



Ayatollah Khamenei says prayer is God's great blessing 2



It is wrong to think Iranians will surrender under economic pressure 3



Sistani condemns killings, kidnappings of protesters 13



Foreign Ministry spokesman Mousavi praises "The Barrage" 16

Shamkhani appeases families of victims of riots



See page 2

Diplomat says BBC Persian is a partner in economic terrorism

TEHRAN — Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad said in a tweet on Thursday that the BBC Persian is a partner in economic terrorism against Iran.

Because of portraying a wrong image of Iran's economic situation and encouraging the people to take out their assets from the country, the BBC Persian has turned into a partner in economic

terrorism, the ambassador noted.

Tehran has repeatedly said that the United States' sanctions against Iran are examples of economic terrorism.

President Hassan Rouhani said in June that the U.S. sanctions against Iran constitute examples of "crime against humanity and economic terrorism" because they have targeted ordinary people's "lives and needs". →3

German FM's anti-Iran remarks irresponsible, unfair: spokesman

TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi on Thursday censured German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass's remarks about the recent protests in Iran, calling his statements unfair and irresponsible which are aimed at misleading public opinion about Belin's indifference towards economic terrorism against Tehran.

In response to a question by a lawmaker, Mass on Thursday said Germany condemns what he called "crackdown" on protestors in Iran.

"However, we do not know the exact number of death toll, but it seems that hundreds (of people) have been killed due to crackdown on recent protests," Mass was cited as saying by DW news network. →2

General: Friendship is Iran's message to neighbors

TEHRAN — Brigadier General Ghadir Nezami, head of the international and diplomatic affairs of the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, said on Thursday that "friendship" and "brotherhood" are Iran's message to neighboring countries.

"Iran's message to neighbors, especially to the Muslim ones, has always been friendly and brotherly relations," Nezami told IRNA in Moscow.

Pointing to Iran's Hormuz peace initiative, he said that the regional countries' positive response to the peace plan will help restoration of stability to the region.

At the United Nations summit in New York in late September, Iran officially unveiled the proposal for regional security. The proposal is officially called the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE). →2



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari
Head of the Tehran Times
Politics Desk

The original game in UK has just started !

The British Conservative Party finally won the House of Representatives by winning 364 seats. Many analysts believe that Boris Johnson's victory in the election means solving the riddle of Britain's exit from the EU. Some believe the British prime minister will leave the EU by the end of January 2020 (less than two months later) on his own accord. Essentially one of the reasons why British public opinion favored the Conservative Party and Boris Johnson was their desire for agreement with the European Union. But the key question is, is this equation easily formed?

The answer is no! In the coming weeks, U.S. President Donald Trump is trying to convince Boris Johnson of "disagreement with Europe" and the "hard exit of Britain" from Europe. Trump uses a variety of methods in this regard. It should not be forgotten that Trump is not only strongly opposed to the "soft British exit of Europe", but he also sees it as the destruction of Washington's economic dominance over London in the coming years. However, if Boris Johnson succumbs to Trump and puts a tough exit from the European Union on the agenda, at least half of those who have voted for the Conservative Party will turn away from him and become angry opponents! In this case, Johnson's control of British political and social Equations is impossible.

Even if Boris Johnson puts an agreement with the European Union and a soft exit from the EU, the game won't be over! The effects of Britain's soft exit from Europe, such as declining economic growth, rising unemployment and inflation, and protest movements by Labor, Democratic Liberal Party, Scottish National Party and extremist nationalists will cause Boris Johnson to face many crises over the next year. . In the meantime, radical nationalists in Britain, such as Trump, are in favor of a "tough British exit from the European Union", becoming a tough, uncontrolled social and political force by the Johnson administration.

As can be seen, the game in UK is never over! Although with the defeat of the Labor and Liberal Democrats, another option called "Repeat New Referendum on EU Exit" has been removed from British political equations, the choice of either "soft exit" or "hard exit" option "From Europe, there will be costs and consequences for the Boris Johnson government. These costs could lead to the fall of the British government and Johnson becoming the third political victim (after David Cameron and Theresa May).

Abdelmadjid Tebboune elected Algerian president

Former Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected Algeria's new president after a vote the authorities hope will end months of turmoil, but demonstrators who toppled his predecessor Abdelaziz Bouteflika vowed that their movement would not stop.

Tebboune, who served as housing minister under Bouteflika and briefly as premier before falling out with tycoons in the ex-leader's entourage, was announced on Friday as the winner of more than half the vote, making a second round unnecessary.

The official announcement by the country's monitoring election authority, which held a press conference in Algiers on Friday, confirmed Tebboune led Algeria's presidential polls, with around 4.9 millions of the counted votes, ahead of Islamist candidate Abdelkader Bengrina, who won 17.38 percent of the votes (1.4 million of votes)

The authority's figures showed former Prime Minister Ali Benflis in third place with 10.55 percent of the votes (900 000 votes), while former minister of Culture Azzedine Mihoubi came in fourth place, with 7.26 percent of the votes (around 600 000 votes). Abdelaziz Belaid, head of el Moustakbal party, the candidate with the fewest electoral votes, obtained 6.66 percent (near 560 000 votes).

Authorities said 40 percent of voters had taken part in Thursday's election, which state media cast as a high enough turnout to vindicate the decision to hold the poll, in spite of a boycott.

But protesters saw the contest between five officially sanctioned candidates as an illegitimate sham intended to keep the old ruling elite in place. Thousands of demonstrators were expected to take to the streets to protest against the result.

The authorities, including the powerful army,

argue that the only way to move the country forward after demonstrators brought an end to Bouteflika's 20-year rule in April is to elect a successor.

Weekly protests that toppled Bouteflika have not stopped, with demonstrators demanding the entire ruling elite cede power to a new generation, despite no obvious leader emerging to represent them. The protesters refer to themselves simply as "Hirak", or "the movement".

Tebboune's rivals included another former premier, two former ministers and a former member of the ruling party's central committee.

Protesters marched in cities and towns across Algeria throughout Thursday's election, in some places clashing with police, who tried to disperse them with baton charges. Late on Thursday, the election body said some nine million Algerians took part in the election. →13

After election victory, Boris Johnson promises January 31 Brexit

After his sweeping election win, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Britain would leave the European Union on January 31

"We will get Brexit done on time by the 31st of January, no ifs, no buts, no maybes," Johnson told cheering supporters on Friday.

"I will make it my mission to work night and day, flat out to prove that you were right in voting for me this time, and to earn your support in the future.

"And I say to you that in this election your voice has been heard, and about time too.

"Because we politicians have squandered the last three years, three and a half years in squab-

bles - we've even been arguing about arguing, and arguing about the tone of our arguments.

"Leaving the European Union as one United Kingdom, taking back control of our laws, borders, money, our trade, immigration system, delivering on the democratic mandate of the people."

Official results from Thursday's general election, a snap poll called by Johnson to break months of political deadlock over Brexit, showed his Conservatives had won 364 of the 650 seats up for grabs in the House of Commons as of Friday morning, with results in one seat still to be declared.

Turnout was about 67 percent, approximately

the same level as the previous general election in 2017.

The results marked a decisive shift in British politics. It was the Conservatives' best election performance since 1987 under Margaret Thatcher, and Labor's worst defeat since 1935, when Clement Attlee ran the party.

■ Brexit: What next?

If Parliament passes Johnson's existing withdrawal agreement by his January 31 Brexit deadline, it will usher in a potentially grueling transition period during which the UK and EU are expected to try and hammer out a deal on their future relationship. →13



Beiranvand selling Portugal match worn shirt to raise cash for charity

TEHRAN — Iran national football team goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand has auctioned off his World Cup match-worn shirt to raise funds for earthquake victims.

Flash floods displaced thousands and prompted chaos and panic in the western Lorestan Province in March.

During the floods, 200 bridges and 400 kilometers of roads were 100 percent destroyed and hundreds of villages were submerged by flood water. →15



ARTICLE

Hana Saada
Journalist from Algeria

Ex-PM Tebboune wins race to succeed deposed Bouteflika

After two decades of Abdelaziz Bouteflika rule, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, a former prime minister, has been elected Algeria's new president, after a crucial vote the authorities hope will serve as a way-out to the political deadlock the Algerian nation has been going through since the outbreak of the fierce pro-democracy popular protests in February, toppling his long-time predecessor Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Tebboune, 74, was elected with 58.15% of the vote in the oil-rich North African nation, ahead of his closest rival, former tourism minister and the head of Elbinaa Islamist party, Abdelkader Bengrine, who claimed 17.38% of the vote, followed by former premier and president of Talaie El Houriyet party Ali Benflis with 10.55 percent, and former culture minister and interim Secretary General of the National Democratic Rally party (RND), Azzedine Mihoubi with 7.26 percent, while president of Al-Moustakbel Front party Abdelaziz Belaid came fifth with 6.66 percent, according to the preliminary results announced by the head of the National Independent Electoral Authority, Mohamed Charfi, on Friday.

According to the body's Chairman, Tebboune snatched victory without the need for a second-round runoff, to become the 8th president of the North African nation since gaining independence from France in 1962. In this vein, the Constitutional Council will announce the final results of the presidential election during the period between 16 and 25 December.

Tebboune served briefly as prime minister in 2017 under former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, before being dismissed few months later. He previously served as Minister of Housing from 2001 to 2002 and again from 2012 to 2017.

The voter turnout at the closing of the polling stations reached 41.13 %, announced the election body's Chief. This turnout is lower compares to the nearly 52% turnout in 2014, which approved Bouteflika's final mandate.

"The turnout is satisfying and it will give the new president enough backing to implement his reforms," said Ahmed Mizab, a commentator on state television. →13

Ayatollah Khamenei says prayer is God's great blessing

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a message on Thursday that prayer is God's great blessing which helps humans stay away from sins.

