how their dreams made them feel.

At the end of the week, they were placed in a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine and shown emotionally-negative images along with neutral images to see whether the emotions they experienced in their dreams changed their response to fear in real life.

"We found that the longer a [sic] someone had felt fear in their dreams, the less the insula, cingulate and amygdala were activated when the same person looked at the negative pictures," says neuroscientist Virginie Sterpenich from the University of Geneva.

"In addition, the activity in the medial prefrontal cortex, which is known to inhibit the amygdala in the event of fear, increased in proportion to the number of frightening dreams!"

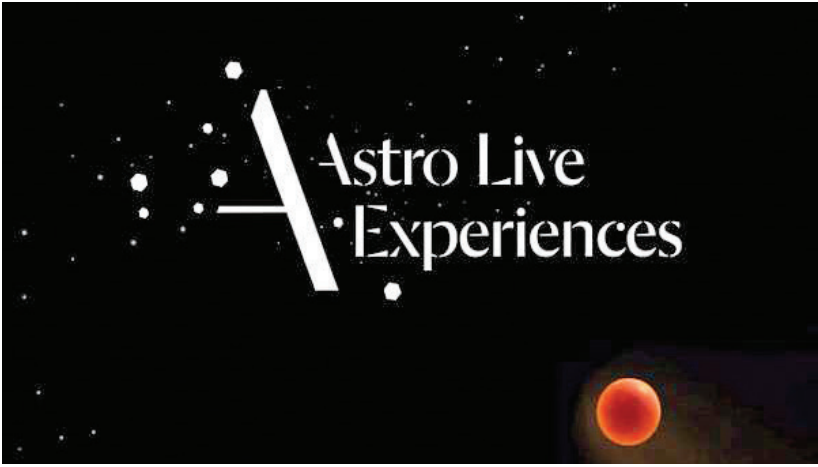
The results support theoretical claims that overnight rehearsal can recalibrate the brain through extinction learning or other tactics.

Still, the authors say that probably doesn't hold for nightmares. Unlike bad dreams, where fear levels are moderate, nightmares can cause excess distress, which could actually disrupt sleep and have a negative impact on our emotions when we wake.

"We believe that if a certain threshold of fear is exceeded in a dream, it loses its beneficial role as an emotional regulator," concludes Perogamvros.

The authors are now interested in looking at nightmares and positive emotions in our dreams to see how they affect us when we wake.

Launch delayed of satellite from New Zealand that creates artificial shooting stars



Officials on Friday scrubbed launch of a satellite from New Zealand that spits out artificial shooting stars for expensive light shows in the sky.

The satellite, built by Japan-based Astro Live Experiences, or ALE Co. Ltd., was packed on board an Electron rocket made by a new space company, Rocket Lab.

The company tweeted just before the planned launch time that "We're standing down... to conduct further tests on ground systems. ... The window remains open until 12 December."

This was to be the 10th launch for Huntington Beach, Calif.-based Rocket Lab and its eighth commercial launch. It also was to be the first time that Rocket Lab has tested navigation telemetry on its first-stage booster as it attempts to fly back to Earth.

The company did not plan to recover the booster, but the data provided by it is to be used to help make the Electron rocket reusable. Rocket Lab intends to catch its boosters, mid-air, using a helicopter with a grappling hook that would snag a parachute line.

The company, founded by New Zealand engineer Peter Beck, launches from its own private launch pad on the Mahia Peninsula of New Zealand's North Island.

ALE, on its website, says "We aim to produce artificial shooting stars by projecting particles, made out of special materials, from orbiting micro-satellites. When the particles re-enter the Earth's atmosphere, they burn through a process known as plasma emission, creating the appearance of shooting stars on the ground."

The company hopes to have its shooting star satellite, ALE-2, ready by the opening ceremony of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in June.

"With this launch, we are a step closer to realizing the man-made shooting star," said ALE's founder and CEO, Lena Okajima. The mission has been named "Running out of Fingers" by Rocket Lab.

Also on board the Electron rocket will be six nano-satellites built by Glasgow-based Alba Orbital.

Alba Orbital provides mission management for other customers. The small satellites represent five countries and a range of technology demonstrations, including a payload built by university students in Hungary to measure human-made electromagnetic pollution and a test of new thermal-isolation material for use in space.

(Source: UPI)

Missing Neutron star discovered 30 years after major supernova explosion



The remains of a supernova that helped us understand how stars work have at last been found by scientists.

Astronomers have been hunted for the neutron star that was left over when a massive star exploded and died for decades. And now, after more than 30 years of work, scientists from Cardiff University claim to have seen it.

The supernova, known as 1987A, is very important to astronomers. It was first seen on 23 February, 1987, and it blazed for months, shining with the power of 100 million suns and being visible on Earth.

It gave scientists the opportunity to examine the life – and death – of an extreme star from relatively close-up. 1987A is part of a nearby galaxy called the Large Magellanic Cloud, which is only 160,000 light years away, relatively nearby at the scale of the universe.

Astronomers have been looking for the neutron star – the collapsed core that the giant star left behind – that would have been left over for the last 30 years. It has been hidden behind a huge cloud of cosmic dust that blocked it out.

But astronomers say that they have finally been able to spot the potential location of that missing star. One part of the dust cloud appears brighter than

the areas around it, and happens to be the location where the neutron star is suspected to be.

"For the very first time we can tell that there is a neutron star inside this cloud within the supernova remnant," said lead author of the study Dr. Phil Cigan, from Cardiff University's School of Physics and Astronomy. "Its light has been veiled by a very thick cloud of dust, blocking the direct light from the neutron star at many wavelengths like fog masking a spotlight."

Now the scientists hope that the world can start looking back at that star, and learn yet more about how they die – and what happens after.

"Our new findings will now enable astronomers to better understand how massive stars end their lives, leaving behind these extremely dense neutron stars," said Dr. Mikako Matsuura, another leading member of the study.

"We are confident that this neutron star exists behind the cloud and that we know its precise location. Perhaps when the dust cloud begins to clear up in the future, astronomers will be able to directly see the neutron star for the very first time."

(Source: The Independent)

Europe gives space programs a big boost

European nations have given a green light, and a significant funding boost, to almost all of the proposals laid out by the European Space Agency (ESA) for its future program, officials said today at the end of a 2-day budget meeting in Seville, Spain. The more than 20% rise in the ESA's 3-year budget is the largest boost the agency has seen in 25 years, one that will allow it to: concurrently run two major orbiting observatories to look at x-rays and gravitational waves; launch a mission to Uranus and Neptune; join NASA in returning samples from Mars; expand its monitoring of Earth's environment to help tackle the climate crisis; and develop a reusable vehicle to take astronauts to and from space.



"This reaffirms our common ambition for Europe," France's research minister Frédérique Vidal told a press conference after the meeting of ministers from all 22 ESA member states. "You see a happy director general in front of you," commented ESA chief Jan Wörner.

ESA managers have often come away disappointed after previous ministerial meetings, which take place roughly every 3 years, and must cancel or slow down programs that don't win enough support. Wörner says the agency spent 2 years developing the current proposal and lobbying members for support. "NASA has one government, we have 22," he joked. But as the ministers went through the 47-page list of programs it became clear that "not a single program had to stop," he said.

In all, the ministers approved a budget of €12.5 billion for the next 3 years, a rise of more than 20% over a €10.3 billion budget set in 2016. "It was a surprise, more than I proposed, which is a very good message," Wörner said. Ministers also agreed to an additional €1.9 billion to allow ESA's mandatory programs—which all members must contribute to in line with their gross domestic product—to continue for another 2 years if for some reason the next ministerial is delayed.

One of those mandatory programs is science. "Science is the backbone of what we do at ESA," Wörner said. With a stagnant budget over the past couple of decades, the rate of mission launches had slowed and European space scientists were anxious for more. One goal was to bring forward the 2034 launch date of the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA), a gravitational wave detector, to run at the same time as the Athena x-ray observatory because they share some targets, such as black holes. And ESA needs to move fast to join NASA in sending a probe to study Uranus and Neptune because there is an alignment of planets that requires a launch around 2030. The science budget will now ramp up to €576 million per year by 2022.

ESA's Earth observation program was another big winner, receiving €1.81 billion over the next 3 years, 29% more than was requested. The program develops its own scientific satellites, called Earth Explorers, and also builds operational monitoring satellites called Sentinels for the European Union under the Copernicus program. ESA's Earth observation director Josef Aschbacher told the press conference that he had "a very concrete list of how that money will be used." Top of the list is building more powerful satellites to measure atmospheric carbon dioxide. Only a few satellites, such as NASA's Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2, are operational, and scientists want to monitor the gas with finer resolution and distinguish between human-generated and natural carbon emissions.

In space exploration, which covers the International Space Station (ISS), the Moon, and Mars, ESA has committed to keep supporting ISS until 2030, to contribute components to the NASA-led Lunar Gateway space station, and to start building parts of the NASA-ESA Mars sample return mission. It has also adopted a French-German proposal for a lunar lander and rover. Wörner says this is a good example of ESA's "moon village" concept, a lunar outpost that various space agencies and commercial enterprises can contribute to. "The idea is now 5 years old and finally we're coming to concrete actions," he said.

(Source: sciencemag.org)

Solving fossil mystery could aid quest for ancient life on Mars

The search for evidence of life on Mars could be helped by fresh insights into ancient rocks on Earth.

Research which suggests that structures previously thought to be fossils may, in fact, be mineral deposits could save future Mars missions valuable time and resources.

Microscopic tubes and filaments that resemble the remains of tiny creatures may have been formed by chemical reactions involving iron-rich minerals, the study shows.

Previous research had suggested that such structures were among the oldest fossils on Earth.

The new findings could aid the search for extraterrestrial life during future missions to Mars by making it easier to distinguish between fossils and non-biological structures.

The discovery was made by a scientist from the University of Edinburgh who is developing techniques to seek evidence that life once existed on Mars.

Astrobiologist Sean McMahon created tiny formations in the lab that closely mimic the shape and chemical composition of iron-rich structures commonly found in Mars-like rocks on Earth, where some examples are thought to be around four billion years old.

Dr. McMahon created the complex structures by mixing iron-rich particles with alkaline liquids containing the chemicals silicate or carbonate.

This process - known as chemical gardening - is thought to occur naturally where these chemicals abound. It can occur in hydrothermal vents on the seabed and when deep groundwater circulates through pores and fractures in rocks.

His findings suggest that structure alone is not sufficient to confirm whether or not microscopic life-like formations are fossils. More research will be needed to say exactly how they were formed.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Vandalized prehistorical bas-relief restored in western Iran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A 3rd-millioumm-BC bas-relief, d e s k vandalized on a rock surface in western Iran earlier in September, has been restored without damaging its other undestroyed sections.

The relief is carved on the face of a rock cliff in Salas-e Babajani county, Kermanshah province.



“Parts of the bas-relief, which were hurt by vandalizers, were rehabilitated by a team of restorers affiliated with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and in collaboration with Kermanshah cultural heritage department, provincial tourism chief Omid Qaderi said on Sunday, IRNA reported.

The department handed over restorers fragments of the [partly] smashed bas-relief, which depicts Iddin-Sin who was a monarch of the Kingdom of Simurrum [circa 2000-1900 BC], Qaderi added.

The magnificent bas-relief is one of the most important archaeological findings [in the region] that can reveal some information about Zagros-inhabited tribes in the third millennium BC, the official noted.

“By merging epoxy resins with mineral supplements, we came close to the color of the relief but attempted to make a slight difference to the original color so that forthcoming generations would not have trouble for research.”

For areas with deep fracture points, stainless steel wires were used and molded with specific epoxy-filled solution, he said.

After a few days, the restored relief will be inspected by the restoration team if it is ready to be covered by a nano-silica coating, he explained.

The relief is one of a group of similar rocks carved on the high cliffs of the eastern border of Mesopotamia. This area was marked by numerous battles between the Mesopotamian cities, outstanding among them is Ur, and their opponents, during the last two hundred years of the third millennium. Despite the long and well-documented rivalry between Ur and Simurrum, these rock relief carvings exhibit features typical of the Mesopotamian tradition, namely, the depiction of an apparently young king trampling his enemy in front of a goddess and carrying a scepter surmounted by two volutes.

The Simurrum Kingdom was an important city state of the Mesopotamian area from around 2000 BC to 1500 BC, during the period of the Akkadian Empire down to Ur III. The Simurrun were regularly in conflict with the Akkadian Empire.

‘World’s oldest chess piece’ found at a settlement in southern Jordan

The world’s oldest chess piece — carved from a piece of sandstone around 1,300 years ago — may have been found in an ancient Islamic settlement in south Jordan.

The chessman is believed to be a rook, which in the game is permitted to move horizontally and vertically for as many spaces as possible and can ‘castle’ with a king.

Chess is thought to have originated in the north of India in 550 CE, before spreading to Persian and from their across Europe and Russia by 1000 CE.

The carved sandstone piece was found at a 1,300-year-old Islamic settlement at Humayma — the modern name for the ancient trading post of Hawara — in southern Jordan, in 1991.

Unlike modern rooks — which are commonly styled to resemble a fortified castle tower — the rectangular stone with two horns is believed to represent the silhouette of a horse-drawn chariot.

In fact, the name ‘rook’ is derived from ‘rukh’, which is the Persian word for chariot. (Source: Daily Mail)

ROUND THE GLOBE

Archaeological site of Delphi

Blending harmoniously with the superb landscape and charged with sacred meaning, Delphi in the 6th century BC was indeed the religious center and symbol of unity of the ancient Greek world.

Delphi lies between two towering rocks of Mt. Parnassus, known as the Phaidriades (Shining) Rocks, in the Regional unit of Phocis in Central Greece. Here lies the Pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Apollo, the Olympian god of light, knowledge and harmony.



The area was inhabited in the 2nd millennium BC, as is evident from Mycenaean remains (1500-1100 BC). The development of the sanctuary and oracle began in the 8th century BC, and their religious and political influence over the whole of Greece increased in the 6th century BC. At the same time, their fame and prestige spread throughout the whole of the then known world, from which pilgrims came to the site to receive an oracle from the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo.

A place with a rich intangible heritage, Delphi is the center of the world (omphalos) in the eyes of the ancient Greeks: according to myth, it was the meeting point of two eagles released by Zeus, one to the East and one in the West. (Source: UNESCO)

Iran welcomes China’s initiative to revive glory of ancient Silk Road

1 → The visiting Iranian minister made the remarks on Friday on the sidelines of the third ministerial meeting of the Ancient Civilizations Forum, which was held in Beijing, China.

The minister voiced hope that more Chinese travelers to visit Iran as he pointed at China a huge tourism market.

Back in June, the Iranian government approved a proposal for allowing visa-free entry of the Chinese nationals into the country. The law took effect on July 16. The decision came in response to a joint request by the Foreign Ministry and the then Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Iran (which later transformed into a ministry).

Mounesan also noted that apart from tourism, Iran would also welcome cooperation with China in the preservation and restoration of cultural relics, the report said.

“China and Iran are two countries with ancient civilizations. Both have many rich world heritage sites, and we are open to learning from each other,” Mounesan said, noting that preserving traditional culture in the new era is very important.

Mounesan also voiced support for China’s efforts to enhance its local culture, mentioning the Palace Museum’s attempts to develop creative cultural industries to attract young people. Iran is also trying to keep its traditional culture alive through various art forms including film, drama, traditional clothes and handicrafts.

“I am very happy that some [handicraft]



experts are young people, and they do like their jobs. In fact, Iran has become one of the largest exporters of handicrafts in the world. Last year, exports of handicrafts in Iran reached \$600 million, and we want to set a target of \$2 billion.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian minister criticized some Western countries that do not have an ancient cultural

background but are trying to create a kind of new culture, which is influencing the younger generation and causing traditional culture to be ignored.

“We have realized the phenomenon of cultural hegemony, but fortunately, more and more young people know their root culture. For example, art majors in universities are very popular among students.

However, we still need more talks to face the cultural wave.”

UNESCO says that ancient Silk Road has connected civilizations and brought peoples and cultures into contact with each other from across the world for thousands of years, permitting not only an exchange of goods but an interaction of ideas and cultures that has shaped our world today.

How to explore the tundra: routes and ideas

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — A trip to the tundra will definitely make for an unforgettable once-in-a-lifetime experience. We have compiled a list of accessible and interesting places to visit in Russia, where you can explore the real tundra. Let’s get started, or as the Russians say — Poekhali!

Tundra permafrost underlies Russia’s entire northern coast. The Kola Peninsula in the Murmansk Region is the easiest place to reach. The tundra stretches further east through Naryan-Mar, Salekhard, the Yamal Peninsula, Norilsk, Dikson and on to Kolyma — these vast areas have largely been left untouched and are the most unspoiled. In the regions around the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean, tundra permafrost covers coastal areas, rolling hills and mountains, and some volcanoes in Magadan Region and the Kamchatka Peninsula.

The best ways to see the tundra are hiking, horse riding or off-road. River sports enthusiasts can go rafting or whitewater canoeing on the Pechora, Ob, Yenisei, Lena, Kolyma or on their calmer tributaries; these tours are often combined with fishing trips. Snowmobile tours or reindeer sledding trips can be organized in winter. You can go skiing on the mountain slopes, and there is even snowkiting for the real thrill-seekers.

There is something appealing about the tundra’s vast emptiness, its endless uninhabited expanses, covered with colorful mosses, lichens, wild flowers and small shrubs, where wild animals and birds stand out against the uniform landscape. The tundra is still inhabited by the indigenous peoples of the North. If you are looking for an alternative way to spend a vacation, there are trips you can go on to visit the Pomors, Nenets, Sami and other indigenous ethnic groups living in northern arctic Russia.

■ The Kola Peninsula

In the Khibiny Mountains and on the Kola Peninsula in Murmansk Region, you can go hiking or on an off-road adventure. The Kola Peninsula is almost completely flat, with little variation in elevation, so you do not need to be super fit to go on a hike there.

Adventurous tourists even arrive on bikes that are a little worse for wear, but they are confident because they do not need to worry about the terrain.

But Khibiny is mountainous and fairly rocky in some places; you need to be prepared for a serious adventure before you arrive there.

You can rent a Jeep on the Kola Peninsula and explore Russia’s mysterious ancient labyrinths (Babylons) by the White Sea, along with other immensely powerful places.

Check out Cape Korabl if you want to find your own amethyst. On the way there, you will also pass through the well-preserved settlements of Kandalaksha, Umba, Kashkarantsy, Kuzomen and Varzuga, where you can learn about Pomor folklore, crafts and traditions. Skilled Sami reindeer herders live in the village of Lovozero.

There is a seemingly bottomless lake in the Khibiny Mountains, Lake Imandra, the Aku-Aku Ravine and other places of natural gems with names that are difficult to pronounce: the Southern Chorgorr and Northern Rischorr Passes, Mount Takhtarvumchorr and Mount Poachvumchorr, the Chasnayok and Poachyok Rivers, the Maliy and Bolshoy Vudjavr Lakes, and the Seidjavr and Pingkyaring Lakes.

The town of Monchegorsk is a good starting point for a hike in the Khibiny Mountains.

■ Kolyma

The best way to experience Russia’s extreme northeast is by going on an expensive, but really exciting off-road expedition from Yakutsk to Magadan.

You will be able to stop and visit unique and remote places along the Kolyma Highway. You have to take the ferry to cross the Lena River and ford across many rivers. You will be able to visit the GULAG History Museum in Teply Klyuch and the site of the former Dneprovsky Gulag, and will see a monument with a sign welcoming you to the village of Oymyakon “Polyus Kholoda”, or “the Pole of Cold” in English. You can also visit Siberian Santa at the “Residence of Chyshaan — Lord of the Cold”, an igloo and ice tunnel complex filled with ice sculptures and giant crystals on the walls and ceiling. There is another place you can visit on this trip which is like no other — abandoned mining ghost town of Kadykchan. The city of Yakutsk and the large town Magadan are also very interesting places to visit and learn about the history and culture of Russia’s northern regions.

This is a real extreme tour. It takes a minimum of eight days to travel the full length of the Kolyma Highway. The



Autumn on the Kola Peninsula in the far northwest of Russia

quality of the road varies greatly with the weather. On rainy days, some areas may be cut off by overflowing rivers or some roads may become so muddy that they are impassable. An ideally passable roadway can only be guaranteed in winter, but temperatures can drop to -60 degrees Celsius.

Prices for tours along the Kolyma Highway start at 100 thousand rubles per person and can cost as much as 300 thousand, depending on the level of comfort that you want to receive along the way. There are very few roadside hotels, camp sites, cafés and restaurants, you often have to pitch a tent for the night, and bring enough food with you in the car. KAMAZ truck tours are almost the most expensive, which are really quite comfortable to spend the night in at truck stops along the way.

■ The Nenets Autonomous Okrug

The Nenets Autonomous Okrug is where you will see what life is really like in the Arctic Circle, you will learn how the Nenets reindeer herders live, and spend the night in a traditional chum (tent) in the Nelmin-Nos settlement. The Pechora River is a popular place to fish for pike, perch and grayling. In summer and autumn you can collect wild mushrooms, berries and herbs. The main natural attraction is the rocky eroded outline of the Timan Ridge.

If you are planning a hike in the tundra, do make sure you get vaccinated against tick-borne encephalitis in advance.

The best starting point for hiking trails is Naryan-Mar. You can fly there from Moscow, St. Petersburg and Arkhangelsk, and in the warmer months you can also fly there from Kirov and Syktyvkar.

■ Yamal Peninsula

Visit the Yamal Peninsula and immerse yourself in the culture of the ethnic groups native to arctic Russia — the Nenets, Khanty and Mansi. Places that are worth a visit include the Natural-Ethnographic Complex in Gornoknyazevsk at the Land of Hope Nenets Camp, and the ancient Sikhirtya Nomads Camp. You can learn how to make and use a lasso for catching deer and participate in traditional games there — sledge jumping, throwing axes and stick tug of war. You can also meet real reindeer and learn how to harness them.

Hiking and rafting are also popular activities on the Yamal Peninsula’s calm rivers that meander through the tundra.

The starting point for all routes is the town of Salekhard, the administrative center of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

■ The Taymyr Peninsula

The almost uninhabited Taymyr Peninsula is the northernmost part of the Eurasian continent. The main attractions are the Putorana Plateau and Lama Lake, nominated to be made a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site. You can reach them by boat from Norilsk on the rivers Norilka and Talaya. After a hike on the Putorana Plateau, visit the waterfalls of Yuzhnyi Neyralakh and then take a walk along the Vitaminka River.

You can also sail along the Yenisei River in a boat, and visit the villages of Ust-Port, Karaul and Nosok — these villages played a major role in developing this wild region in the Far North during the Soviet period.

Dudinka is one of the coldest settlements on the planet. It is home to the Taymyr Regional Museum, Russia’s northernmost public museum.

At the mouth of the Yenisei at the Brekhovskiy Lakes,

there is a protected area with a tremendous amount of bird life. In the warmer months you can spot white-tailed eagles, peregrine falcons, tundra swans, red-breasted geese and other rare birds.

Travel along the Taymyr Peninsula, starting from Norilsk. There are flights to Norilsk Alykel Airport from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Yekaterinburg and a number of other cities. There are local regional flights to Khatanga, Dikson and Igarka.

■ The Kamchatka Peninsula

Kamchatka’s mountainous tundra landscape has a special charm. There are forests in the lowlands. High mountains and volcanoes — a kingdom of lava and stone. In the valleys between them there are colorful mosses, dwarf shrubs and green Siberian dwarf pines. The easiest way to access and admire the Kamchatka tundra is to hike up the mountain passes on foot or drive there in an SUV; the closest trails to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky start at the foot of the Avachinsky and Vilyuchinsky volcanoes.

In order to take in the vast tundra in all its splendor, book a helicopter trip over the picture-postcard Valley of Geysers, fly over the puffs of smoke emitted by volcanoes bubbling with lava and sulfur around the Uzon volcanic caldera, or hover over the kingdom of the Kamchatka brown bear on Kurile Lake. Helicopter tours last about an hour, when you will see meandering cobalt-blue rivers, volcanoes and their craters, and you will see the colors of the tundra, which change from bright green to fiery red with the seasons. When the weather is good you will easily be able to spot bears from the helicopter. Helicopter tours in Kamchatka cost about 40 thousand rubles.

Make sure you are prepared for the outdoors. You will be spending the night at turbazy (tourist camps) and at camping sites. The only hotels in the region are in the towns and some villages.

■ Other ways to explore the tundra

* Tourists with Schengen visas who like travelling off the beaten track can visit the unique Svalbard Islands in the Arctic Ocean, which Russia shares with Norway. Barentsburg is a Russian town on Svalbard, but it is almost impossible to get there without passing through Norwegian territory.

* The Yailas — the high Crimean Mountains — are a prime example of an Alpine tundra region. At a high elevation where the shrubland ends, there are amazing mosses, growing out of rocky and gravelly soils, as well as lichens and many unique plants and flowers.

* Do you want to learn more about the culture of the ethnic groups living in the Far North without making the epic journey? Just off the route M8 or the Yaroslavl Highway, 50 kilometers from Moscow, you can visit the ethnographic park “Kochevnik” (Nomad). The owners have built chums (tents) and yurts there. You can try traditional dishes and teas from different ethnic groups in arctic Russia, and there are also shamanic rituals performed there. Yaks, sled dogs, deer and even camels are kept on the territory, and you can try some archery and learn to harness deer. On August 9 each year, the Nomad Park hosts a colorful celebration for the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples.