"Among God's great blessings, which no one can count, there are some [blessings] which are clearly remarkable and make thinkers wonder. Prayer is among the most interesting and wonderful blessings," the Leader said in his message to the Muslim prayers (Namaz) conference in Gorgan, Golestan province.

The Leader also said that prayer gives "spirituality" to human interaction.

Shamkhani appeases families of victims of riots

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), on Thursday visited some families in western cities of Tehran province who lost a family member in the mid-November riots.

It was the first official step in line with the policy by the Islamic Republic to appease the victims.



On November 15 the government raised gasoline price in order to moderate the consumption rate, which had reached about 110 million liters. The move prompted protests in a number of cities. The protests were largely peaceful but turned violent when armed riotous elements took advantage of the situation to vandalize public and state property, and attack civilians and security forces alike. Some rioters even tried to put pipelines carrying oil and gas on fire.

Speaking with the families of some of the victims, Shamkhani said more than 85 percent of those killed in Tehran province's cities had not even taken part in the protests.

They were suspiciously targeted and killed by melee weapons and firearms that are not in service in security forces or armed forces, stated Shamkhani, a former defense minister and IRGC Navy chief.

Certainly there was a plot by those opposed to the Islamic Republic system to kill people during the unrest and pin the blame on the police and other security forces, Shamkhani said, according to the Tasnim news agency.

Shamkhani also referred to order by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to compensate those who were killed or sustained damage or injuries during the riots, insisting on the need to pursue the issue promptly.

Shortly after the riots broke out, the Leader tasked the Supreme National Security Council to present a report detailing the reasons behind the riots and deal with the families of victims by upholding Islamic mercy.

Saudi Arabia seeks to ease tensions with Iran: Wall Street Journal

Saudi Arabia is quietly trying to mend fences with Iran and other regional foes as officials in the kingdom have grown more worried about the risks conflict poses to its oil-dependent economy, the Wall Street Journal wrote released in an article on Thursday.

Riyadh's newfound interest in better relations with regional rivals comes as Saudi officials question how much backing it has from the U.S. and other allies. Saudi calculations changed after a cruise-missile and drone strike temporarily disabled a large portion of the country's crude production earlier this year.

"The Sept. 14 attack was a game-changer," one Saudi official said.

Representatives of Saudi Arabia and Iran have directly exchanged messages in recent months and also communicated through intermediaries in Oman, Kuwait and Pakistan, according to Saudi, European and U.S. officials. The main focus of the communications, these officials say, has been easing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

According to Iran's ambassador to Paris, Bahram Qasemi, and other officials, Tehran has floated a peace plan to the Saudis that includes a mutual pledge of nonaggression and cooperation, aimed at securing oil exports following a spate of tanker attacks.

Mine explosions struck Saudi, Emirati and Japanese oil tankers this summer near the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Those attacks, which the U.S. blamed on Iran, were followed by explosions in October on an Iranian tanker that Tehran blamed on an unnamed foreign government. The incidents have driven up the cost of shipping and forced oil buyers to delay loadings.

Riyadh has also engaged in secret talks with Houthi militant group it has been fighting in Yemen for years, according to Arab and U.S. officials. The conflict there has created what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The two sides now have a hotline in an effort to minimize potential clashes, said a Western official.

Houthi forces initiated the push for talks in September with a proposal for a unilateral cease-fire; the Saudis responded with a partial cease-fire of their own.

"Iran doesn't want the continuation of tensions. We are seeking peace," Mr. Ghasemi said in an Oct. 30 interview.

Support has eroded for Saudi Arabia in key world capitals, especially Washington, where lawmakers from both parties want to see Riyadh end the war in Yemen and hold people accountable for the killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi.

Riyadh is facing renewed questions from U.S. lawmakers about its reliability as an ally after a Saudi Air Force trainee killed three American sailors last week at a Florida military base.

General: Friendship is Iran's message to neighbors

I → Foreign Minister Zarif has invited all regional states to join the peace plan 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 to "forge a blueprint for peace, security, stability, and prosperity" in the region.

German foreign minister's anti-Iran remarks irresponsible, unfair: spokesman

I → In reaction to Mass' remarks, Mousavi said, "The world's public opinion has not thus far forgotten how Germany armed the criminal regime of Saddam, the Iraqi former dictator, with chemical weapons which were used against the Iranian and Iraqi citizens in the war between Iran and Iraq."

Saddam Hussein's army gassed Iranian soldiers and civilians and Iraqi Kurds in the 1980s.

Mousavi called on Germany to avoid biased approach toward issue of human rights.

"It is expected that Germany, instead of exercising non-professional biased policies, to resort to preliminary principles of human rights with open eyes and a comprehensive impartial approach," Mousavi remarked.

"Such irresponsible and meddling statements can't hide some European countries' ignorance in fulfilling their commitments under the nuclear deal as well as their indifference toward economic terrorism against Iran adopted by the U.S.," Mousavi went on to say.

The Foreign Ministry official said it is better that Germany and some other European countries look at their own record in handling protests and sale of huge consignments of weapons to the region which have brought misery for the people.

"The German police's move in suppressing demonstrators participating in protests during the G20 summit of heads of state in Hamburg in 2017 and dispatching huge quantities of arms and ammunition to Western Asia by some European countries which has ended in war



crimes, destruction of people's properties and massacre of innocent children and women in the region, including in Yemen, will never be forgotten by the public opinion worldwide."

On November 15, the government increased the gasoline price. However, the legitimate public protests against the price increase were directed at creating chaos through attacks on public and private properties, forcing law enforcement forces to step in to stop saboteurs.

Certain Western officials and foreign-based opposition groups, such as the MKO and monarchists, have been exaggerating about the number of the dead in the protests.

Also on Tuesday, Mousavi reacted to a statement by the newly-appointed High Representative of the European Union for

Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, noting that the EU was making a political and instrumental use of human rights.

He said such approach was intended to isolate sovereign states.

In his statement, which was published on Monday, Borrell claimed that Iran used widespread and disproportionate force against nonviolent protesters.

"Observing the people's rights is a principle and national security necessity for the Islamic Republic of Iran as a democratic establishment," Mousavi stressed at the time.

Also earlier this month, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution urged relevant state bodies to honor Islamic mercy in regard to those who committed violent acts and caused insecurity

in the protests.

The call by the Leader came in response to a request by Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani on how to deal with those who were killed or wounded in the protests as well as those who acted violently.

The Leader said those who were killed without being involved in fueling riots should be considered martyrs and their families should receive stipends.

On others (those who instigated riots or committed violent acts under the influence of anti-Islamic Revolution propaganda), the Leader said each group must be treated in a way that is closer to the Islamic mercy.

Shamkhani had prepared a report according to a verdict by the Leader soon after the eruption of protests to realize the root causes and reasons behind the unrest and providing support for the families of the victims.

The Supreme National Security Council's report had suggested that, within the existing legal framework, those ordinary citizens who were killed during the protests innocently without any destructive role, should be recognized as martyrs and their family should also be subject to services by the Martyrs Foundation.

In the meantime, the report had suggested that those who were killed in the protests in any way should be entitled to receive Diyah (blood money based on Islamic law) and their family members should also be appeased.

Shamkhani also visited the victims' families in the province of Tehran on Thursday to appease them.

Iran calls for equitable geographical representation in CCPCJ

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has called for equitable geographical representation in the coming formal meetings of the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

"We renew our request to the Executive Director to present a comprehensive action plan for equitable geographical representation in the coming formal meetings of the CND [Commission on Narcotic Drugs] and CCPCJ. In this regard, we also appeal FINGOV [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime] to continue on a standing agenda item, on a regular basis, to evaluate the progress made by the Office in improving representation from developing countries," he said in a statement, addressing a joint meeting of the Reconvened Sessions of the 62nd CND and the 28th CCPCJ.

Following is the full text of the statement published on Friday by website of Iran's permanent mission to the UN office in Vienna:

My delegation appreciates Ambassador Bakhet and Ambassador Kupchyna for their co-chairpersonship of the joint meeting of the two Commissions.

We also take note with appreciation of the preparations made by the Secretariat for this joint meeting.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of G-77 and China and would like to put forward the following comments and observations in our national capacity.

We welcome the appointment of H.E. Ms. Ghada Waly, as the new Executive Director of UNODC from Egypt and wish her every success

in advancing the work and visibility of the Office. We would like also to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Fedotov for his exemplary hard work and unique leadership throughout his tenure in the office.

We underscore the prominence and active role of the 'open-ended intergovernmental working group in improving the efficiency of governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime' (FINGOV), and consider it as a valuable apparatus for cultivating prolific consultations and communications between Member States and the Secretariat in matters related to the UNODC.

While stressing the significance of availability of adequate, foreseeable and unwavering funding for UNODC to boost providing technical assistances to developing countries, upon their request, we note with concern the challenges facing UNODC due to the shortfall in general purpose funding and underlining funding trends affecting the Office ability to efficiently and independently uphold core programmatic functions, in particular normative work and research.

We also take note with grave concern the financial challenges facing the INCB and its Secretariat due to shortfall in the regular budget funding affecting the ability of the INCB Secretariat to effectively assist the Board and Member States in ensuring the execution of the drug control treaties. We believe that all necessary administrative and financial arrangements should be put in place to ensure full technical and financial independence of the Borad and enable it to fulfil its treaty-mandated functions effectively. In this context, receiving any voluntary contribution should be strictly

transparent and in line with the INCB mandate.

With regard to the "Draft proposed program plan for 2021 and performance information for 2019 for the UNODC", though thanking the Secretariat for drafting this important document and consulting with the Member States in order to improve the framework and content of it, we are of the view that listing of all legislative mandates may lead to loosing the focus of the program. From our perspective, relevant United Nations Conventions, CND and CCPCJ declarations, resolutions, and decisions are the core mandates of the Office to conduct its normative, substantive, policy support and research work.