(Based on a research into Russian sources)

Tulsi Gabbard: Wake Up and Smell Our \$6.4 Trillion Wars

THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVE — The Democratic establishment is increasingly irritated. Representative Tulsi Gabbard, long-shot candidate for president, is attacking her own party for promoting the “deeply destructive” policy of “regime change wars.” Gabbard has even called Hillary Clinton “the queen of warmongers, embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party.”

Senator Chris Murphy complained: “It’s a little hard to figure out what it’s trying to scratch in the Democratic Party right now.” Some conservatives seem equally confused. The Washington Examiner’s Eddie Scarry asked: “where is Tulsi distinguishing herself when it really matters?”

The answer is that foreign policy “really matters.” Gabbard recognizes that George W. Bush is not the only simpleton warmonger who’s plunged the nation into conflict, causing enormous harm. In the last Democratic presidential debate, she explained that the issue was “personal to me” since she’d “served in a medical unit where every single day, I saw the terribly high, human costs of war.” Compare her perspective to that of the ivory tower warriors of Right and Left, ever ready to send others off to fight not so grand crusades.

The best estimate of the costs of the post-9/11 wars comes from the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University. The Institute says that \$6.4 trillion will be spent through 2020. They estimate that our wars have killed 801,000 directly and resulted in a multiple of that number dead indirectly. More than 335,000 civilians have died—and that’s an extremely conservative guess. Some 21 million people have been forced from their homes. Yet the terrorism risk has only grown, with the U.S. military involved in counter-terrorism in 80 nations.

Obviously, without American involvement there would still be conflicts. Some counter-terrorism activities would be necessary even if the U.S. was not constantly swatting geopolitical wasps’ nests. Nevertheless, it was Washington that started or joined these unnecessary wars (e.g., Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen) and expanded necessary wars well beyond their legitimate purposes (Afghanistan). As a result, American policymakers bear responsibility for much of the carnage.

The Department of Defense is responsible for close to half of the estimated expenditures. About \$1.4 trillion goes to care for veterans. Homeland security and interest on security expenditures take roughly \$1 trillion each. And \$131 million goes to the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, which have overspent on projects that have delivered little.

More than 7,000 American military personnel and nearly 8,000 American contractors have died. About 1,500 Western allied troops and 11,000 Syrians fighting ISIS have been killed. The Watson Institute figures that as many as 336,000 civilians have died, but that uses the very conservative numbers provided by the Iraq Body Count. The IBC counts 207,000 documented civilian deaths but admits that doubling the estimate would probably yield a more accurate figure. Two other respected surveys put the number of deaths in Iraq alone at nearly 700,000 and more than a million, though those figures have been contested.

More than a thousand aid workers and journalists have died, as well as up to 260,000 opposition fighters. Iraq is the costliest conflict overall, with as many as 308,000 dead (or 515,000 from doubling the IBC count). Syria cost 180,000 lives, Afghanistan 157,000, Yemen 90,000, and Pakistan 66,000.

Roughly 32,000 American military personnel have been wounded; some 300,000 suffer from PTSD or significant depression and even more have endured traumatic brain injuries. There are other human



costs—4.5 million Iraqi refugees and millions more in other nations, as well as the destruction of Iraq’s indigenous Christian community and persecution of other religious minorities. There has been widespread rape and other sexual violence. Civilians, including children, suffer from PTSD.

Even stopping the wars won’t end the costs. Explained Nita Crawford of Boston University and co-director of Brown’s Cost of War Project: “the total budgetary burden of the post-9/11 wars will continue to rise as the U.S. pays the on-going costs of veterans’ care and for interest not borrowing to pay for the wars.”

People would continue to die. Unexploded shells and bombs still turn up in Europe from World Wars I and II. In Afghanistan, virtually the entire country is a battlefield, filled with landmines, shells, bombs, and improvised explosive devices. Between 2001 and 2018, 5,442 Afghans were killed and 14,693 were wounded from unexploded ordnance. Some of these explosives predate American involvement, but the U.S. has contributed plenty over the last 18 years.

Moreover, the number of indirect deaths often exceeds battle-related casualties. Journalist and activist David Swanson noted an “estimate that to 480,000 direct deaths in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, one must add at least one million deaths in those countries indirectly caused by the recent and ongoing wars. This is because the wars have caused illnesses, injuries, malnutrition, homelessness, poverty, lack of social support, lack of healthcare, trauma, depression, suicide, refugee crises, disease epidemics, the poisoning of the environment, and the spread of small-scale violence.” Consider Yemen, ravaged by famine and cholera. Most civilian casualties have resulted not from Saudi and Emirati bombing, but from the consequences of the bombing.

Only a naïf would imagine that these wars will disappear absent a dramatic change in national leadership. Wrote Crawford: “The mission of the post-9/11 wars, as originally defined, was to defend the United States against future terrorist threats from al-Qaeda and affiliated organizations. Since 2001, the wars have expanded from the fighting in Afghanistan, to wars and smaller operations elsewhere, in more than 80 countries—becoming a truly ‘global war on terror’.”

Yet every expansion of conflict makes the American homeland more, not less, vulnerable. Contrary to the nonsensical claim that if we don’t occupy Afghanistan forever and overthrow Syria’s Bashar al-Assad, al-Qaeda and ISIS will turn Chicago and Omaha into terrorist abattoirs, intervening in more conflicts and killing more foreigners creates additional terrorists

at home and abroad. In this regard, drone campaigns are little better than invasions and occupations.

For instance, when questioned by the presiding judge in his trial, the failed 2010 Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, a U.S. citizen, cited the drone campaign in Pakistan. His colloquy with the judge was striking: “I’m going to plead guilty 100 times forward because until the hour the U.S. pulls its forces from Iraq and Afghanistan and stops the drone strikes in Somalia and Yemen and in Pakistan and stops the occupation of Muslim lands and stops Somalia and Yemen in Pakistan, and stops the occupation of Muslim lands, and stops killing the Muslims.”

Ajani Marwat, with the New York City Police Department’s intelligence division, outlined Shahzad’s perspective to The Guardian: “It’s American policies in his country.’ ... ‘We don’t have to do anything to attract them,’ a terrorist organizer in Lahore told me. ‘The Americans and the Pakistani government do our work for us. With the drone attacks targeting the innocents who live in Waziristan and the media broadcasting this news all the time, the sympathies of most of the nation are always with us. Then it’s simply a case of converting these sentiments into action’.”

Washington does make an effort to avoid civilian casualties, but war will never be pristine. Combatting insurgencies inevitably harms innocents. Air and drone strikes rely on often unreliable informants. The U.S. employs “signature” strikes based on supposedly suspicious behavior. And America’s allies, most notably the Saudis and Emiratis—supplied, armed, guided, and until recently refueled by Washington—make little if any effort to avoid killing noncombatants and destroying civilian infrastructure.

Thus will the cycle of terrorism and war continue. Yet which leading Democrats have expressed concern? Most complain that President Donald Trump is negotiating with North Korea, leaving Syria, and reducing force levels in Afghanistan. Congressional Democrats care about Yemen only because it has become Trump’s war; there were few complaints under President Barack Obama.

What has Washington achieved after years of combat? Even the capitals of its client states are unsafe. The State Department warns travelers to Iraq that kidnapping is a risk and urges businessmen to hire private security. In Kabul, embassy officials now travel to the airport via helicopter rather than car.

Tulsi Gabbard is talking about what really matters. The bipartisan War Party has done its best to wreck America and plenty of other nations too. Gabbard is courageously challenging the Democrats in this coalition, who have become complicit in Washington’s criminal wars.

“No to foreign interference”: Algerians dissipating disaccord in face of European Parliament’s resolution

1 → “Everyone should understand that rejection of foreign interference is a principle rooted in the political culture of Algeria, its people and institutions, and all attempts, in this respect, are doomed to fail,” he stressed.

“The Algerian people who have said loud and clear that they do not need any lessons, whatever their origin, know perfectly how to respond, at the appropriate time, to those who try to interfere in their affairs and hinder the process through which Algeria will shift to a new era, marked with progress and prosperity in serenity and peace,” the lieutenant general Gaid Salah said.

“This valiant people will thwart the attempts of the gang which, after it has failed in its schemes, is resorting to foreign parties, especially those known for their historical deep-rooted hatred and who do not want the good for Algeria and its people,” he noted.

“The Algerian people, who have managed to overcome the various ordeals and obstacles, are able today to foil the schemes of the gang and its lackeys.”

They “know very well how to overcome this situation, with wisdom and lucidity, and how to get Algeria out of the crisis and pave the way for a glowing future,” the chief of the Army Ahmed Gaid Salah stressed.

For the lieutenant general, the people “alone will define the benchmarks of a promising future, thanks to their determination and their Army’s commitment to keep Algeria free, independent and sovereign in its decision, accepting no interference or diktat and submitting to no bargaining whoever the parties.”

The Algerian Foreign Ministry, for its part, slammed the resolution, considering it as a new attempt to bring into Algeria the type of “engineered chaos” that had already spread ruin and armed conflict elsewhere in the Arab world.

“The European Parliament, at the instigation of a group of deputies from diverse partisan affiliations, has arrogantly taken the liberty of ruling on the current political process in our country at this moment in time when Algerians are preparing to elect a new president in full democracy and transparency,” the ministry added in a statement.

“With this resolution, the European parliament has above all confirmed, at the initiative of the instigating deputies, that it is henceforth openly promoting their agenda of engineered chaos which had been unfortunately implemented in many brotherly countries,” the ministry highlighted.

EP non-binding resolution provoked strong reactions among Algerians, who rushed to the streets, reflecting the position of Algeria, which refuses humiliation and submission.

Saturday’s protests are the largest pro-government demonstrations of their kind seen in Algeria, organized by the General Union of Algerian Workers, or UGTA in support of the government and the presidential election, slated for December, 12, 2019. Marchers voiced their support for the military and the sovereignty of the country, expressing their indignation and strong condemnation of the European Parliament resolution. They stressed that this move is a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Algeria and a provocation against the Algerian people and a despicable act of propaganda, based on misinformation and malicious intentions serving foreign agendas eager to create chaos and undermine the stability of the country.

“No to foreign interference!” read one placard in response to the European Parliament resolution.

“The December 12 vote will go ahead,” demonstrators chanted against former colonial power France, telling its “children” -- anti-vote protesters -- to “get out”.

Spy case flip-flop reveals anti-China bias

Wang Liqiang, a self-claimed high-level Chinese spy who defected to Australia, seems to have been having trouble backing up his story. According to the latest news, Australian security agencies concluded that Wang might be at most “a bit player on the fringes of the espionage community.” Some Australian media outlets even described this case as a “spy farce.”

Over a week ago, Wang shocked Australian and Western public opinion. Wang claimed that he had “infiltrated the student movement in Hong Kong” and “interfered with elections in Taiwan.” His words seemed customized for the current political situations. Many political forces felt as if they had hit the jackpot, and a whirlwind blew up.

How could a 27-year-old participate in a series of espionage activities? It sounded like Wang was a liar. China soon released a courtroom video of Wang’s conviction for fraud in 2016. Many of his misdeeds were exposed. It seems that the farce with which Wang showed his loyalty to Australia’s anti-China forces and the latter utilized him to fuel anti-China opinions could not continue anymore.

This case revealed the lack of morality of quite a few Australians in the intelligence community and press circles. They should not have been fooled by Wang. However, they fell into the trap willingly, taking advantage of Wang regardless of the consequences.

Wang’s case helped the Hong Kong opposition win the district council elections. And Tsai Ing-wen’s authority hyped this case and detained the alleged leaders of a so-called Chinese mainland intelligence agency based in Hong Kong as claimed by Wang. However, the case collapsed promptly.

But the Chinese people should by no means believe that the Australian intelligence community and media outlets will be ashamed and restrain themselves from discrediting China. Their mentality has already been extremely ideological. In terms of throwing mud at China, they only focus on the effects it can produce, rather than whether it is right or wrong. No matter what setbacks they have suffered, they can always be forgiven and continue their smears against China fearlessly.

Recent accusations made by Western public opinion against China, which were over-exaggerated and full of loopholes, as well as their overt double standards, have shocked the Chinese people over and over again.

Reform and opening-up has offered Chinese more access to Western public opinion. We once believed in the “objectivity” and “fairness” of Western public opinion institutions, but gradually, Chinese people have realized that they are far from perfect as we used to believe. In the past two years, we have witnessed all kinds of unscrupulous and ugly performances.

Some Western media outlets have established standardized production lines of China reports, which prioritize value and standpoint.

For a long time to come, China will be unable to change this paranoia of Western public opinion. But fortunately, the Chinese have clearly observed the Western media’s serious prejudice and hostility toward China. The previous positive image of the Western media among the Chinese public has collapsed. It is hard for them to affect Chinese society as they did in the past. They are marginalizing themselves in Chinese society.

China needs to make efforts to dismantle the influence of the West’s China-related reports worldwide. The work will be tough, but worthwhile to pursue. Only by gradually achieving this task can China’s soft power make a necessary breakthrough.

Iran at forefront of push for nuclear-weapons-free middle east

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iran continues to be behind a longstanding proposal at the United Nations for a regional nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

However, there are lingering questions crying out for answers: how realistic is Iran’s proposal in the face of implicit opposition from the United States and Israel which have nuclear weapons.

The danger of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East shows that business cannot continue as usual. It is a real threat, and this threat is further exacerbated by the two nuclear weapons regimes that have used the Middle East in their power games and scapegoated Iran in not reaching a final document at the annual NPT Review Conferences.

Like Iran, other states from within the region understand the gravity of the threat and the need for a comprehensive process that reduces tensions and serves as a starting point for an inclusive discussion in goodwill.

The United Nations claims it has been working to eliminate nuclear weapons, including through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, both of which are yet to enter into force. The problem is this is all for political points.

That said, the stakes for international as well as regional security could not be higher still. Ending weapons of mass destruction possession and use in the Middle East has



to be a vital priority for every country. For this Israel should be held to account too.

This is because the US and Israel behave as if they want to keep nuclear weapons and freedom of action for the foreseeable future. That’s a dangerous position to take, particularly after Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the JCPOA (2015 nuclear restraint agreement with Iran).

Which is why Iran has been working with states from within the region and the international community to draw attention to the fact that the most important component missing is the belief that such a zone is still possible and the goodwill needed to sustain this process.

Iran says there are several possibilities to move forward if only the states want

to achieve the zone, instead of using this topic to bash each other for short-term political points.

The main diplomatic challenge is to take forward a positive process that engages positively with the existing treaty regimes covering all types of weapons of mass destruction. At a minimum, it would have been important for the UN to commit to holding a follow up conference every year under UN General Assembly auspices.

They should also consider what positive initiatives can be taken to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference in 2020, especially in light of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and the failure to hold the 2012 Conference that was agreed in 2010. Although nuclear weapons have only been

used once in history, the 1945 bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War attest to their devastation.

The United States and Israel decided not to participate in this year’s conference, however, their absence in the room is not necessarily a bad thing at this moment as it allows the other states to have a constructive discussion to serve as a positive and crucial step towards a positive outcome.

Having said that, the civil society should call on Israel to pay attention that with consensus on all final decisions on the WMD Free Zone treaty, it has everything to lose by not joining the process and international isolation to gain. The US’s stand is that the time is not right and the states in the region are not ready for disarmament. The US should be reminded that there is huge difference between disarmament and dismantlement - there is no such thing as not being ready for disarmament as disarmament begins with a conversation if there is goodwill. Just like Israel, the US hasn’t shown that goodwill.

The question is not readiness, wanting or not wanting - as the US and Israel on numerous times have rejected the establishment of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. It is time to start this much-needed discourse - just as it is time for the US, Israel and other nuclear weapons states to dismantle their stockpiles based on a specific timeline and with no strings attached.

CO2-eating bacteria made in the lab could help tackle climate change, scientists claim

Bacteria which normally survive on sugar have been genetically altered to make them capable of surviving through consumption of carbon dioxide and could be harnessed to help produce sustainable supplies of food and fuel, scientists claim.

Over the course of several months, researchers in Israel created an E coli strain which, through genetic manipulation, consumes CO2 for energy instead of organic compounds.

The team used “metabolic rewiring”, to help transform the E coli’s diet to make it consume CO2 in a similar manner to a plant.

This involved adding genes which metabolise CO2, and removing genes which usually process sugar compounds.



“From a basic scientific perspective, we wanted to see if such a major transformation in the diet of bacteria – from dependence on sugar to the synthesis of all their biomass from CO2 – is possible,” said first author Shmuel Gleizer, a Weizmann Institute of Science postdoctoral fellow.

“Beyond testing the feasibility of such a transformation in the lab, we wanted to know how extreme an adaptation is needed in terms of the changes to the bacterial DNA blueprint.”

The team said the results were a significant step in synthetic biology and highlight the “incredible plasticity of bacterial metabolism” and could provide a framework for future carbon-neutral bioproduction.

“Our main aim was to create a convenient scientific platform that could enhance CO2 fixation, which can help address challenges related to sustainable production of food and fuels and global warming caused by CO2 emissions,” said senior author Ron Milo, a systems biologist at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

“Converting the carbon source of E coli, the workhorse of biotechnology, from organic carbon into CO2 is a major step towards establishing such a platform.”

Dr Gleizer said there was no existing precedent for the process. “The study describes, for the first time, a successful transformation of a bacterium’s mode of growth. Teaching a gut bacterium to do tricks that plants are renowned for was a real long shot,” he said.

“When we started the directed evolutionary process, we had no clue as to our chances of success, and there were no precedents in the literature to guide or suggest the feasibility of such an extreme transformation. In addition, seeing in the end the relatively small number of genetic changes required to make this transition was surprising.”

The authors say that one major limitation is that the bacteria currently release more CO2 than is consumed through carbon fixation. In addition, more research is needed before it’s possible to discuss the scalability of the approach for industrial use.

The researchers say their next step will be to aim to supply energy through renewable electricity to address the problem of CO2 release, and improve their understanding of the conditions in which the bacterium can flourish.

“This feat is a powerful proof of concept that opens up a new exciting prospect of using engineered bacteria to transform products we regard as waste into fuel, food or other compounds of interest,” said Professor Milo.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

World Heart Federation obesity warning

(June 05, 2002)
The World Heart Federation is warning that obesity will overtake tobacco smoking as the biggest cause of heart disease unless the current trend of unhealthy lifestyles stops. At least a billion people across the globe are now extremely overweight, putting a massive strain on the world wide healthcare systems. This report from Emma Jane Kirby.

Obesity, which can cause heart disease, strokes and diabetes is **on the increase** across the globe. According to the World Heart Federation, an estimated twenty-two million children under five years old are now severely overweight. Nearly one in three children in the United States between the ages of five and fourteen is obese, compared to one in six, thirty years ago.

But obesity is not a **condition** which solely affects the Western World. Increasingly, **low and middle income countries** are suffering from the condition, often due to a change in their diets, as they **substitute fiber intake** for a much **higher consumption of saturated fats** and sugar. In Beijing, for example, one in five children of school age is now obese.

The World Heart Federation says obesity can also be blamed for **spiraling** health costs. The US spends almost a tenth of its national healthcare budget on overweight patients, and in Western countries as much as two point eight percent of the total sick care costs is **attributable to** obesity. The Federation warns that unless the world’s population acts now to eat a healthier diet and to take more exercise, obesity will rapidly **overtake** smoking as the leading **lifestyle risk factor** for heart disease and strokes.

■ **Words**
on the increase: growing
condition: medical problem
low and middle income countries: poorer countries
substitute: if you substitute something for something else you use it instead of the other thing
fiber intake: the amount of fiber they eat
higher consumption of saturated fats: eating of more fats that are considered bad for you
spiraling: here, increasing rapidly
attributable to: likely to be caused by
overtake: here, becomes a bigger problem than...
lifestyle risk factor: something people choose to do which can badly affect their health

(Source: BBC)

International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated in Tehran

➔ This year, the event focuses on the empowerment of persons with disabilities for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development as anticipated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which pledges to ‘leave no one behind’ and recognizes disability as a cross-cutting issues, to be considered in the implementation of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The event was attended by Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari, Tehran Mayor Pirouz Hanachi, Welfare Organization Director Vahid Qobadi- Dana and some other officials.

Shariatmadari, for his part said that in order to build a more accessible environment for the persons with disabilities, culture should be promoted in the society, and the public should be aware that disability is not farfetched and can happen to anyone in anytime of their life.

“We are very pleased that law on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities was approved which can be an effective step towards resolving the problems of those suffering from disabilities.”

Majlis [the Iranian parliament] approved both general outlines and details of a bill on rights of persons with disabilities on January 2018. Development of disability-friendly cities, free transportation, health insurance, free education, job creation, housing loans, and less working hours are some of the articles of the law.

Since the approval of the law, education for students with disabilities have been provided in Azad universities, subsidies for patients with spinal cord injury as well as disability care centers have been increased,



he stated, adding, 1,057 residential units will be provided to families having members with disabilities within next week.

Shariatmadari said students with disabilities studying in state universities will receive scholarships for the first time this year.

Although the cities must be adjusted to be disability-friendly, the public’s perspective to disabled people must be adjusted, which requires partnership between related bodies, including media, he highlighted.

Last year, a budget of 120 trillion rials (nearly \$2.8 billion) was proposed to fully implement the law, however, only 11 trillion rials (nearly \$260 million) was

allocated, he said.

Next year, some 150 trillion rials (nearly \$3.5 billion) is required to be provided to the Welfare Organization in this regard, he concluded.

■ **Disability genes database to be launched within 4 years**

Qobadi-Dana for his part said that the Welfare Organization is working on the establishment of the disability genes database, which is going to be developed over the next 4 years.

“Our main goal is that people with disabilities lead an independent life with effective participation in the community and to be able to work and have a normal

Polluted air sends over 12,800 citizens to hospitals

SOCIETY d e s k TEHRAN — Air pollution has caused respiratory and cardiac problems for residents of big cities of the country over the past few days, sending 12,838 people to hospitals, Pir-Hossein Kolivand, head of Emergency Medical Services Organization said.

High concentration of particulate matter during November 24-29, caused 12,838 people to refer to medical centers and hospitals, 5,100 of whom were suffering from respiratory problems and 7,730 others from cardiovascular diseases, he explained.

Isfahan, Alborz and Tehran provinces had the highest number of patients, respectively, Kolivand stated, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

Polluted air also resulted in closure of schools and universities on Saturday.

■ **Tehraners breathe 47 days of foul air this year**

Tehran air quality index (AQI) reached an unhealthy level of pollution for 47 days since the beginning of this year (March 21), according to a report published by the Tehran Air Quality Control Company.

An AQI is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.



The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), good (51-100), lightly polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), moderately polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

During the aforementioned period, 45 days got lightly polluted, while air quality reached unhealthy levels for 2 days which was almost dangerous for all the residents.

This is while, last year over the same period 34 days were unhealthy for sensitive groups, and Tehraners did not breathe a single day of heavily polluted air.

No human cases of avian influenza reported: health official

SOCIETY d e s k TEHRAN — No cases of human infection with avian influenza virus have so far been reported in the country, Mohammad Mehdi Gooya, head of infectious diseases management department at the Ministry of Health has announced.

The most common type of influenza this year in the country is A (H1N1) and (H3N2), while H1N1 accounts for about 90 percent of the diagnosed cases which is the most severe form of the disease, he stated, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Influenza has been widespread in the country since the past month, which killed 15 people so far, he regretted.

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is an infectious disease caused by an influenza virus. Symptoms can be mild to severe. Three of the four types of influenza viruses affect humans Type A, Type B, and Type C. Type D has not been known to infect humans, but is believed to have the potential to do so.

Death occurs mostly in poeple in high risk groups namely, the young, the old, and those with other health problems.

Influenza spreads around the



world in yearly outbreaks, resulting in about three to five million cases of severe illness and about 290,000 to 650,000 deaths. About 20 percent of unvaccinated children and 10 percent of unvaccinated adults are infected each year.

Avian influenza refers to the disease caused by infection with avian (bird) influenza (flu) Type A viruses. These viruses occur naturally among wild aquatic birds worldwide and can infect domestic poultry and other bird and animal species. Avian flu viruses do not normally infect humans.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ◀ ▶ ☰

Iran well rid of 153 swarms of desert locusts

Some 153 swarms of desert locusts from Saudi Arabia which penetrated into the southeastern provinces have been controlled, Esmaeil Najjar, head of Iran’s Crisis Management Organization has said.

Since the [Iranian calendar] month of Bahman (starting on January 21) we fought swarms of desert locust in approximately 532,000 hectares of farming lands, IRNA news agency quoted Najjar as saying on Saturday.

Provinces of Bushehr, Fars, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad, Hormozgan, Kerman, Khuzestan, and Sistan–Baluchestan have been affected by the locusts which incurred major losses on farming lands and gardens.

Farm lands in the aforementioned provinces have undergone aerial spraying of chemical insecticides and ground pest control operations, he stated.

He went on to say that a budget of 300 billion rials (around \$7 million) is required to completely eradicate the outbreak, while some 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.3 million) have so far been allocated, and another budget of 200 billion rials (nearly \$4.6 million) is planned to be allotted in this regard.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-plast, -plasty, -plastic”

■ **Meaning:** living cell or particle
■ **For example:** The next approach is **angioplasty**, in which a catheter is used to balloon open the arrowed part of the artery.

PHRASAL VERB

Head something off

■ **Meaning:** to prevent something from happening, especially something bad
■ **For example:** The President intervened to head off the conflict.

IDIOM

Nip something in the bud

■ **Explanation:** to prevent something from becoming a problem by stopping it as soon as it starts
■ **For example:** Try to nip this kind of bad behavior in the bud.