We take note of the draft "Consolidated budget for the biennium 2020–2021 for the UNODC" and renew our call for UNODC to consult with the Member States prior to the publication of the draft consolidated budget and provide it in a timely manner in order to facilitate a meaningful engagement of the Member States for elaboration of such documents.

We acknowledge that there is a legitimate and joint demand by the Member States from the Secretariat to fully consult with them before introducing and implementing any new programs and initiatives, at sub-regional, regional and global levels, and also on ongoing and planned activities, based on clear mandates and policy guidance provided by the Governing Bodies and

agreement of the concerned Member States.

We also emphasize the necessity for UNODC to augment effectiveness of its technical assistance programmes and activities, in close consultations with and guidance received from the Member States.

We take note with concern of the information contained in the report of the Executive Director on gender balance and geographical representation within the UNODC and restate our firm position that tangible and effective efforts by the Office are still absent to increase representation of developing countries in the staff composition of the Office.

We renew our request to the Executive Director to present a comprehensive action plan for equitable geographical representation in the coming formal meetings of the CND and CCPCJ. In this regard, we also appeal FINGOV to continue on a standing agenda item, on a regular basis, to evaluate the progress made by the Office in improving representation from developing countries.

Finally, we strongly request the Executive Director to increase his evocative exertions to upsurge the representation of developing countries in the Secretariat, including inter alia through the establishment of a balanced geographical representation team at the Executive Director's office at all levels, to ensure equitable geographical representation, and report on the progress thereon to the Commissions.

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOICE NO. 98004



Hereby Sirjan Jahan Steel Complex announces its intention of selling and exportation of 50.000 Mt of SSP Steel Billets (size; 150 × 150 mm) on basis of FOB shipping point, therefore interested bidders are invited to obtain the tender documents by sending a formal letter of interest to the E-mail addresses below:

SJSKO.SALES@gmail.com or DKMSJSKO@gmail.com

| S No. | Description | Start Time & Date | End Time & Date |
|-------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Obtainment of Tender Documents | 12:00 PM Local Time on December 11, 2019 | 12:00 PM Local Time on December 16, 2019 |
| 2 | Submission of Financial Bid | 12:00 PM Local Time on December 11, 2019 | 12:00 PM Local Time on December 21, 2019 |
| 3 | Opening of the Envelopes | 16:00 PM Local Time on December 22, 2019 | |

Terms & Conditions:

- The tender documents will be sent to the bidders via E-mail.
- All bids should be sent in sealed envelopes.
- Conditional bids shall not be accepted.
- No financial bid shall be accepted later than Saturday, December 21, 2019 (12:00 PM Local Time (Tehran Time)).

For more information please contact us at:

Tel: +982186086357 - +982186085834 - +982186084633 - +983442273806

Cell: +989901212678

Kuwait calls for lift of sanctions on Iran

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Mansour Al-Otaibi, Kuwait's ambassador to the UN, has called for removal of sanctions on Iran.

"We hope existing differences end and leads towards amending the nuclear deal so that we make sure that Iran will not return other program or nuclear arms," Al-Otaibi said in an interview with al Jazeera aired on Friday.

"Kuwait does not want the neighboring Muslim nation of Iran to remain under sanctions or to be isolated," he further said.

"Iran should assure the international community, especially its neighboring countries, that has no intention to produce atomic weapons," he added.

The Kuwaiti envoy further claimed, "There are positive signs which are possibly paving

the ground for resumption of bilateral talks between Iran and the U.S. to reach a joint understanding to amend the nuclear deal."

In a key speech at the United Nations General Assembly late in September, President Hassan Rouhani said Iran's "response to any negotiation under sanctions is in the negative."

U.S. President Donald Trump, who has abandoned the 2015 the nuclear deal and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Iran, has been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran.

"On behalf of my nation and state, I would like to announce that our response to any negotiation under sanctions is in the negative," Rouhani told world leaders and delegates participating at the annual UN conference.

Mousavi to Macron: Iran is an independent nation, we don't need advice

POLITICAL **d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday that his country will not tolerate any interference in its internal affairs, rejecting the French presidents' call for an immediate release of two detainees who are in Iran's custody for security reasons.

Seyed Abbas Mousavi's remarks came in a tweet in reaction to Emmanuel Macron's demand on Tuesday that Iran should release immediately a French detainee and another Iranian-French detainee.

Writing on his official Twitter account, Mousavi said, "France should not forget that Iran enjoys an independent sovereignty. Nei-

ther our government nor our judiciary do not need any recommendation by anybody."

"Interference in Iran's internal affairs is intolerable," Mousavi further underscored.

Macron had called for the immediate release of two French nationals arrested in Iran, Fariba Adelkhah and Roland Marshall.

"On Human Rights Day, I think of Fariba Adelkhah and Roland Marshall, two compatriots jailed in Iran and their families," President Macron tweeted.

He went on to say that their imprisonment cannot be tolerated, adding that they should be released immediately. "I have said this to President Rouhani and I repeat it here."

Cleric criticizes Rouhani admin's negligence in increasing gas price

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Tehran Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani on Friday criticized the Rouhani administration for its mismanagement and negligence in implementing the gas price hike policy.

"The administration's tactlessness in the gasoline issue led to a catastrophe, with bloods spilled and damage done in the country," Movahedi Kermani told worshippers in Tehran.

The Supreme Economic Coordination Council, which its decisions are approved by the president, parliament speaker and judiciary chief, decided to increase petrol prices after many deliberations, including consultations with economic experts. The petrol subsidy reform plan went into force on November 15. The decision was endorsed by the Leader.

Based on the plan, every car owner is authorized to buy 60 liters of gasoline per month at a price of 1,500 toman (35 cents). Any amount beyond that is sold at 3,000 toman.

The price is based on the official rate of 4,200 toman per dollar. In the free market, the dollar is currently around 12,000 toman.



The proceeds from increase in petrol prices are being paid to 60 million citizens, who account for 75 percent of the Iranian population.

Protests erupted in some cities in Iran

against increasing gasoline price. In certain cases, the protests turned violent as some rioters attacked security forces with knives and guns.

Rioters damaged public and private prop-

erty and set banks and state buildings on fire.

The protests lasted just for a few days.

Movahedi Kermani said while increasing the price of gasoline was justified, the way the policy was implemented amounted to complete negligence.

"You decided to increase the price of gasoline, and of course gasoline price should reach its real price but only after thorough calculations, not the way that gentleman said 'I slept through the night and when I woke up in the morning I realized that the price of gasoline had gone up,'" he said.

The cleric was referring to remarks made by President Hassan Rouhani on November 27, when he said he had asked the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) not to inform him of the timing of the decision's implementation. Rouhani's remarks were widely criticized in Iran.

"I hope this is a lie," Movahedi Kermani said. "This is no small matter."

The cleric, like many inside Iran, argued that the administration should have convinced the public before implementing the decision and should have implemented the policy in stages.

IRGC chief: It is wrong to think Iranians will surrender under increasing economic pressure

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned the enemies to put an end to their anti-Iran plots or face consequences.

"We tell you that if you do not abandon (your hostile acts), we will set fire to your interests," Tasnim quoted Major General Hossein Salami as saying on Thursday.

He also warned that Iran will take revenge against any hostile act.

Salami said the enemy is wrong to think it can coerce Iranians to surrender by increasing economic pressure.

The more the pressure, he said, the stronger the people's determination will become to resist the enemy.

U.S. President Donald Trump has adopted a maximum pressure policy against Iran since he walked away from the JCPOA. The policy includes sanctions on Iran's economy, especially its oil exports, and bans on top Iranian figures and organizations. At the same time, the U.S. president has pushed for talks with Tehran.

Iranian leaders have openly rejected the notion of talks with the U.S. as long as its illegal sanctions against Tehran are in place.

Tehran has described the U.S. sanctions as "economic war" and "economic terrorism".



The more the pressure, Salami says, the stronger the people's determination will become to resist the enemy.

It also says sanctions on the central bank will prevent it to buy food and medicine.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said last month that the United States' sanctions and economic war on Iran

have targeted the ordinary people's health and livelihood.

"There was a time when such warfare was used to simply limit the activities of some countries. However, new warfare of the United States and what Trump has called the 'economic war' have targeted the ordinary people's livelihood and health," the chief diplomat lamented.

In response to U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran announced on May 8 — the anniversary of the withdrawal — that its "strategic patience" is over and would gradually reduce its commitments to the deal at 60-day intervals, which were designed as deadlines for Europe to protect Tehran's economic interests under the deal.

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

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

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

Iranian Navy commander invites Qatar to join Indian Ocean drill

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Navy commander has invited the Qatari Navy to join the joint military exercises by the navies of the Indian Ocean littoral states as an observer.

Mohammad Hossein Khanzadi made the proposal in a meeting with his Qatari counterpart in Doha on Wednesday.

"Iran Navy has invited the Qatari Navy to be an observer member during a joint drill which is supposed to be staged in the northern part of the Indian Ocean by mid-March," Khanzadi stated.

The Iranian Navy is currently the president of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) summit.

"Regarding high-level training capacities, the Iranian Navy is ready to share its experiences with the Qatari Navy in line with upgrading Qatari officers' training level," the rear admiral said in the meeting.

The Qatari navy commander, for his part, welcomed as valuable a plan according to which his country's warships can visit Iranian ports for exchanging experiences.

The two commanders further conferred on

renewal of memorandum of understanding between their forces.

The IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.

There are 32 navies at the IONS - 23 members and 9 observers. The member states include Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa,



Tanzania, Australia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Singapore.

Diplomat says BBC Persian is a partner in economic terrorism

1→ "It should not be said that the U.S. has imposed sanctions on us, because they are not sanctions. They are crime against humanity. They could be called sanctions if they targeted some of our sensitive industries, but they are crime against humanity and economic terrorism when they target the people's lives and needs," he said in a cabinet meeting.

Baeidinejad says Ofcom confirms receipt of Iran's complaint

In another tweet on Wednesday, Baeidinejad said that the Office of Communications has confirmed receiving Iran's complaint against the London-based anti-Iran TV channels.

He also noted that complaint against the BBC Persian is simultaneously being pursued through the BBC World Service.

Baeidinejad announced in November that the Iranian embassy in London had filed a complaint against the London-based anti-Iran TV channels for inciting violence in protests over rise in petrol price.

The ambassador said the TV channels, which also include the pro-Pahlavi Manoto TV, incite protestors to resort to violence and also broadcast false reports about rallies against increase in petrol price.

"Our country's embassy in London has filed complaint against Persian language anti-Iran TV channels of Iran International, BBC Persian and Manoto TV to Ofcom, because of the biased distortion of the recent incidents in Iran and also their invitation for the spread of violence," Baeidinejad tweeted.

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

Rioters, who were mainly hooligans, damaged public and private property and put banks and state buildings on fire.

New sanctions to ban humanitarian trade with Iran: U.S. Treasury

The U.S. Treasury Department has stressed that Washington's newly announced sanctions targeting Iran's air and maritime transport industries will lead to the restriction of trade related to humanitarian goods.

"U.S. persons will be prohibited from engaging in transactions involving Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) or E-Sail, including transactions for the sale of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, or medical devices," the Treasury's guidelines on Iran sanctions read.

"In addition, non-U.S. persons that knowingly engage in certain transactions with IRISL or E-Sail, even for the sale to Iran of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, or medical devices, risk exposure to sanctions under additional authorities," it added.

The announcement comes after the Trump administration announced Wednesday that it was targeting IRISL and Iran's major airline, Mahan Air, over baseless allegations of Tehran supporting "terrorists" in the region.

The Wednesday order put IRISL and Mahan under U.S. presidential Executive Order (EO) 13382, which allegedly targets "weapons of mass destruction proliferators".

The Treasury's guidelines on the new sanctions stressed that entities put under EQ 13382 would not be eligible for any humanitarian sanction exceptions.

The statement comes despite Washington's claim that its sanctions do not affect Iran's access to humanitarian goods.

U.S. officials have, nonetheless, signaled on numerous occasions that Washington's sanctions seek to harm Iran's general population in a bid to force Tehran to accept Washington's dictates.

Earlier this year, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Tehran had to listen to Washington "if they want their people to eat".

The new bans mark the latest round of Washington's wide sweeping sanctions against the country after the U.S. government unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions lifted under the deal last year.

Speaking on Thursday, U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook boasted that U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's oil sector have led to more than \$50 billion in revenue losses, have hindered Iran's refined-oil products and have undermined foreign investment.

"Both upstream and downstream investments in Iran's oil and gas sector have

stopped," Hook said.

"Foreign investors have almost entirely pulled out of Iran due to the risks and billions in investment has been lost," he added.

Hook said that the wide sweeping oil sanctions seek to force Iran to negotiate with the U.S., a demand which Iranian officials have firmly rejected as long as Washington fails to uphold the previously negotiated nuclear deal agreement.

U.S.-backed figure claims Iranians 'understand' Trump

Following Washington's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, the U.S. has since adopted a policy of "maximum pressure" against Tehran, coupling sanctions with stepped up regional provocations and military deployments aimed at Iran.

The U.S. has also sought to provoke internal unrest in the country by supporting various destabilizing elements targeting the country, such as the terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) and violent separatist groups.

According to observers, Reza Pahlavi, son of deposed Iranian king Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, is one of the main figureheads being "groomed" by Washington as part of its campaign to destabilize

Iran amid recent foreign-backed riots in Iran.

In recent remarks to the U.S.-based magazine Newsweek, Pahlavi expressed his support for Trump's aggressive policies targeting the Iranian economy and called for stepped-up western intervention in Iran.

He also claimed that the Iranian people "understand and appreciate" the U.S.-imposed sanctions and believe that the Iranian government is to blame for the "maximum pressure" targeting Iran.

Pahlavi's remarks come despite numerous studies indicating that Iranian resentment against Washington has largely increased amid the U.S.'s wide sweeping sanctions.

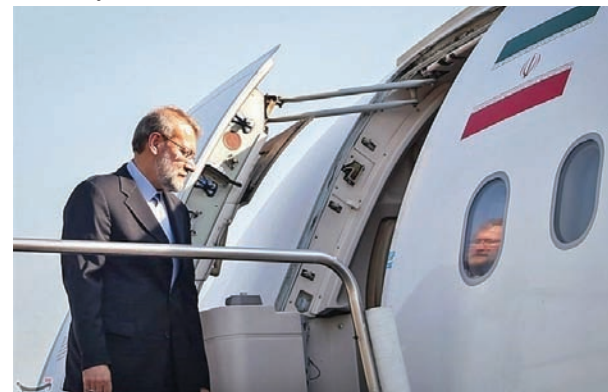
A recent study published by the University of Maryland's Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM) and the Toronto-based IranPolls shows that an overwhelming 86 percent of Iranians despise U.S. policies.

The study's results come despite stepped-up efforts by foreign media outlets to stir unrest in Iran and promote anti-government sentiment amid tightening U.S. sanctions crippling the country's economy.

(Source: Press TV)

Larijani set to visit Turkey on Saturday

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani is scheduled to visit Turkey on Saturday to partake in the 12th Plenary Meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA).



Larijani is set to leave Iran for Turkey on Saturday morning to deliver a speech to the 12th APA Plenary in Antalya, Tasnim reported.

He will be accompanied by a parliamentary delegation.

The APA was established in 2006 at the Seventh Session of the Association of Asian Parliamentary for Peace (AAPP). It has 42 Member Parliaments and 16 observers.

The assembly has been created as a forum to exchange views, ideas and experiences for developing common strategies and promoting peace in Asia and the world, according to its website.

The APA is comprised of the Plenary, the Executive Council, Bureau of the Assembly, the Committees, and the Secretariat.

The Plenary may approve decisions, resolutions and declarations or submit reports on general policies of the APA and on other subjects related to its activities.

Commander: Iran leading world in defense technology

TEHRAN (FNA) — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh highlighted that his country's indigenized production of defensive systems and equipment has turned it a leading manufacturer of the field in the world.

Across many areas, the world's state-of-the-art technology has been indigenized by the agency of Iran's capable defensive technologists, said Brigadier General Hajizadeh on Thursday.

He was addressing a plenary meeting of the commanders and senior officers of the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, an engineering hub.

He added the Islamic Republic's defensive systems and equipment boast a thoroughly indigenous production process, noting that the military hardware's quality has turned the country into one of the world's defense technology leaders.

Had it not been for the Headquarters' now-30-year-old services, sanctions employed against the country would have come to inflict considerable damage on its various industrial, energy, and economic sectors, he said.

"Thanks to the diligence exercised at the Headquarters, not only have many of the oppressive sanctions been rendered ineffective, but also they have been turned into an opportunity for growth and fruition of the country's domestic capability and capacity," the commander hailed.

The Headquarters has been contributing heavily to Iran's industrial and economic spheres, including by playing a significant role in its efforts to exploit its oil wealth.

In February, the country opened the third phase of its Persian Gulf Star Refinery, where the Headquarters has been contributing to construction efforts. The development marked the country's self-sufficiency in gasoline production with a total output standing at more than 100 million liters per day.

Ever since the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, the United States and its allies have been taking the country under indiscriminate economic and trade sanctions.

The U.S. lifted the nuclear-related ones among the bans after conclusion of a multi-national nuclear accord between Iran and world powers in 2015. Last year, however, it unilaterally and illegally left the deal and returned the sanctions.

Tehran has denounced Washington's violations as "economic terrorism," but has vowed to defy the measures, continue to harvest and sell crude, and not join any new negotiation unless the bans are removed.

In September, Brigadier General Hajizadeh said that Iran is among the top 5 countries of the world with superior technology for manufacturing drones.

"Today, 40 years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution we are witnessing huge advancements in different areas and now we are among the top 5 countries of the world which possess the technology for manufacturing advanced Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)," he added.

A week before that, India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to India Ali Chegeni, reiterated that New Delhi is determined to further expand defense and military cooperation with Tehran.

Referring to the historical and friendly relations between Iran and India, Singh welcomed promotion of defense relationships, specially in the fields of defensive science and education, exchange of experiences and information on counterterrorism, piracy and rescue in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, as well as exchange of delegations at various levels.

Late in July, reports emerged that India was impressed by Iran's defensive capabilities which led to the downing of an American spy drone in the Strait of Hormuz.

Downing of the U.S. Global Hawk drone by Iran in the Persian Gulf prompted a rethink within the Indian military establishment, led by the air force, over the acquisition of American-made armed drones on account of their cost and questions over their survivability.

India's three services had planned to buy 30 drones from the United States at a cost of \$6 billion. The plans were for the air force and the army to acquire 10 Predator-B drones each and the navy to buy long-distance surveillance versions.



STOCK MARKET

| | |
|--------|----------|
| TEDPIX | 339386.6 |
| IFX | 4385.67 |

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

| | |
|-----|--------------|
| USD | 42,000 rials |
| EUR | 46,802 rials |
| GBP | 55,516 rials |
| AED | 11,437 rials |

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Brent | \$64.97/b |
| WTI | \$59.70/b |
| OPEC Basket | \$65.38/b |
| Gold | \$1,473.40/oz |
| Silver | \$817.02/oz |
| Platinum | \$944.50/oz |

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

IFX hits record high of 4,392 points

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), hit a record high of 4,392 points in the past Iranian calendar week (ended on Friday), IRNA reported.

According to a report offered by the Public Relations Department of IFB, the index has risen 5.4 percent in the past week and experienced a 94-percent growth since the start of current Iranian calendar year (March 21).

The value of trades at this market was 4.576 trillion rials (about \$108.9 million) during the five working days of the past week (Saturday to Wednesday) with a 4.5-percent weekly rise.