Iraq parliament approves Abdul Mahdi's resignation

Iraq to prosecute high-ranking officials over corruption

By staff & agencies

Iraqi legislators have approved Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi's resignation during a parliament session held in capital Baghdad amid weeks of deadly anti-government protests in the country.

Referring to Article 76 of the country's constitution, Speaker Mohammad al-Halbousi on Sunday said President Barham Salih will now ask the largest political bloc in parliament to nominate the next prime minister al Jazeera reported.

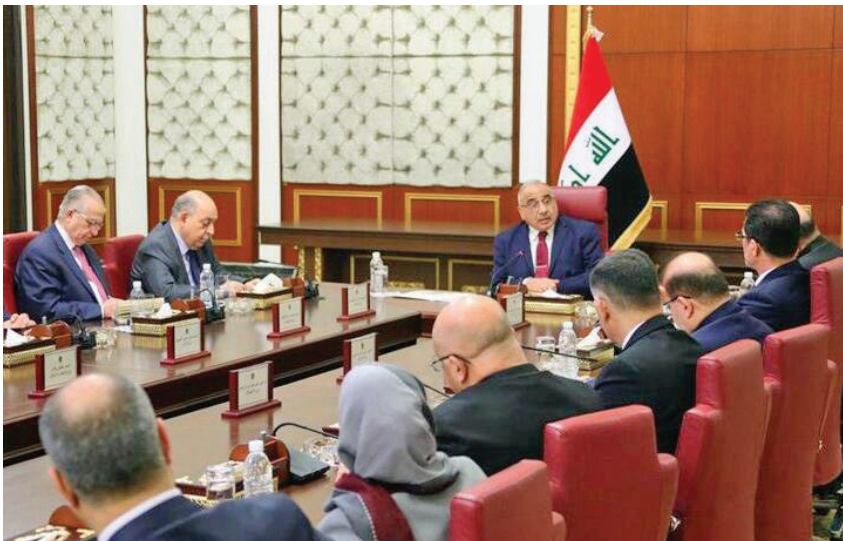
On Friday, an embattled Abdul Mahdi formally submitted his offer to step down.

The statement by Abdul Mahdi, who assumed office a little over a year ago, came shortly after Iraq's top Shia leader, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, condemned the use of lethal force against the protesters and called for a new government.

A cabinet meeting on Saturday had approved the statement, which also suggested the resignation of key members of the Iraqi government, including Abdul Mahdi's chief of staff.

Legal experts say Abdul Mahdi's government will take on a caretaker role for 30 days or until the largest bloc in parliament agrees on a new candidate to replace him.

But with the question as to who forms the largest political bloc in parliament remaining unanswered, that decision may



take longer to reach.

Bylaws of the Council of Ministers stipulate that the prime minister should send his resignation to the president. If he does so, the president would take over until the largest bloc in parliament nominates an alternative, which according to article 81 of Iraq's constitution, should be within two weeks.

But in a pre-recorded speech on Saturday, Abdul Mahdi did not mention the president.

Instead, he said that acting on the advice of Iraq's chief Supreme Court judge, he would submit his resignation to parliament.

■ **Iraq to summon, prosecute more top officials**

Meanwhile, a high-ranking Iraqi official says authorities are going to issue arrest warrants for a number of high-ranking officials and refer them to the judiciary for trial over charges of

corruption, as part of the government's reforms after a wave of protests over unemployment, corruption and lack of public services hit the country.

Iraqi government spokesman Saad al-Hadithi told the official Iraqi News Agency on Saturday that a special central court, formed in coordination between executive and judiciary bodies, deals with important corruption cases.

Hadithi added that the court has ordered investigative bodies in the courts of appeal nationwide to summon, issue arrest warrants and seize the assets of anyone found guilty of corruption.

He further highlighted that dozens of subpoenas have been issued, detentions have taken place and even prison sentences have been handed down to senior officials at the levels of ministers, governors, lawmakers and members of provincial councils.

"Work is underway in this regard, and other relevant decisions will be made within the next few days," Hadithi pointed out.

On October 11, the Iraqi Supreme Anti-Corruption Council said in a statement that nine high-ranking officials had been referred to the judiciary to be prosecuted on charges of corruption.

The senior officials included former ministers and former provincial governors, according to the statement.

Gorbachev reveals danger awaiting World as U.S. troops stay in Afghanistan

On the day President Trump went on a surprise Thanksgiving visit to Afghanistan, former Soviet leader Gorbachev shared his memories of the USSR's role in the Afghan conflict in the 1980s and much more.

Sitting down to be interviewed by CNN, the first and only Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev commented on Donald Trump's intention to withdraw the U.S. contingent from Afghanistan, arguing the move would be vitally important: "They must be withdrawn. That is the main lesson. You know, it's like a match. The match is lit, a fire spreads. And these clashes, when the leading, largest countries in this conflict become ever more involved, they are dangerous for all nations", the former head of the USSR noted speaking about the lessons learned from the Soviet troop pullout from the region in 1989.

At the time, the United States and the Soviets were mending fences in relations and trying to come to grips with the ongoing political processes around the world. The effort resulted in Gorbachev's meeting with George H.W. Bush on Malta that officially put an end to the Cold War.

Back then, Washington supported the mujahideen fighters

trying to topple Afghan President Mohammad Najibullah's Soviet-backed government. However, just over two years later, the USSR itself collapsed and assistance to the Kabul government ground to a halt, leading to the latter's fall.

When asked about the landmark arms accord, the 1987 INF Treaty, Gorbachev ripped the U.S. move to scrap the historic deal:

"All the agreements that are there are preserved and not destroyed", he said. "But these are the first steps towards the destruction of [that which] must not be destroyed in any case. Therefore, if this path goes further, then everything is possible. This must not be allowed".

He stressed that the ultimate goal of arms control is to dispose of nukes entirely, admitting though there are persisting tensions in relations between Washington and Moscow. Addressing the nascent multipolar rivalry between states, Gorbachev stressed that "a hot war should be avoided". The former Soviet president, however, seems to view some ongoing developments as positive:

"It's good that already all over the world there is a conversation and people are talking, people are reacting, and



this is the most important thing", Gorbachev said.

Addressing the Cold War as a recurrent theme in a variety of pop culture products, and the acclaimed "Chernobyl" TV series, Gorbachev said the reasons had been studied at length and the conclusions were sent out to all other countries.

(Source: Sputnik)

‘U.S. abuses justice systems to target its enemies’

The incarceration and extradition trial of Julian Assange is one of many examples of the U.S. abusing the legal systems of other countries to target its political enemies, said John Shipton, the father of WikiLeaks founder.

Assange is currently held at a top security UK prison pending a hearing on extradition to the U.S. An American court wants him on espionage charges that may effectively result in imprisonment for life. Assange's case is one of many in which Washington puts pressure on other nations to abuse

their legal systems to persecute people that the U.S. government doesn't like, Assange's father believes.

The situation with Assange is similar to what happened to other people in Washington's crosshairs, Shipton told an audience at the University of Cologne on Saturday.

One similar case he cited is that of Huawei Chief Financial officer Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested in Canada on a request from the U.S. Like Assange, she is fighting an extradition request by the U.S., which accuses her of financial fraud in relation to

violations of anti-Iranian sanctions imposed by Washington.

Another example is Ola Bini, a digital rights activist and personal friend of Assange, who got arrested in Ecuador, in a move apparently coordinated with Assange's expulsion from the nation's embassy in London. Bini spent 70 days in jail without formal charges being brought, even though Ecuadoran government officials immediately claimed he had been involved in computer intrusion. The Swedish citizen has been released but is forbidden to leave the country.

Shipton said it was obvious why his son is wanted by the U.S. After all, his creation, WikiLeaks, continues to expose the nefarious activities of the American government, even as Assange is kept under lock and key.

"There [was] a coup in Bolivia two weeks ago. If you wish, you can look up [the WikiLeaks site for] the name[s] of those involved in the coup, and you will see reports describing those who are corrupted; those who betray their country for money; those who have constant contact with the United States embassy," he said.

(Source: RT)

Royal purge: Prince Charles reportedly plans to slim down Monarchy, kick out some family members

The news comes following reports that the Prince of Wales could become King within the next 10 years. According to one scenario voiced by royal experts, Queen Elizabeth, 93, may trigger a regency act, which would see Charles taking on all the roles of the King, while the Queen remains the head of state by title.

Prince Charles is preparing to slim down the UK monarchy by kicking out some members of the Royal Family, the Daily Star reported citing royal experts. The Prince of Wales is said to have long planned to make the monarchy well-run and cost effective when he becomes King, but after a recent scandal involving Prince Andrew, the Queen's second son and reportedly her favorite, Charles, who is first in line to the throne reportedly jump started his plans on reforming Britain's monarchy, royal experts told the newspaper.

Prince Andrew stepped down from public duties after his interview with the BBC in which he made several controversial statements that caused a great furor in the British public. The royal spoke with the BBC after pressure mounted on him to explain his ties with Jeffrey Epstein, the U.S. billionaire who was arrested on charges of



running a sex trafficking network of minors this summer and killed himself while awaiting trial in prison. Prince Andrew admitted that he stayed in Epstein's mansions, private islands, but categorically denied allegations that he had sexual intercourse with one of Epstein's sex-slaves, Virginia Giuffre, who claimed she was forced to have sex with the royal when she was 17.

After the interview was aired Charles reportedly met

with the Queen and persuaded her to sack Prince Andrew. The scandal, royal experts said, fuelled the Prince's desire to cut out royal outsiders.

"Prince Andrew is now out of the picture. I don't see him ever undertaking royal duties again, and any hope that his daughters would is now gone", Brittani Barger deputy editor of Royal Central told the Daily Star. "I think when it's all said and done, the monarchy will be Charles and his children and grandchildren".

Charlie Proctor, editor of the Royal Central said the Prince of Wales wants the engagements to be conducted only by members of his immediate family – his sons and their wives. Later Charles' grandchildren would also join "the Firm".

Proctor stressed that there are no chances of Prince Andrew's daughters ever becoming working royals and conducting engagements on behalf of the Royal Family. At the same time he lamented the fact that the "royal purge" may see some members of the family go, in particular Prince Edward, the Queen's third son and Princess Anne, who are considered to be the most hardworking royals.

(Source: Sputnik)

Thousands in Tel Aviv rally to demand Netanyahu's resignation

Thousands of Israeli protesters have held demonstrations in Tel Aviv to demand Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's resignation over his corruption charges.

At least 6,000 people were at the gathering in the Habima Square of Tel Aviv, Israel's Channel 12 estimated.

Netanyahu is "the most cowardly prime minister we've ever had," a demonstrator told Yedioth Ahronoth (Ynet), adding that the premier "needs to resign and go plead his case in court." Israel is "sick of the corruption", another protester said. "We need

to send Bibi home," she said.

A same rally had been held last Saturday in Tel Aviv, where hundreds of demonstrators urged Netanyahu to leave office.

Protesters chanted "Bibi go home," and waved signs reading: "Netanyahu, let go already," "Netanyahu, you should quit," and "The corrupt should go home."

"What you see here is absurd. We have a man who is charged with three major crimes. And he still believes he wants to be [a] prime minister. I mean this is crazy," a protester said. Netanyahu's political opponents and

demonstrators have moved to capitalize on the indictment on charges relating to corruption, bribery and breach of trust against him, hoping to strip the weakened 70-year-old leader of power.

Netanyahu has vowed to stay in office while he fights the criminal charges, which include bribery, fraud, and breach of trust in one case, and additional fraud and breach of trust charges in another two cases.

Last Saturday, Benny Gantz, the leader of center-left Blue and White political alliance and Netanyahu's main challenger

in the two elections this year, called on the Israeli premier to step down, but still offered to form a coalition administration with his Likud political party if there are any chances.

"In light of the circumstances, I call to form a unity administration that is as broad as possible under my leadership," Gantz said at a press conference in Tel Aviv.

He added, "I will be prime minister for the first two years while Netanyahu can work on his legal issues. If he is acquitted, he can come back and be prime minister."

(Source: agencies)

Iraq protesters burn Hakim shrine entrance in holy city

➔ Abdul Mahdi's resignation announcement came hours after a call from Iraq's top Shia Muslim cleric for the government to step down to end the unrest.

Abdul Mahdi's government, including himself, will stay on in a caretaker capacity following the lawmakers' vote until a new government can be chosen, the prime minister said later on Saturday in a televised cabinet meeting.

(Source: agencies)

Will Riyadh end its invasion into Yemen?

➔

The Saudis slowly seized the opportunity to get out of the Yemen deadlock. In the meanwhile, Muscat became a place for two sides involved in the war to reach an agreement.

■ **Muscat, a host with a positive and effective role**

Officials from both Yemen and Saudi Arabia told the Associated Press on November 13 that both sides are holding indirect, behind-the-scenes talks to end the devastating five-year war in Yemen.