Some 9.639 billion securities were traded through 1.684 deals at Fara Bourse in the past week, which indicates an eight-percent increase in the number of securities and an 11-percent rise in the number of trades compared to its previous week.

As reported, IFB's value of trades ha reached 112 trillion rials (about \$2.66 billion) since the beginning of current Iranian year.

Meanwhile, TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has increase 16,859 points, or 2.23 percent, to 339,387 during the five working days of the past week, Tasnim news agency reported.

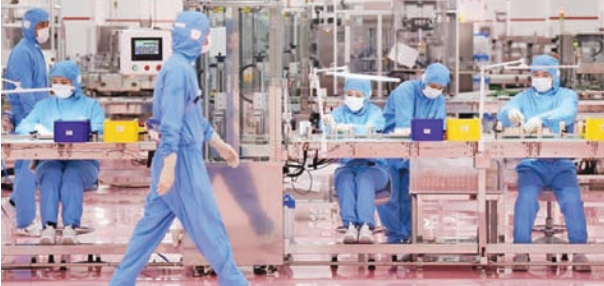
As reported, 22.121 billion securities worth 113.355 trillion rials (about \$2.7 billion) were traded through 2.671 million deals at TSE, indicating 29.56 percent rise in terms of value, while 30.24 percent fall in terms of number of securities, and 19.12 percent increase in number of trades.

Japan manufacturers' business mood gloomiest in nearly 7 years

Japanese big manufacturers' business mood was at its bleakest in nearly seven years in the fourth quarter, a closely watched central bank survey showed, as the U.S.-China trade war and soft global demand weighed on the export-reliant economy.

Non-manufacturers' business sentiment also worsened, according to the Bank of Japan's "tankan" quarterly survey released on Friday, as an increase in the domestic sales tax from October took a toll on consumption.

The glum readings will likely keep the BOJ under pressure to maintain or even ramp up its massive stimulus program to fend off the risk of another recession.



The headline index for big manufacturers' sentiment stood at 0 in December, down from plus 5 in September and worse than a median market forecast of plus 2, according to the survey.

The tankan's sentiment indexes are derived by subtracting the number of respondents who say conditions are poor from those who say they are good. A positive reading means optimists outnumber pessimists.

It marked the fourth straight quarter of decline and hit the lowest reading since March 2013, a month before BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda deployed his "bazooka" monetary stimulus to pull Japan out of deflation.

The index for big non-manufacturers stood at plus 20, sliding from plus 21 in September but exceeding a Refinitiv estimate of plus 17.

Big manufacturers and non-manufacturers expect business sentiment to remain flat or worsen further in the next three months, the survey showed, a sign companies remain cautious on the outlook due to uncertainty over global trade tensions.

Big firms plan to increase capital expenditure by 6.8 percent in the current business year ending in March 2020, compared with a median market forecast of a 6.0 percent gain, according to the survey.

Capital expenditure has been among the few bright spots in Japan's economy as companies continue to invest in high-tech and labor-saving technology to cope with a labor crunch.

The central bank will closely scrutinize the tankan results at its Dec 18-19 policy-setting meeting. Many investors see the BOJ in no mood to ease policy further anytime soon.

Japan's economy expanded at a much faster pace than initially reported in the third quarter, as solid domestic demand and business spending offset the pain from weak exports and output, although many analysts anticipate a slowdown this quarter.

(Source: businesstimes.com.sg)

Iran, Uzbekistan stress all-out expansion of economic ties

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Uzbekistan emphasized expansion of relations in all economic areas during the two countries' 13th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tashkent on Thursday, the Iranian Industry Ministry's news portal Shata reported.

The meeting was chaired by Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani and Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Elyor Ganiyevand, and representatives of several renowned companies from both sides attended the event.

Speaking in the meeting, the Iranian minister pointed to the presence of 50 Iranian companies in the meeting, and holding mutual trade conferences as well as Iran's exclusive exhibition in Tashkent as indications of the importance that Iran puts on mutual trade



and economic collaboration with Uzbekistan. Over the past few years, major documents

have been signed by the two countries in a variety of areas including trade, transportation,

Iran's 8-month steel ingot production up 5% yr/yr

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The output of Iran's major steel ingot producers reached 17.424 million tons in the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-November 22), indicating a five percent increase compared to last year's same period.

As reported by IRNA, the mentioned steel producing units managed to produce 16.64 million tons of the commodity in the last year's eight-month period.

The country's output of steel products also experienced a seven-percent rise in the said time span.

During the said period, steel companies produced 13.556 million tons of steel products (rebar, beam, sheets, etc.) in comparison to the last year which the figure stood at 12.635 million tons.

In addition, the country's production of sponge iron in the mentioned eight-month period reached 18.552 million tons to register an increase of seven percent compared to the 17.363 million tons in the previous year's same time span.

In early November, Iran's deputy industry, mining and trade minister said the country's steel products output is going to reach 28 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.



Speaking on the sidelines of the 15th International Exhibition for Mines, Construction Machinery and Related Industry and Equipment (Iran ConMin 2019), Jafar Sarqini put the country's steel products output in the first half of the current calendar year (March, 21-September 22) at 13.2 million tons.

"Industry ministry is planning to increase the exports of steel products to 12 million tons by the end of the year [calendar year which ends on March 19, 2020]," Sarqini said.

The value of the exports of such commodities is expected to reach \$9 billion by yearend, the official added.

Iran's annual steel production is planned to reach 45 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

Eurozone slowdown shows signs of easing: Lagarde

Christine Lagarde said the eurozone's economic slowdown is showing tentative signs of bottoming out, sending the single currency higher as she spoke after her first policy meeting as president of the European Central Bank.

There are "some initial signs of stabilization" and a "mild increase in underlying inflation", she told reporters on Thursday.

She repeated that risks to growth remain on the downside but said they are "somewhat less pronounced."

The euro jumped as high as \$1.1154 before paring gains to trade up 0.1 percent at \$1.1142 at 2.55 pm Frankfurt time.

We'll be curating stories from management guru John Bittleston and making them free to read.

Still, Ms Lagarde unveiled updated economic forecasts that show the outlook remains muted for now.

Growth will be 1.1 percent next year - a slight revision lower - and 1.4 percent in 2021, the bank predicted.

The first outlook for 2022 showed an expansion of 1.4 percent that year. Inflation is seen at 1.6 percent in 2022 - still below the goal of just under 2 percent.

The Governing Council earlier held its deposit rate at a record-low minus 0.5 percent, and bond purchases at 20 billion euros (\$30 billion) a month, sticking to a controversial package unveiled in September.

■ Lagarde pledged the strategic review

Ms Lagarde also pledged the central bank's first strategic review since 2003, giving it an opportunity to assess whether the inflation goal needs to be adjusted.

On Thursday, she said such a review is "overdue" and she aims to start it in January, completing it before the end



of the year.

It needs to be "comprehensive" and include consultation with members of the European Parliament, the academic community and representatives of civil society, she said.

She added that there is no "preconceived landing zone" but it will address challenges including climate change, technology, and rising inequality.

The review "needs to look at all and every issue, needs to turn every stone and will take its time - but will not take too much time", Ms Lagarde said.

"It will aim at not just preaching the gospel that we think we mastered but also at listening to the views of those to whom we reach out," she added, promising that it would also include the "immense challenges" posed by inequality

'17 foreign countries eager for investment in Chabahar Port'

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Director General of Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province said 17 countries have expressed willingness for contribution to development of Chabahar Port in south-eastern Iran, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to Behrouz Aghaie so far 130 foreign company representative delegations have visited Chabahar, of which 17 have expressed willingness for investment in the port.

Emphasizing the fact that Chabahar Port has no restrictions on accepting investors from other countries, Aghaie said, "Working with India does not mean rejecting the presence of other countries in Chabahar Port."

The official further mentioned negotiations for making the port an especial economic zone and said, "Becoming a special economic zone would solve many of Chabahar's problems in terms of tariffs, insurance and other matters, and this is one of the necessities for development of Chabahar Port because it makes it more competitive."

Referring to the comprehensive development plan of Chabahar Port, the official pointed to some of the provisioned projects in this port including setting up

and joint investment, some of which have been already operationalized, he said.

Rahmani further noted that good talks have also been held for easing issuance of visas for nationals of both countries and Iran is ready for enhancing cooperation in the field.

The official also expressed hope that holding such committee meetings would help the two sides to take major steps for boosting collaboration between the two countries' private sectors.

Given cultural, religious and historical commonalities between Iran and Uzbekistan, and in line with both sides' eagerness for promoting trade and economic ties, effective steps will hopefully be taken for expansion of banking ties and setting up direct flights, according to Rahmani.

Rahmani arrived in Tashkent at the head of an economic delegation late on Wednesday.

a rice processing plant, construction of slaughterhouse, construction of oil drainage tanks and preparation of silos with over 100,000 tons of capacity.

According to Aghaie, Chabahar is one of the most advanced ports in the region in terms of depth for berthing.

"Shahid Beheshti port has three multi-purpose berths with a total length of over 1700 meter. over 15.5 million cubic meters of dredging has been executed in this port which creates 16.5 meters of depth for berthing of vessels with even highest drafts," he said.

After years of negotiation, Iran has awarded the development project of this port to India, and the South Asian country committed \$500 million to build two new berths in this port.

Chabahar has two main ports, Shahid Kalantari port and Shahid Beheshti port. Shahid Kalantari port's development has been finished in 1983. However, the development project for Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port is planned to be implemented in five phases of which the first phase was started in 2007 and due to financial problems resulted from U.S.'s first round of sanctions on Iran the project was almost halted until 2016 in which the sanctions were lifted over Iran's economy.

and climate change.

Her plans have worried some officials, who fear being diverted from their primary mandate of restoring price stability. Inflation has averaged just 1.2 percent so far in 2019, despite years of unprecedented and often contentious stimulus.

■ The U.S.-China war

Moreover, while some economic indicators have suggested lately that the bloc's slowdown might be easing, Germany remains embroiled in its worst manufacturing slump in a decade, and the U.S.-China trade war and Brexit have continued to weigh on growth.