The news agency said the negotiations are taking place with Oman, a Persian Gulf Arab country that borders both Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as mediator.

It said Oman has positioned itself as a quiet mediator in the past and in a possible sign the back-channel talks could be stepping up, Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman arrived in Muscat on November 11.

It said the current talks focus on interim goals, such as re-opening Yemen's main international airport in Sanaa, shut down by the Saudi-led coalition in 2016. According to AP, also under discussion is a buffer zone along the Yemen-Saudi border in areas under Houthi control.

However, the best solution for Saudi Arabia and the UAE is to take a serious step to stop the war. The release of 200 Yemeni captives by Saudi Arabia and the arrival of 128 of them is a promising move by Riyadh, which, if continued, can prepare the ground for ending war and easing Yemenis' pain.

Hadi a spent force as Saudis directly engage Houthis

➔ Hadi's deputy prime minister Abdulaziz Gubari warned Saudi Arabia last month not to sign any bilateral agreement with the Houthis.

Abdulghani Rageh, a pro-Hadi military leader in Ta'izz, said the talks between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis have sidelined the former Yemeni president.

"The Houthis are the winners of the talks," he said, claiming that battles have calmed down on the Saudi borders but not on local fronts.

Mohammed Ali told MEE that Saudi Arabia prioritizes its safety and economy over all other issues.

Hadi and his regime, he said, are "only helpless followers of Saudi Arabia" and Riyadh prefers to discuss any solution with the Houthis instead of its "weak" proxies.

Saudi Arabia launched its military aggression against Yemen in 2015 in an attempt to reinstate Hadi and eliminate the Houthis. With those objectives appearing more elusive than ever, the only way for Hadi seems to also engage the Houthis.

However, Hadi and his high-ranking associates live outside Yemen and "none of them care about Yemenis," Ali said.

"I hope to see Yemenis inside Yemen holding talks with the Houthis and reaching reconciliation internally. Solutions will come from within Yemen, not from another country," he added.

(Source: Press TV)

UAE's military push likely to anger Western arms suppliers

The United Arab Emirates has reportedly launched a program to build military weapons on its own, in a move likely to frustrate the country's traditional arms suppliers.

The UAE has established a government-owned conglomerate to spearhead development of advanced weapons for its military, Reuters reported.

The new entity, known as EDGE, will take more than 25 state-owned companies under its umbrella, employing a combined workforce of approximately 12,000 with annual revenues topping \$5 billion, it said.

Those ambitions were put on display at Dubai Airshow in Dubai last month, where the country's military handed an EDGE subsidiary a \$1 billion contract for guided missiles.

According to Reuters, the UAE's defense industry now manufactures drones and small ammunition under the EDGE.

Observers believe the program is likely to anger long-time arms suppliers, chiefly the United States, which have traditionally looked at the oil-rich Arab states as a source of lucrative ventures.

The UAE has recently cultivated military relations with China and Russia and bought some weapons from them.

(Source: Press TV)

ISIL detainee arrested on her return to Ireland from Turkey

An Irish citizen aligned to ISIL deported from Turkey along with her two-year-old daughter was arrested Sunday on her return to Dublin on suspicion of terrorist offences, Irish police said.

Ireland agreed to repatriate Lisa Smith, 38, and her two-year-old daughter after Ankara began deporting foreign citizens linked to Islamic State earlier this month.

Turkey says it has captured 287 militants in northeast Syria, where Turkish troops launched an offensive against the Kurdish YPG militia last month, and has hundreds more jihadist suspects in detention. Dublin has said for months that it has a responsibility to bring Smith back to Ireland and that its main concern was for the safe repatriation of her daughter.

The girl was now being cared for by relatives, police said.

(Source: Daily Star)

Monaco vs. PSG postponed due to bad weather

Sunday's Ligue 1 game between Monaco and Paris St Germain has been postponed because of bad weather.

"Following a decision by the Monaco authorities, the game between Monaco and Paris St Germain, scheduled today at 2100 (2000GMT), is cancelled and will be played at a later date because of the weather conditions," Monaco said in a statement.

Torrential rain and the risk of flooding prompted local authorities to issue a red warning in the region.

PSG lead the standings with 33 points from 14 games with Monaco in 14th place on 18 points.

(Source: Reuters)

Watford sack manager Flores after 85 days in charge

Watford sacked manager Quique Sanchez Flores on Sunday less than three months into his reign following a poor run of results in which the club won only one of their 10 league matches with the Spaniard in charge, the Premier League club said.

Flores, who was reappointed in September for a second spell in charge, is the second manager to be sacked by the club this season after they let go of Javi Gracia four games into the campaign.

"With regret, Watford Football Club confirms the departure of Head Coach Quique Sanchez Flores," the club, who are bottom of the standings with eight points from 14 games, said in a statement.

The club have not announced a replacement but British media reported that former Brighton & Hove Albion manager Chris Hughton was a candidate.

Flores was previously in charge of the club during the 2015-16 season, after which he was surprisingly sacked. He took over from Gracia after his fellow Spaniard won only one point in the first four matches of the season.

Under Flores, Watford's solitary league win came against promoted Norwich City last month while they beat Championship side Swansea City in the League Cup before being eliminated in the fourth round by Everton.

In the league, he oversaw five defeats — including an 8-0 humbling by champions Manchester City — and his last game in charge was Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Southampton where they let their lead slip in the final 12 minutes.

"Quique is a man of great integrity and it was clear how much he wanted to have a positive impact, but ultimately results have dictated our decision," Watford chairman and CEO Scott Duxbury said.

(Source: Mirror)

Harden scores 60 points in Rockets win

James Harden scored 60 points for the fourth time in his career during the Houston Rockets' 158-111 NBA win over the Atlanta Hawks.

He played just 31 minutes of the game and fell one point shy of his career-high points haul of 61 points, which he has achieved twice.

Only Wilt Chamberlain (32) and Kobe Bryant (six) have more 60-point hauls and Harden is tied with Michael Jordan.

"That's a great list right there," said Harden, who also had eight assists.

"Those guys are something that I'm trying to get to. Hopefully when it is all said and done, I can be mentioned in that group forever."

Harden is also the fourth player to score 50 or more points on 20 occasions, after Chamberlain (118), Jordan (31) and Bryant (25).

Against the Hawks, he scored 13 points in the first quarter, 18 in the second and 29 in the third.

(Source: BBC)

Ronaldo ends goal drought as Juventus slip up vs. Sassuolo

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his first Juventus goal since October to rescue a 2-2 Serie A draw against Sassuolo in Turin, as the Italian champions dropped points for only third time this season.

Leonardo Bonucci fired Juve into the lead in the first half, but an exquisite finish from Sassuolo winger Jeremie Boga levelled the scores just three minutes later before Francesco Caputo put the visitors in front after the break following a defensive mix-up and an error by keeper Gianluigi Buffon.

Ronaldo netted from the penalty spot midway through the second half to end his four-match goal drought in all competitions and deny Sassuolo their first ever win in this fixture.

(Source: Soccernet)

Guardiola suffering from his worst ever start to a season

Pep Guardiola is experiencing the worst start to a league season in his entire coaching career.

His Manchester City side could only manage a 2-2 draw away at Newcastle United on Saturday lunchtime as they slipped 11 points behind Premier League leaders Liverpool, following the Reds' 2-1 win over Brighton at Anfield.

"I'm not thinking about the game we have to win. I know that we can't lose any," Guardiola said.

City's points total of 29 after 14 matches is the lowest of any Guardiola team in history, while the number of losses (three) is also the most of his career at this stage of the season.

"I'm not a magician. I don't know if we can catch Liverpool," Guardiola said after defeat at Anfield in November.

Injuries to the likes of Aymeric Laporte and Oleksandr Zinchenko have left City light at the back.

Fernandinho is having to cover at centre-back, and Guardiola's team have conceded 16 goals in 14 games so far in the Premier League.

This time last season, they'd conceded just six goals, keeping clean sheets in eight out of their opening 14 games.

This is despite having scored the most goals (39), had the most possession (64 percent on average) and created the most chances (224) in the league this campaign.

"They scored from their two shots," Guardiola said after the draw with Newcastle.

(Source: Marca)

Portugal, France and Germany in Euro 2020 super group

Defending champions Portugal and the last two world champions, France and Germany, were thrown together in what German coach Joachim Loew described as the group of death following a lop-sided and complicated Euro 2020 draw on Saturday.

England were drawn against Croatia in a repeat of last year's World Cup semi-final while other favorites were given a much easier ride in the 24-team tournament which will be played in 12 different countries across the region.

The clear pick of the six first round pools was Group F, to be played in Munich and Budapest, which pitted France, Portugal and Germany, plus the winners of either playoff A or D.

However, the sting was slightly taken away by the format which allows four of the six third-placed teams to qualify for the round of 16.

UEFA's decision to rank the teams according to their result in the qualifiers, combined with Portugal's performance in their group, meant they ended up among the third seeds while France were one of the second seeds.

"This is a group of death," said Loew whose side will play all three games at home under competition rules. "The expectations will be quite high. For our young team, this will be huge challenge but also a big motivation."

England and Croatia, who have met in the Nations League since Croatia's 2-1 win in Moscow last year, will be joined in Group D by the Czech Republic and the winners of playoff C — either Scotland, Norway, Serbia or Israel.

■ Easier match

The Group D winners will face the runners-



up from Germany's group in the round of 16 while the second-placed team will travel to Copenhagen to meet the Group E runners-up — potentially an easier match.

The Group will be played in London — host for the semi-finals and final — and Glasgow.

Other favorites were given a much easier-looking ride.

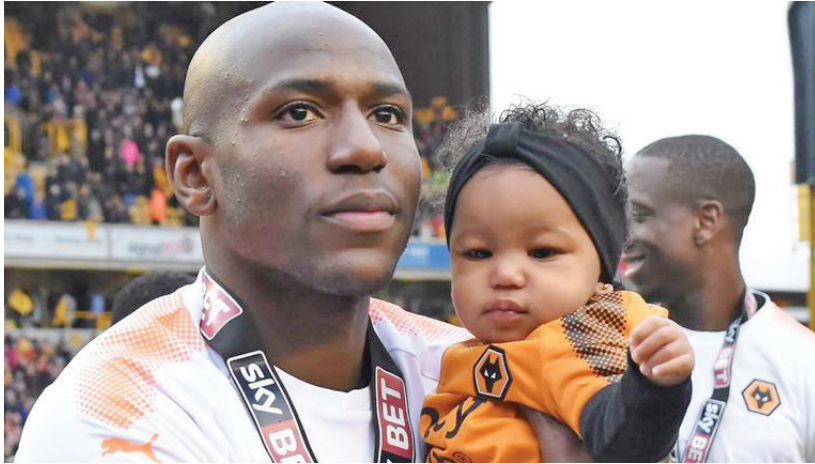
Italy, who won all 10 qualifying games as they bounced back from failing to make the last World Cup, will face Turkey, Wales and

Switzerland in Group A, in Rome and Baku.

"We have a slight advantage by playing at home. Maybe some will think we are favorites but we need to confirm everything on the pitch, as always," Italy coach Roberto Mancini said.

Euro 2008 and 2012 champions Spain, who will jointly host Group E in Bilbao with Dublin, play Sweden, Poland and playoff winner B — either Bosnia, Slovakia, Ireland or Northern Ireland.

Football star Benik Afobe 'heartbroken' after death of two-year-old daughter



Footballer Benik Afobe says he is "heartbroken" after the death of his two-year-old daughter.

The striker, who plays for Championship club Bristol City on loan from Stoke, announced his daughter Amora had died on Friday evening after "unexpectedly developing a severe infection".

A statement issued by his family said: "It is with an extremely heavy heart that the Afobe family have today confirmed the devastating news that their first child, their beloved daughter Amora, 2, passed away late on Friday evening.

"Amora was taken to hospital for treatment after unexpectedly developing a severe infection. "Unfortunately she then suffered a number of serious complications and despite doctors doing absolutely everything they possibly could, Amora passed away peacefully with the love of her family by her side.

"The entire family have been left totally devastated and heartbroken, and would like to ask that their privacy is respected at this incredibly difficult time."

West Ham star and former England player Jack Wilshire, who Afobe has described as his "best mate in football", posted a heartfelt message as he described Amora's "infectious smile".

He wrote: "Benik, my brother, my words will never mean enough to express how deeply sorry I am for your loss, and I know that no words will heal the pain in your hearts right now, just know I am here for you."

He added: "Amora infectious smile will live

on in our hearts forever. I love you my friend stay strong."

Bristol City said Afobe's teammates were informed of the news about Amora's death after their 5-2 win over Huddersfield Town on Saturday.

Head Coach Lee Johnson said: "I'd like to dedicate that win to the big man and his family - much love to you all."

Afobe's former club Wolverhampton Wanderers posted a tribute on Twitter, saying: "Our hearts break for Benik Afobe and his family following the tragic news of his daughter's passing this weekend. "The Wolves family are with you, Benik."