The subdued outlook raises questions over whether the central bank has enough monetary ammunition left.

Even officials most supportive of stimulus have signaled a reluctance to cut the deposit rate deeper below zero, and Ms Lagarde herself again warned about detrimental side effects such as financial bubbles, squeezes on bank profitability and discontent among savers.

The new ECB chief said that she does not favor one monetary stance over another, but simply aims to make sound decisions for the eurozone.

"Once and for all, I'm neither a dove nor a hawk, and my ambition is to be this owl, that is often associated with a little bit of wisdom," she said.

"I'm not full of vanity, but I will certainly try to bring the best out of members of my governing council in order to arrive at monetary decisions and use of instruments that will be as consensual as possible."

(Source: businesstimes.com.sg)

Brazil economic stars align, turning 2020 into 'make or break' year

Conditions for buoyant economic growth in Brazil have rarely, if ever, been better, making 2020 a "make-or-break" year for Latin America's largest and long underachieving economy.

Unprecedented monetary stimulus, huge strides on the government's reform agenda to bring public finances under control and open up the economy, and a record low exchange rate should help fuel the boom.

Sustained growth is long overdue. The economy has struggled to grow much above 1% a year in each of the three years since the 2015-16 crash, making it the worst recovery from recession on record.

The central bank on Wednesday cut interest rates to a new low of 4.50%. Real interest rates, taking into account inflation, are now below 2%, one of the lowest levels in two decades and almost unthinkable only a few years ago.

Bluntly put, if the economy can't rally now, when can it?

"It's all there ... but 2020 is going to be a very complicated year. Even though some boxes have been ticked, I don't see a convincing

story," said Monica de Bolle, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

"There's no real dynamism in consumption, investment, or on the external side, and government spending has collapsed too. So where's the growth going to come from?"

■ Strengthening domestic demand

Brazil bulls say it will come from strengthening domestic demand and investment, as the private sector replaces the public sector as the engine of growth. Economy Minister Paulo Guedes talks regularly about the "crowding in" of private sector investment in the coming years.

The stakes are high. Coming to the end of his first year in power, the honeymoon period of President Jair Bolsonaro is over and a recovery in his popularity hinges largely on growth going up and unemployment coming down.

Drausio Giacomelli, head of emerging market research at Deutsche Bank in New York, is pretty positive on Brazil, but cautions that 2020 will be a "make-or-break year."

Economy Ministry officials have put the economy's sluggish performance for most of this year down to consumers, investors and businesses all taking a "wait-and-see" approach to the new government.

After a double-dip recession scare earlier in the year, the economy grew by 0.6% in the latest quarter. That was faster than expected and the fastest in 18 months as business investment accelerated for a second straight quarter.

Significantly, a Datafolha poll this week showed that the improving economy is lifting Bolsonaro's approval ratings, which had been lower than any president ever at this stage of their presidency.

Most economists are penciling GDP growth of 2% or more for 2020, which will probably be around double this year's growth. The government is budgeting for 2.3%, with the risk to that view skewed to the upside.

■ Essential conditions

"Essential conditions for sustained growth were laid down in 2019. Brazil is ready for a new development cycle," said Waldery Rodrigues,

special secretary to the Economy Ministry.

With interest rates at 4.50% and inflation barely above 3.00%, businesses are slowly taking on more credit to invest and consumers are being encouraged to borrow and spend. The hope is this trend accelerates next year.

Ratings agency S&P on Wednesday raised its outlook on Brazil's sovereign credit to positive from neutral, a step toward an eventual upgrade that would lift Brazil back toward investment-grade status.

Yet unemployment remains high at 11.6%, and is only likely to come down gradually. More than 12 million Brazilians are out of work, the number of underemployed is around double that, and the number of private-sector informal jobs is now a record high 11.9 million, according to statistics agency IBGE.

The PII's de Bolle and other analysts note the labor market's improvement is coming at a price: Many of the new jobs are low paid, low skilled, informal and precarious, which does not point to a boom in consumption.

(Source: reuters.com)

NIOC inks exploration research deals with 2 universities

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)'s Exploration Directorate signed deals with two major universities for geological studies of the potential oil reserves in the west and northwestern Iran (Azerbaijan Province), Shana reported. A deal with Sahand University of Technology was signed by NIOC's Discovery Director Saleh Hendi and Ahmadreza Mostafa Qarebaqi the head of Sahand University, while the other deal was signed by Hendi and the Head of Tabriz University Mir-Reza Majidi on Thursday. According to NIOC's Exploration Directorate, Azarbaijan is geologically located in the northwestern part of the central sedimentary basin of Iran, and despite its vast extent, the region's geological and hydrocarbon potentials are not well explored. Back in August, NIOC announced that the company had introduced 10 major oil and gas exploration projects in the company's Exploration Directorate. The agreements included a project for



quantitative interpretation (QI) of Abadan plain's seismic cube, research studies on Lorestan Province's shale oil resources and geochemical study of some hydrocarbon reservoirs in southern Iran as well as a

project for producing 10,000 barrels of a High Pressure, High Temperature (HPHT) drilling fluid. Considering the challenges of exploring hydrocarbon resources, NIOC's Exploration

Directorate has identified various research projects and created a roadmap based on the country's sixth five-year national development plan (2016-2021) and in line with its organizational strategies. Operational exploration activities in the oil and gas industry require structural studies and up-to-date technologies in the field of geology and exploration. In this regard, so far NIOC's Exploration Directorate has signed several agreements with Iranian universities and knowledge-based companies for research in various fields of geophysics, geochemistry, unconventional hydrocarbon resources and drilling. Since the re-imposition of sanctions, Iran has been encouraging domestic companies' presence in its oil and gas projects, both in exploration and in development sectors. In the exploration sector, as there are many blocks waiting for exploration, NIOC is seriously following up on the plans to lay the ground for the private sector's contribution.

Caspian Sea oil exploration operations underway

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — Managing Director of Khazar Exploration and Production Company (KEPCO), a subsidiary of National Iranian Oil Company which handles exploration operation in the Caspian Sea region in Northern Iran, said exploration operations are underway in the region. "Emphasized by the President [Hassan Rouhani] and the Oil Minister [Bijan Namdar Zanganeh] operations for developing and exploring hydrocarbon resources in the Caspian Sea [region] are underway," Ali Osouli told Shana.

Mentioning President Rouhani's recent talks with the presidents of the Caspian states, Osouli noted that Iran is pursuing joint projects for exploration and extraction of oil in the Caspian Sea. "[In those talks] President Rouhani expressed hope that such discussions would be followed up on in joint economic committee meetings," he added. According to the official, KEPCO also has on the agenda to cooperation with knowledge-based companies specialized in deepwater explorations and also with the neighboring countries for executing exploration projects

in the region. Founded in January 1998, KEPCO is a subsidiary of NIOC which is mainly focused on oil and gas exploration and development operations in South Caspian Basin in Iran's territory. The company is in charge of all the contracts signed by local and international companies regarding the exploration and development of hydrocarbon reserves in the area including the pertinent environmental matters. The Caspian Sea is divided into three regions in terms of oil and gas reserves:



Northern, Middle and Southern Caspian. The Southern Caspian, which is in Iran's territory, is the deepest with oceanic depths of over 1,000 meters (3,300 ft).

Oil hits three-month high as trade hopes, UK election lift sentiment

Oil rose on Friday to its highest in nearly three months as progress in resolving the U.S.-China trade dispute and Britain's general election result appeared to lift two clouds that have been dampening investor appetite for risk. U.S. sources said on Thursday that Washington has set its terms for a trade deal with Beijing, offering to suspend some tariffs on goods and cut others in exchange for Chinese purchases of more American farm goods. Brent crude, the global benchmark LCOc1, climbed to \$64.95 a barrel, the highest since Sept. 23, and as of 1000 GMT was up 71 cents at \$64.91. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude CLc1 gained 52 cents to \$59.70. The 18-month trade war has been a dampener for oil prices, while uncertainty around Brexit has also weighed. Britain's ruling Conservative Party won a large majority in Thursday's general election, giving it the power to take the country out of the European Union. An "eventful past 24 hours has removed a layer of uncertainty for the global economy," said Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM. "Yet it remains to be seen whether the return of the feel-good factor is enough to set oil prices on a definitive northerly trajectory." A drop in the U.S. dollar .DXY against the backdrop of a strong pound helped boost commodities. The pound surged



more than 2% on Thursday supported by the election result. "Risk appetite among financial investors is now likely to remain high thanks to the deal between the U.S. and China and the forthcoming end to the Brexit cliffhanger," said Eugen Weinberg, an analyst at Commerzbank. "This will also benefit the oil price." Brent has rallied by almost 21 percent in 2019, supported by efforts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia to cut production. The alliance, known as OPEC+, agreed last week to lower supply by a further 500,000 barrels per day as of Jan. 1. They have been limiting supply since 2017, helping to clear a glut that built up in 2014-2016. OPEC's own research indicates that the oil market in 2020 may see a small supply deficit, although the International Energy Agency (IEA) sees global inventories rising despite the further step by OPEC+. (Source: reuters.com)

Tokyo Gas plans to step up overseas expansion in renewables, LNG

Distributor Tokyo Gas Co. Ltd. will step up overseas expansion, boosting stakes in renewable energy, liquefied natural gas (LNG) development and infrastructure projects, to triple its overseas profit by 2030, its president said. Last month, Japan's biggest seller of city gas unveiled a long-term vision that targets a rise of 67% in operating profit by 2030 through overseas expansion. Tokyo Gas and other utilities are grappling with falling demand at home as Japan ages rapidly with a declining birthrate, while the liberalization of its energy markets has spurred competition among old-guard utilities. "Our priority is to increase renewables," Tokyo Gas President Takashi Uchida told Reuters in an interview on Tuesday. It wants renewables to generate 40% of its overseas profits of about 40 billion yen (\$368 million) by 2030. The company's renewable assets are only 490,000 kilowatt (kW) generation capacity, mainly solar and onshore wind power assets in Mexico, but it aims to raise global renewable assets tenfold to 5 million kW by 2030. "We are interested in entering offshore wind projects," Uchida said. Another key source of growth will be LNG upstream assets and infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia, he added. **Foreign companies** "Our focus is to invest in foreign com-

panies in a way (that) we have control, instead of just buying stakes in upstream assets, as they could become engines for our future growth," Uchida said. Tokyo Gas is in final talks with First Gen Corp, a clean energy producer based in the Philippines, to build an LNG terminal there, he said. "We want to do it as soon as possible, but we still need to discuss on how much risk we can take," Uchida said, adding that he expected a final investment decision once power purchase agreements have been secured. Tokyo Gas, which imports about 14 million tons of LNG a year, is likely to announce a deal "soon" to raise its stake in an existing LNG upstream project, Uchida said, without identifying it. Another target is to boost LNG trading to 5 million tons by 2030 from practically nil now, to generate 10 billion yen in profit, he said. "We are not seeking profits from financial trading and all of our trades will be linked with physical supplies," Uchida said. The company's main activities in this area will be swapping cargoes with overseas partners or making seasonal swaps with other utilities, he said. It already has a trading desk with two staff in Singapore, but may hire more traders, Uchida added. (Source: bworldonline.com)

Tanker market closing in on new decade with much to look forward to

By Ken Silverstein

The tanker market had an eventful quarter, with VLCCs in particular taking full advantage of the trade war aftermath. In its latest weekly report, shipbroker Intermodal noted that "pacing towards the end of the year there are much to discuss on how the crude markets performed on the last quarter. HFO prices are mostly flat on popular bunkering locations with VLSFO/MGO being on the spotlight. Last quarter proved to be quite fruitful for crude tanker owners through all ship sizes, VLCC'S quadrupled their TCE'S and THE rest of the sizes followed up with rather healthy levels. U.S. sanctions on the COSCO tanker fleet, uncertainty about the IMO2020 effect along with owners' bullish attitude and idle ships due to scrubber fitting boosted the market." According to Mr. Dimitris Kourtesis, Intermodal's Tanker Chartering Broker, "with oil prices sitting at \$60/bl for WTI and Brent at \$64/bl, OPEC is trying to impose further cuts on oil output. Even after OPEC officials speaking publicly on further oil output cuts there wasn't any noticeable change on prices. Cuts aim to reduce the OPEC total output of oil by 500,000 bpd within the first quarter of 2020. It seems that Saudis have always been supporters of oil cuts, but this time one of the main reasons is, that on Wednesday their National oil company Saudi ARAMCO will start trading in public and its IPO value as we speak, stands at about \$1.7 trillion,



which means that an increase in oil prices will also boost the equity value of the company". Kourtesis added that "it looks like some OPEC members resist these cuts. Iraq is the second-largest oil producer country after Saudi Arabia; it has increased its oil production by 100% the last decade. Even though Iraqi officials are strong supporters of further cuts, the structure of the oil industry in Iraq isn't very easy to control. **Limiting the oil output** With oil majors operating the biggest fields and with the government having zero authority over the Kurdistan regional government this should be a hard task to accomplish. OPEC has also discussed with Russia the possibility of trying to limit the oil output, as of now this hasn't been as successful as OPEC members would desire.

Vladimir Putin knows that an increase on crude or condensate prices will drag gasoline prices higher and thus will create some internal instability. It is rumored that even if, all OPEC / non-OPEC members, somehow comply, oil prices will not reach the desired levels but at least a solid ground could be planned for the oil market to move into the new decade", he noted. Intermodal's broker also said that "early last week VL's were trading quiet but steady, as we moved towards the end of the week some activity spiked and started to slightly push the market higher. It could be that 3rd decade window for fixing is simply tight at this moment or that certain under the radar fixtures helped Owners to push higher. TD3 ended last week at 270 at WS99 (TCE \$ 80,000 PDPR) and 280 at TD1 WS56.68 (TCES 44,000 PDPR)". In the Suezmax segment, "despite the holidays and people travelling, week 49 started slow with a noticeable increase of rates ex WAF as charterers try to cover their last stems for the year. TD20 closed positively on Friday at WS138,85 levels and the Black Sea program for December is covered. Finally, in the Aframax market, "UKCONT/BALTIC Market is pushing rates higher as once more charterers are looking to cover last the stems of the year. With the position list not being really tight, TD7 stands at 80 at WS183 (TCE \$ 67,000 PDPR). Med didn't perform as N. Europe but there is no anticipation for any decrease on rates", Kourtesis concluded. (Source: hellenicshippingnews.com)

Russian contractor starts work at power plant south of Iran

TEHRAN — Iranian officials say a Russian contractor is taking over at a major power plant south of the country which is expected to be built through finances provided by Moscow. A local official in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan said on Wednesday that construction works for the Sirik Power Plant had effectively started after banks opened a letter of credit for transfer of funds for the project. Hossein Salimi, who heads the local energy department at Hormozgan, said temporary shelters and offices had been erected at the site of the project in Sirik for operations to start by the Russian contractor. This photo taken in February 2017 shows Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak (R) speaking at a gathering to mark the start of cooperation between Iran and Russia for building a major power plant in Sirik, in southern Iranian province of Hormozgan.



Salimi said the manager of the Russian company in charge of the project would be in Tehran within the next days to order the start of the construction work. Russia is expected to invest up to €1.2 billion in the construction of Sirik, a 1,200-megawatts power plant that would significantly boost Iran's electricity generation capacity in areas near the Persian Gulf. Once fully operational, the Sirik project would add some 12 terawatt hours (TWh) of power to Iran's current production of more than 300 TWh. The project has been described as a symbol of Russia's growing inclination to invest in Iran at a time the United States is piling massive economic pressure on the country. Russia has committed itself to other infrastructure projects in Iran worth nearly \$5 billion. Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Wednesday that the projects, which include a key railway southeast of the country, would start next year after clearing administrative barriers for transfer of funds and other issues. (Source: Press TV)

Renewables to become the new normal at remote mines

The Energy and Mines World Congress that took place in Toronto provided great insights into the recent developments of onsite renewable energy applications at remote mines. Generally, the year 2019 has been identified as the tipping point. The business case for partly substituting expensive fuel like diesel, heavy fuel oil (HFO) or gas by solar and wind had been positive on paper for years. However, actual projects have evolved slowly. In 2019, almost a dozen new projects have been officially announced and at the same time many more projects are under development and on the verge of being announced. Nick Holland, CEO of Gold Fields, a mining company that is a pioneer in integrating renewables, pointed out in his keynote that costs savings are possible, and a cost-efficient decentralization of power generation enabled by renewables comes with further advantages: "Renewables make for great business – lower cost and supply security. Independence from the grid is critical – microgrids are the future!" Mining companies see the need to decarbonize and pursue initiatives that go well beyond renewables, such as electrification of mining vehicles. These initiatives will further increase the electricity demand in mining and in the long run the need for locally generated renewable energy. Miners are gaining trust in renewable energy solutions. **The renewable energy system** The fear of production losses has been decreasing over the past years with every new renewable energy system that has been added to a mine globally. Before, the general attitude was characterized by "wait and see", but the mode has been changing in 2019 to "let's act now." The individual decision makers today run a relatively low perceived risk by driving forward renewable energy projects. The solutions that are being built now are often more sophisticated than they were before, and they incorporate a higher share of renewables that is also enabled by storage solutions. The epicenters of these developments are Australia and Sub-Saharan Africa, two regions having substantial areas with insufficient public grids and typically excellent solar resources. At the same time, renewable energy development also has a local driver. Though the mining sector is rather global, the word-of-mouth and political pressure on mining players to add renewables unleashes additional speed on a local level. In comparison to the physical lifetime of solar and wind assets, the lifetime of mines or the mining licenses are often rather short. In addition, miners are used to relatively short-term energy supply for diesel, HFO and gas. Long-term purchase agreements for renewable energy often require a change of thinking and have slowed down the development of many projects in the past. More and more companies have come up with redeployable solar solutions that allow for offering short-term PPAs. On the hardware-side, the costs of redeployable solar solutions have come down significantly, but at the same time this approach is a bet on future growth of this segment. **New target projects** Redeployability also means that new target projects need to be available within a reasonable time period in the future. If not, the solar assets would have to be stored in warehouses until new deployment, which can prove to be costly. Several newly announced projects combine solar and wind power. One of the biggest disadvantages of solar and wind solutions is that they generate unsteady energy. Solar and wind output are often negatively correlated, which means that when solar irradiation is high wind speeds are typically low, and vice versa. This phenomenon allows for increasing the renewable energy share in the system while minimizing the need for storage. (Source: solarnovus.com)

But Mr. Trump, is Israel lovable?

By Sheldon Richman

ANTIWAR — Speaking before Sheldon Adelson's Israeli-American Council the other day, Trump took a shot at Jewish Americans who he says don't «love Israel enough.»

«We have to get the people of our country, of this country, to love Israel more,» Trump said. «We have to get them to love Israel more because you have people that are Jewish people, that are great people — they don't love Israel enough. You know that.»

Typical of Trump, this is scatter-brained. He begins by talking about «the people of our country,» which sounds like everyone, but ends up focusing on Jews who «don't love Israel enough.» In either case, Trump talks rubbish. First off, observe that although Trump stands accused of fomenting anti-Semitism by such remarks, he actually turns the loyalty issue upside-down. He doesn't say that some Jewish Americans are too loyal to Israel (presumably at the expense of America), which is what a classic anti-Semite would say, but that they are not loyal enough. Recall that he previously labeled Jews who vote for Democrats «disloyal.» Disloyal to whom? Disloyal to Israel! We know this because he's criticized the Democratic Party for «defending [Reps. Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, who sympathize with the Palestinians] over the State of Israel.» Trump's critics seem to overlook this twist because it doesn't fit their stock narrative.