Stoke City, who signed former Arsenal player Afobe from Wolves for £12m in January, also posted a tribute, saying: "We'll be with you, Benik."

Afobe, 26, was expected to miss the rest of the season after suffering a cruciate ligament injury in September following what his coach called a "freak accident" in training.

The former England youth player, who has represented the Democratic Republic of the Congo at full international level, began his career at Arsenal but did not make a competitive appearance for the club.

He had several loan spells at other clubs including Huddersfield Town, Reading, Bolton Wanderers, Millwall, Sheffield Wednesday and Milton Keynes Dons before signing for Wolves in 2015 for a reported £2m.

(Source: Sky Sports)

Lewis Hamilton ends sixth title year in winning style



Lewis Hamilton claimed one of the most dominant victories of his glittering sixth title-winning season at the Abu Dhabi GP to sign off from F1 2019 in ultimate style.

The Briton matched his personal-best tally of 11 wins in one year - and set a new points record for a season - with an immaculate performance under the lights of the Yas Marina in which he won by 17 seconds from Max Verstappen.

Verstappen capped his own fine season with a second place after winning a duel with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Leclerc overtook the Dutchman on the first lap, but Verstappen's ability to run longer on his tyres through the first stint proved key and he was able to re-pass the Ferrari on track in a bold but brilliant overtake.

But Leclerc's third place is only provisional owing to a post-race investigation for an alleged fuel discrepancy on his Ferrari.

On the track, the Ferrari just held off Valtteri Bottas as the Mercedes driver underlined the world champions' pace by racing strongly from the back of the grid.

Sebastian Vettel also made a late move on Alex Albon for fifth place, but it proved a disappointing race to cap a difficult season for the four-time world champion.

Sergio Perez, meanwhile, produced one of the drives of the day to scythe through the midfield pack in the closing stages, pip-

ping McLaren's Lando Norris to seventh on the final lap of the season.

Lewis Hamilton has admitted he is flattered by Ferrari's interest, refusing to shut down a move to the Italian giants.

Ferrari have ramped up their pursuit of Hamilton at the season-concluding race in Abu Dhabi by publicly wooing Britain's six-time world champion.

Italian media have reported that Hamilton, who is out of contract with Mercedes at the end of next season, has spoken on two occasions with Ferrari chairman John Elkann this year.

While in a further intriguing twist on Saturday evening, Mercedes boss Toto Wolff — whose own future with Formula One's record-breaking team is also in doubt — revealed he would not stop his £40million-a-year driver from entering into talks with their Italian rivals.

Hamilton will start Sunday's race as the favourite to close out his world championship year with an 11th victory after putting his Mercedes on pole position.

But, in the moments after claiming the 88th pole of his career, the Englishman was asked for his response to Mattia Binotto's comments in which the Ferrari team principal described Hamilton as an "outstanding driver", adding that his potential availability in 2021 could "only make Ferrari happy".

(Source: Reuters)

Messi and Rapinoe expected to take Ballon d'Or honors



At one point he looked like the favorite, but Messi already pipped him to FIFA's The Best title in September.

The 32-year-old top-scored in La Liga last season with 36 goals as Barcelona won the title. He did not have a great Copa America with Argentina, but his genius is undeniable.

"If you give the Ballon d'Or to the best player of this generation then you should give it always to Lionel Messi. That's how it is," admitted Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp.

"But if you give it to the best player of last season, then it was Virgil van Dijk. I don't know exactly how it will work but

that is how I see it."

The value of individual honors in football is debatable, and the timing unsatisfactory, coming midway through the European club season.

Yet surely nobody could suggest Rapinoe would not be a deserving winner of just the second women's Ballon d'Or, an award voted for by a panel of 48 journalists.

Norway's Ada Hegerberg won it in 2018 but will not retain her title after missing the World Cup.

Among the stars of that tournament to be nominated are England's Lucy Bronze, Netherlands striker Vivianne Miedema, Australia's Sam Kerr and the USA trio of Alex Morgan, Rose Lavelle and Tobin Heath.

However Rapinoe, the 34-year-old feminist icon and outspoken critic of US President Donald Trump, should add this honor to those of Golden Boot winner for top scorer and Golden Ball for best player at the World Cup.

Even her supposed rivals seem to be rooting for her.

"She does lots of things off the pitch, but I think she is the favorite to win the Ballon d'Or mainly down to her performances during the World Cup," Bronze told France Football.

(Source: Eurosport)

Iran win two golds at Karate1 Premier League

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Amir d e s k Mehdi-zadeh and Sajad Ganjzadeh claimed two gold medals at the at the Karate 1-Premier League in Madrid, Spain on Sunday.

The male kumite -67 Kg final saw Mehdi-zadeh tie 0-0 against Ozer Omer Abdurrahim from Turkey but the Iranian fighter was awarded the victory.

Ganjzadeh beat Jacquet Dnylson from France 4-0 at the male kumite +84kg.

Earlier on the day, Iranian karate athletes Hamideh Abbasali and Salah Abazari had won two bronze medals in the competition.

Abbasali had defeated Saito Ayaka from Japan at the female kumite +68 Kg bronze medal match.

In the male kumite +84 Kg, Abazari defeated his countryman Mahdi Ashouri Garmjani to win a bronze medal.

A total of 737 karate athletes from 89 countries took part at the Karate 1-Premier League in Madrid, Spain.

The Karate1-Premier League- is the most important league event in the world of Karate. It comprises of a number of the most prominent Karate competitions and endeavors to bring together the best Karate athletes in the world in an open championships of unprecedented scale and quality.

Initiated in 2011 with two tournaments held in Paris and Istanbul, the Karate1-Premier League- has made exponential progress in terms of magnitude and status of the tournaments as well as the number of participants and countries represented.



IPC President Parsons congratulates Iran on Paralympic Day



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President Andrew Parsons congratulated Iran for celebrating 12th National Paralympic Day.

Around 60,000 people with disabilities attended the day celebrated by the Iran National Paralympic Committee in 31 cities between November 7 and 13. "Congratulations on Paralympic Day but I unfortunately cannot be with you. I wish you the best for this event. Iran is a powerhouse country in Paralympic Movement. It's very incredible to see what you're doing in many different sports with so many good athletes. I cannot wait to see you in Tokyo next year. For now, I wish all the best Iran for Paralympic Day 2019," Parsons said in a video message.

Different activities to raise awareness of the Paralympic Movement were held. Workshops were held in schools, universities and at media houses. There were visits arranged to rehabilitation centers and people with disabilities were provided with opportunity to try Para sports.

Iran first celebrated the National Paralympic Day in 2003 and was included in the National Calendar by a Presidential order in 2016, Paralympic.org reported.

The main goals of the National Paralympic Committee are to introduce the Paralympic Movement to the Iranian society, contribute to the inclusion of people with disabilities, change attitudes towards people with disabilities and provide them with social opportunities.

Iran fall short against Japan at IWBF Asia Oceania Championships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's men's team lost to Japan 71-51 at the 2019 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) Asia Oceania Championships in Thai city Pattaya on Sunday.

Reo Fujimoto led Japan with 18 points while Omid Hadiazhar scored 21 points for Iran.

Team Melli will face Australia on Monday.

The IWBF Asia Oceania zone has four spots available for men and three for women at Tokyo 2020, with one spot in each already allocated to Japan as the host nation.

Fourteen men's teams and an event-record eight women's teams will compete

at the competitions, taking place at the Eastern National Sports Centre and are scheduled to conclude on December 7.

In the men's competition, the six top-ranked teams - Australia, China, Iran, Japan, South Korea and Thailand - will play in Division A, which will be a single round-robin to determine first to sixth place in the ranking.

The other eight teams - Afghanistan, Chinese Taipei, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia - are drawn into two pools of four in Division B.

The top two teams in Division B will become the seventh- and eighth-ranked teams in Division A to make up the quarter-final pairings.

Evacuations in Philippines as typhoon cancels SEA Games event

The Philippines has begun evacuating thousands of people, local officials said Sunday, as a powerful typhoon rumbling in from the Pacific forced Southeast Asian Games organizers to cancel or reschedule some events.

Forecasters expect Typhoon Kammuri to make landfall Monday evening or Tuesday morning, packing gusts of 170 kilometres (105 miles) per hour and maximum sustained winds of 140 kph.

The storm entered Philippine territory Saturday evening, shortly before President Rodrigo Duterte and boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao launched the Games with a colorful opening ceremony.

This year's Games in Clark, Manila and Subic, which run through to December 11, are already particularly complex with a record 56 sports across dozens of venues that are in some cases hours apart by car.

Outdoor events in Subic -- on the west coast of the main Philippine island of Luzon in the country's north -- were the first to be affected by Kammuri.

"The windsurfing has been cancelled until we have a more accurate picture of the weather," Ramon Agregado, the organizing committee's head of the Subic cluster of venues, told AFP.

The women's triathlon event was brought forward to Sunday, Agregado said, "so we could take advantage of the



good weather".

Duathlon events scheduled for Tuesday will now take place on Monday.

Agregado said that venues will not be changed, but in the event of bad weather the equipment will be taken down and put back together once the events are rescheduled.

Evacuation centers

Some local government units in central Bicol region urged people to begin leaving their homes on Saturday night.

By Sunday afternoon, more than 3,000 people were in evacuation centers, mostly in schools and gymnasiums in Camarines Norte, the disaster management office of the

province said.

Most of them live in coastal areas and low-lying places where flash floods and landslides are possible due to heavy rains that will be brought by the typhoon.

No mandatory evacuation has been ordered yet, the disaster management office said.

School classes and government offices in some towns will be closed Monday and Tuesday in anticipation of the heavy rains. The Philippines, which last hosted the Games in 2005, are aiming to win the most medals, and history is on their side: seven of the last 11 SEA Games hosts have topped the table, reflecting the tradition of rewriting the sporting programme to suit local strengths.

The hosts got off to a flying start on Sunday, scooping golds at the dancesport competition and triathlon, and topped the table with 17 medals by the afternoon.

Around 8,750 athletes and team officials are expected at this year's 30th edition -- the biggest ever -- and there are some 12,000 volunteers. Organizers hope more than 500 million viewers will tune in on TV.

In an eclectic programme, Olympic sports like swimming and athletics sit side-by-side with regional favorites such as martial arts arnis and wushu, and this year athletes will even battle an obstacle race course in Manila.

(Source: AFP)

Goalball team leave Tehran for 2019 IBSA Goalball Asia/Pacific

IRNA — Iran's men's goalball team traveled to Japan to participate at the 2019 IBSA Goalball Asia/Pacific Championships.

The competition will be held in Chiba, Japan, from December 2 to 11 -- just eight months before the country hosts the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

It will be one of the most important competitions of the year because the winners will qualify for the Paralympics.

Around eight men's and six women's teams will compete as the Japanese public get a taste of goalball.

"We are looking to win the tournament because our team are ready for the event. Unfortunately, we didn't send our women's team since the team had little chance of winning a berth in the competition," head of Iran Sports Federation for the Blind and Partially Sighted Mohammad Reza Mazloumi said.

Shahriari match commissioner of Beach Soccer World Cup final

TASNIM —Paria Shahriari from Iran was chosen as the match commissioner of the 2019 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup final match.

The final will be held between Portugal and Italy.

The competition was held in Luque, Paraguay from November 21 to December 1.

Match commissioners are the official representatives of a governing body at a game and are responsible for ensuring the match is properly organized and runs smoothly.

Shahriari, who is head of Beach Soccer at the Iran Football Association, had also been chosen as match commissioner at the 2018 Summer Youth Olympics for the futsal competitions.

Iranian wrestlers collect two medals from Russia's Alrosa Cup

MNA — Both of the dispatched Iranian freestyle wrestlers to Russia managed to win medals in the 2019 edition of the Alrosa Cup, also known as Moscow Grand Prix.

The Iranian wrestling federation had dispatched two wrestlers namely Ahmad Bazri in 86kg and Mohammad Hossein Mohammadian in 97kg categories.

Bazri settled for a silver after conceding a defeat to Russia's Magomed Eldarovitch Ramazanov in the final bout.

And Mohammadian overpowered Anzor Urishev from the host country to win the bronze medal of the event.

The competition was held on November 29-30 in Olympics weight categories of both freestyle and Greco-Roman disciplines at Moscow's Luzhniki Sports Complex.

All the gold medals of the event, both in freestyle and Greco-Roman, went to Russian wrestlers expect for the 65kg of freestyle which was collected by Azerbaijan's Haji Aliyev.

Guangzhou lift eighth Chinese Super League title

Guangzhou Evergrande won their eighth Chinese Super League (CSL) title on Sunday, defeating Shanghai Shenhua 3-0 on the final day of the 2019 season to reclaim the crown they lost last year.

With the championship going down to the final day of the season, Beijing Guoan needed to defeat Shandong Luneng at home and hope that Cannavaro's side lost to visiting Shanghai Shenhua.



Guoan triumphed 3-2 thanks to a stoppage time goal but Evergrande were comfortable 3-0 winners over struggling Shenhua.

Winger Wei Shihao made it 1-0 for Guangzhou moments before the break when he stabbed in from close range.

Korea Republic international Park Ji-Soo made it 2-0 on 55 minutes and celebrated by running over to head coach Fabio Cannavaro, embracing and pointing at the Italian.

Brazil-born Chinese international Elkeson clipped in the third. Evergrande topped the final CSL table with 72 points, ahead of Guoan with 70. SIPG were third on 66.

(Source: AFP)

Cuban wrestling great Gustavo Rolle Fernandez passes away

Cuban wrestling great Gustavo ROLLE FERNANDEZ, an Honorary Member of the United World Wrestling Hall of Fame, passed away at the age of 78.

Rolle devoted much of his life to the development of wrestling in Cuba.

After Rolle's competitive wrestling career was cut short by injury, he served as head coach of Cuba's freestyle wrestling national team from 1965 until 1982. He then took over as President of the Cuban Wrestling Federation, a position he held until 2008.

Rolle served as Director of National High Performance (1990-1995), President of the Pan American Wrestling Committee (1990-1995) and UWW Bureau Member & Head of Science & Technical Department (1995-2012). He was appointed as UWW Honorary Bureau Member in 2014.

He is the creator of the Gramma y Cerro Pelado Tournament, an annual international wrestling event held in Havana, Cuba.

(Source: UWW)

AFC celebrates Asia's top performers

Asia's stars from on and off the pitch will be honored by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on a glittering night at the iconic Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday.

The AFC Annual Awards Hong Kong 2019 will be a night to remember after a momentous year for Asian football, following the successful staging of the biggest-ever AFC Asian Cup in the UAE, the Continent's ultimate club competition, the AFC Champions League, alongside the AFC Cup and the pilot FIFA/AFC Women's Club Championship as well as other age group competitions.

Leading the Continent's outstanding

achievements in 2019 are China PR's Li Ying, Indian defender Ashalata Devi Loitongbam and Japan's captain Saki Kumagai, who will be vying for top honors in the AFC Player of the Year -- Women's category.

Meanwhile, Ali Reza Beiranvand from Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan's Tomoaki Makino and Akram Afif of Qatar are the frontrunners to clinch the AFC Player of the Year award in the Men's category.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, the AFC President, said: "Asia celebrates another year of tremendous achievements -- on and off the field -- where our competitions reached new levels and continued to engage with fans not only in Asia but also

across the world.

"And tomorrow night (Monday), we salute the efforts of our players, coaches and Member Associations, who have displayed exemplary character and attitude through their performances on the pitch and through activities and programmes aimed at promoting and developing football.

"Asia's achievements are worthy of such an occasion and together, we will celebrate and honor the winners at the AFC Annual Awards."

The AFC Futsal Player of the Year and AFC Coach of the Year (Men & Women) will also be awarded as will the AFC Member Association of the Year and AFC Presi-

dent Recognition Awards for Grassroots Football in the Inspiring, Developing and Aspiring categories.

The AFC President added: "I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our wonderful hosts -- The Hong Kong Football Association Ltd. -- for their hospitality and hard work of staging a significant night for all the winners and our guests."

The following award categories will be announced at the gala event and presented at another special event:

AFC Youth Player of the Year (Women)
AFC Youth Player of the Year (Men)

AFC Asian International Player of the Year
(Source: the-afc)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Mohammad Shojaeian
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737



Tehrantimes79



Tehrantimesdaily

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Enmity produces rancor and destruction.

Imam Ali (AS)

Culture minister asks for continuation of artists' tax exemption

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi has asked the government not to eliminate the tax exemption for artists and cultural activities.



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi in an undated photo. (Tasnim/Masud Shahrestani)

In letters sent to President Hassan Rouhani, First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs on Saturday, Salehi asked for a continuation of the tax exemption for those people engaged in cultural and artistic activities.

The appeal was made in response to some reports that recently announced the government's plan to eliminate the tax exemption.

Base on Article 139, Section L of Iran's tax law, all publishing, press, Quranic, cultural and artistic activities being performed under the authorization of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance have been exempted from paying the tax.

"You know well that artistic and cultural activities in the country are not essentially moneymaking and profitable," Salehi wrote in the letters, pointing out that the culture ministry has always done its best to support these cultural enterprises.

In posts and statements published on social networks and Persian news agencies, many Iranian artists, cultural organizations and experts have warned against the elimination of the tax exemption for artists and cultural activities.

They emphasized that by the elimination of the tax exemption, artists and others working in the cultural fields would be squeezed by the consequent higher living expenses more than ever.

Cinéma Vérité announces international lineup

A R T **TEHRAN** — A lineup of 24 movies from 21 countries will compete in the various categories of the international competition of the 13th Cinéma Vérité, Iran's major documentary film festival, the organizers announced on Sunday.



A scene from Dutch filmmaker Ton van Zantvoort's documentary "Sheep Hero".

Eight films, including "Kabul, City in the Wind" by Abuzar Amini from Afghanistan, "Ringside" by Andre Hormann from Germany, "Sheep Hero" by Ton van Zantvoort from the Netherlands and "The Kingmaker" by Lauren Greenfield from the U.S., will compete in the full-length films section.

Eight mid-length documentaries, including "Spoon" by Laila Pakalnina from Latvia, "Symphony of the Ursus Factory" by Jasmina Wojcik from Poland, "My Country Till I Return" co-directed by Erdal Hos and Nuran Ozkan from Turkey and "Scars" by Didier Cros from France will go on screen.

The short films competition also features eight documentaries. Among the films are "Pain Is Mine" by Farshid Akhlaqi from Australia, "Women of the Gulag" by Marianna Yarovskaya from Russia, "Thursday Fields" by Harry Zernike from the U.S. and "Dandelion Mum" by Barbra Hollan from Norway.

The Documentary and Experimental Film Center is the organizer of the Cinéma Vérité festival, which will take place at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex from December 9 to 16.

UNESCO to commemorate Farabi, Attar in 2020, 2021

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — UNESCO **d e s k** will commemorate Iranian philosopher Abu Nasr Farabi and Persian mystic and poet Farid ud-Din Mohammad ibn Ebrahim Attar in 2020 and 2021.

The organization has registered Farabi's 1150th birthday and Attar's 800th death anniversary on its 2020 and 2021 calendars of events respectively, Iranian National Commission for UNESCO director Hojjatollah Ayyubi announced in a press release on Sunday.

"Countries can propose the birth and death anniversaries of their eminent luminaries to UNESCO in order to hold commemoration programs," he said.

Ayyubi added that a variety of programs will be arranged to commemorate the luminaries.

Abu Nasr Farabi was regarded in the Arab world as the greatest philosophical authority after Aristotle.

Attar is mostly known for the Mantiq at-Tayr (The Conference of the Birds), an allegorical poem describing the quest of the birds for the mythical Simorgh, or Phoenix, whom they wish to make their king.

His Elahi-nameh and the Mosibat-nameh ("Book of Affliction") both are mystical allegories similar in structure and form to the Mantiq at-Tayr.



Tomb of Persian poet Attar, Neyshabur.

Audiences like "When the Moon Was Full" at Tallinn Black Nights

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Narges Abyar's acclaimed drama "When the Moon Was Full" received the audience award at the 23rd Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, which is underway in the Estonian capital, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The film tells the story of a woman from Tehran who marries a man from an Iranian province near the border of Pakistan. Soon after, she discovers that her new brother-in-law is a religious extremist trying to recruit her husband for his bloody cause.

"Kontora" by Anshul Chauhan from Japan won the grand prize of the festival and Jun Robles Jana from the Philippines was named best director for his movie "Kalel, 15".

The best actress award went to Alina Serban from Germany for her role in "Gypsy Queen" by Hüseyin Tabak, while Cavan Clerkin from Britain was crowned best actor for his role in "Muscle" by Gerard Johnson.

Eight more Iranian films, including "Dance with Me" by Sorsuh Sehat, "The Warden" by Nima Javidi and "Just 6.5" by Saeid Rustai, were also screened in various sections of the Tallinn festival, which will come to an end today.

"Magralen" wins Golden Knight Award at Malta Intl. Short Film Festival



A scene from "Magralen" by Maryam Zarei.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian **d e s k** filmmaker Maryam Zarei's short "Magralen" has won one of the five Golden Knight Awards at the Malta International Short Film Festival.

"Magralen" features a family of four living in a wrecking yard. Nima and four-year-old Tara, suffering from vision loss, spend time playing around the yard—especially in an old car they had created for themselves.

The closing ceremony of the one-day festival was held in Valletta, the capital of the Southern European country of Malta

on November 30.

Other winners of the Golden Night Awards are "The Bind" by Marie-Elena Dyche from the UK, "Trap" by Kahra Scott-James from New Zealand, "Abe's Story" by Adam Stewart from Ireland and "New York Rhapsody" by Irwin Suba from the U.S.

One of the longest-running film festivals of its kind worldwide, the Malta International Short Film Festival is open to non-professional productions, film school students and commercial productions. It is held annually during the last week of November.

Iranian films to compete in Chennai festival



This combination photo shows the posters of the films "Zero Floor", "The Warden", and "Just 6.5".

A R T **TEHRAN** — A lineup **d e s k** of three Iranian films will be competing in the 17th Chennai International Film Festival, which will take place in the Indian city from December 12 to 19, the organizers have announced.

"Just 6.5" by Saeid Rustai, "The Warden" by Nima Javidi and "Zero Floor" by Ebrahim Ebrahimi will be screened in the official section of the festival.

"Just 6.5" is about a police squad under the leadership of Samad who has been assigned to arrest Nasser

Khakzad, a major drug trafficker in Tehran.

"The Warden" tells the story of an Iranian prison warden who is assigned to transfer prisoners to a new building during the 1960s.

In the movie "Zero Floor" Vahid comes to Tehran to stop an operation from being performed on his four-year-old son Soheil but he finds out he has passed away during surgery.

The final list of the official selection of the festival will be announced in the near future.

Brazil's president accuses actor DiCaprio of financing Amazon fires, offers no evidence

SAO PAULO (Reuters) — Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro claimed on Friday that Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio financed fires being set in the Amazon rainforest, without presenting any evidence, the right-wing leader's latest broadside in casting blame over forest fires that have generated international concern.

Bolsonaro appeared to be commenting on social media postings claiming that the environmental organization the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) had paid for images taken by volunteer firefighters that it then supposedly used to solicit donations, including a \$500,000 contribution from DiCaprio.

The WWF has denied receiving a donation from DiCaprio or obtaining photos from the firefighters.

"This Leonardo DiCaprio is a cool guy, right? Giving money to torch the Amazon," Bolsonaro said on Friday during brief remarks in front of the presidential residence. DiCaprio denied having donated to the WWF. In a statement, the actor lauded "the people of Brazil working to save their natural and cultural heritage." But, he said, "While worthy of support, we did not fund the organizations targeted."

DiCaprio has been an outspoken advocate on behalf of combating climate change, speaking frequently about environmental issues including the Amazon forest fires. His Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, which is focused on projects that "protect vulnerable wildlife from extinction," is part of the Earth Alliance.

Four members of the nongovernmental organization



Leonardo DiCaprio attends the premiere of "Once Upon a Time In Hollywood" in Los Angeles, California, U.S., July 22, 2019. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni/File Photo)

Alter do Chão Fire Brigade were arrested on Tuesday with police accusing them of purposefully setting fires in order to document them and drum up more donations. They were released on Thursday on a judge's order.

Politicians and other NGOs fiercely criticized the arrest, saying it was part of a concerted attempt by Bolsonaro's government to harass environmental groups.

Scientists and activists blame land speculators, farmers

and ranchers for setting the fires to clear land for agricultural use, saying that deforesters are being emboldened by Bolsonaro's rhetoric of promoting development and farming over preservation.

The Amazon rainforest is considered a bulwark against global climate change.

Bolsonaro has repeatedly lashed out at various factions in casting blame for the forest fires.

In a Facebook live post on Aug. 21, he said, "Everything indicates" that NGOs were going to the Amazon to "set fire" to the forest. When asked then if he had evidence to back up his claims, Bolsonaro said he had "no written plan," adding, "that's not how it's done."

One day later he admitted that farmers could be illegally setting the rainforest ablaze, but roughly a month later he attacked the "lying media" for saying that the rainforest was being devastated by the fires.

Bolsonaro talked about DiCaprio on Thursday during a live webcast. The president said the WWF paid the firefighting NGO to take pictures of forest fires in the Amazon.

"So what did the NGO do? What is the easiest thing? Set fire to the forest. Take pictures, make a video," the president said. "(WWF) makes a campaign against Brazil, it contacts Leonardo DiCaprio, he donates \$500,000."

"A part of that went to the people that were setting fires. Leonardo DiCaprio, you are contributing to the fire in the Amazon, that won't do," Bolsonaro said.