But turning to the matter at hand, Trump now entitles us to ask: what's so lovable about Israel anyway? The modern state was founded through a campaign of ethnic cleansing — violent expulsion of Arabs, that is, non-Jews, from their long-held properties — and outright massacres and terrorism. For the next couple of decades it subjected those who avoided expulsion to martial law. Then in 1967 it conquered the remainder of Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, creating new refugees. Since then Israel has denied the inhabitants of those territories all rights while the Israeli occupiers built privileged Jewish-only settlements and otherwise usurped the land it acquired through aggressive force — contrary to morality and international law. The West Bank today resembles apartheid South Africa. But things are even worse in Gaza, a small, crowded piece of land under blockade that dissenting Israelis call a concentration camp and others euphemistically refer to as merely the world's largest open-air prison. Gaza consists largely of refugees from the 1947-48 ethnic cleansing and their families.

So, I ask again, what's lovable about Israel? Is it because Israel calls itself the nation-state of the Jewish people (whether or not they live or want to live there) and Jews were treated horribly by Christian Europe, culminating in the monstrous Nazi Judeocide? That doesn't make Israel lovable. It is accountable for its crimes against humanity in Palestine regardless of the atrocities Jews suffered elsewhere. Israel is not exempt from moral judgment.

As for Jewish Americans in particular not loving Israel enough, Trump has again stuffed his foot in his mouth, something so commonplace that most people don't notice it. Like other Americans, Jewish Americans are not obligated to love Israel. How could they be? They are not part of a supposed Jewish national people — they are Americans with a particular private religious faith (unless they are secular). If they wanted to become Israelis, they would have done so.

Israel, despite what it claims, cannot be the nation-state of all Jews everywhere (even atheists with Jewish mothers); it is the state only of its own Jewish citizens/nationals. The 25 percent of non-Jewish Israeli citizens unfortunately are out of luck, but then it shouldn't call itself a democracy. Jewish Americans have roots in many countries, yet no one would say they are obliged to love those places.

We may ask: what does today's state of Israel have to do with the Jewish creed, especially the universalism of the prophets? Little, really: Zionism was a secular movement that disparaged traditional and secularized Jews in Europe and America. Theodor Herzl et al. promised a new Jew in his own state, strong and hardy farmers and soldiers, unlike the frail bookish scholars and rootless «parasitic» financiers of the so-called «diaspora.» (It wasn't a diaspora since the Judeans were not exiled by the Romans in 70 CE.) That's one reason Zionism was a minority movement for a long time.

No one is clear about what it means to be a Jewish state. True, you have to be a properly credentialed Jew to get the benefits the Israeli state offers, but that only means having a Jewish mother or being converted by an approved Orthodox rabbi. (Conservative and Reform converts need not apply.) Jews and non-Jews may not marry each other, but that is not a religious injunction for Israelis; rather it's a matter of secular (pseudo-)ethnic purity. It's feared that Israeli children of interfaith marriages are less likely than other children to identify as Jewish — but then what would happen to the «Jewish people's» state?

In fact, no Jewish national ethnicity exists to be kept pure, but many Israelis (who do constitute an Israeli ethnicity) don't accept that. Nevertheless, Jews worldwide are of virtually every ethnicity, culture, language group, and color, and despite what Israel's apologists say today, Hitler was wrong: there is no Jewish race (or gene or blood). Most Jews descend from the converts of many ethnicities — Judaism was a wide-ranging proselytizing religion roughly from 200 BCE to 200 CE (and later) — and most ancient Israelites, Judahites, Yehudis, and Judeans never left their homes, although many of their offspring converted to Christianity or Islam.

For the record, ancient kingdoms of Israel, Judah, Yehud, and Judea, according to the Old Testament, were no more lovable bastions of enlightenment than any other kingdom in the vicinity, what with their authoritarian monarchies, military conquests, genocides, Hebrew and gentile slave labor, animal and occasional human sacrifice, forced conversion of gentiles, suppression of religious pluralism among the Hebrews, and persecution and even capital punishment of sundry peaceful nonconformists, such as homosexuals and dissenters.

Moreover — and I wouldn't expect Trump to know this — there is a long and honorable tradition of Jewish anti-Zionism. It goes back to the days of Herzl, though his idea of a «return» to Canaan originated earlier with non-Jews for perhaps less-than-honorable reasons. On different grounds, Orthodox and Reform Jews vehemently opposed Herzl's movement. (See details on this and other matters discussed here in my book *Coming to Palestine*.) The Orthodox regarded the Zionists as charlatans because a «return» was not to occur until the Messiah appeared in order to redeem the sinful Jews; the Orthodox anti-Zionists did not regard any of the atheists running the Zionist movement as Messiahs — even if they had Jewish mothers.

The Reform shared that disdain for the Zionists and Zionism but on different grounds. First, they rejected the premise that the people around the world who profess Judaism constitute an exiled national people, race, or ethnicity. Judaism is just a religion, they said. Second, they objected to a country that would proclaim itself the nation-state of all the «Jewish people,» including Jews who don't and won't live there. This, they said, would harm the Jewish citizens of other countries and the non-Jewish residents of Israel. Third, they knew that Palestine was not a «land without a people,» and so they rejected the land theft and expulsion they knew would be required to make a Jewish state there. I would say the Reform were right. (The remnant of this movement resides at the American Council for Judaism.)

So, Mr. Trump, I can't see how Jewish Americans, who when surveyed rank justice high on their list social concerns, have an obligation to love Israel — or how this admonition from you, an enthusiast for Palestinian oppression, could possibly be taken seriously.

Now everyone is angry about the war in Afghanistan!

By Mohammadreza Farahzadi

TEHRAN — New revelations about the war in Afghanistan show that public discontent with the Afghan war and occupation of the United States and NATO has reached a climax. No doubt, in this story, both major American parties are to blame. George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump are the three US presidents who have lied to the world and even to their own people about the war in Afghanistan.

As Ben Armbruster wrote in *Guardian*, The American people have known that the war in Afghanistan was a lost cause for quite some time. According to the Pew Research Center, Americans' views of the war started to go south right around the end of 2011, until eventually a majority started seeing the writing on the wall about two years later. That's why the Washington Post report this week on the so-called «Afghanistan Papers», detailing how US officials «deliberately misled the public» on the war's progress, is almost sort of unremarkable. If the piece took away any shred of innocence left from this ghastly enterprise, it's that perhaps some of us thought our leaders, while failing miserably at building a nation thousands of miles away, were at least acting in good faith.

At the same time, the Post report is rage inducing, not just because of the sheer stupidity of American leaders continuing to fight a war they knew they could not win, but also how their unwillingness to take responsibility for a failed policy caused so much death, destruction and heartbreak, particularly among those American families who have admirably dedicated their lives to serving their country, and the countless number of Afghan civilians trapped in a cycle of endless war they have nothing to do with. Of course, the «Afghanistan Papers» immediately recalled memories of the Pentagon variety leaked to the New York Times nearly a half century ago because they too were government documents outlining how numerous American administrations had lied to the public about Vietnam — another long, costly and unnecessary war with no military solution.

But there's one major difference: the war in Afghanistan doesn't have as direct an impact on the lives of everyday Americans as the Vietnam war did, when the military draft meant that everyone had to deal with the cold war proxy conflict in south-east Asia one way or another. Therefore, it's entirely possible, likely even, that this major and important report from the Post will drift into the wilderness just like the dozens of Trump-era stories that would have, for example, taken down any other US president in «normal times».

But there's one big question the Post report raises but does not address: why? Why did so many people — from government contractors and high-ranking military officers, to state department and National Security Council officials — feel the need to lie about how the war in Afghanistan was going? The easy answer is that there's a long tradition in Washington, particularly among the foreign policy establishment, that self-reflection,



taking responsibility and admitting failure is a big no-no. Heck, you can get convicted of lying to Congress about illegal arms sales, and cover up brutal atrocities and still get a job at the state department. Did you torture anyone? No problem. While DC's culture of no culpability certainly plays a role in this case, the more compelling answer lies somewhere near the fact that once the American war machine kicks into gear, no amount of facts undermining its very existence is going to get in the way.

Indeed, the United States has so far doled out nearly one trillion dollars for the war in Afghanistan (the true cost of the war will be trillions more) and everyone's on the take: from defense industry executives, lobbyists and US political campaign coffers to Afghan government officials and poppy farmers to anyone and anything in between. What's more is that this military-industrial-congressional complex is largely insulated from public accountability, so what's the incentive to change course? The Pentagon's entire budget operates in much the same way: unprecedented amounts in unnecessary appropriations resulting in hundreds of billions of dollars in waste, fraud and abuse. Yet Congress continues to throw more and more money at the defense department every year without ever requiring it to account for how it spends the money. In fact, the war in Afghanistan is small potatoes by comparison.

The bottom line is that the Afghanistan Papers clearly show that a lot of people were killed, injured and subject to years, if not lifetimes, of psychological trauma and financial hardship because a bunch of men — yes, mostly men — in Washington didn't want to admit publicly what they knew privately all along. If we don't start holding these people to account — and it's not just about Afghanistan — the DC foreign policy establishment will continue to act with impunity, meaning that it's probably more likely than

not that in 50 years there'll be another batch of «papers» revealing once again that we've failed to learn obvious lessons from the past.

The Afghanistan war is more than a \$1 trillion mistake. It's a travesty

Also *Guardian* reported that The American people have known that the war in Afghanistan was a lost cause for quite some time. According to the Pew Research Center, Americans' views of the war started to go south right around the end of 2011, until eventually a majority started seeing the writing on the wall about two years later.

That's why the Washington Post report this week on the so-called «Afghanistan Papers», detailing how US officials «deliberately misled the public» on the war's progress, is almost sort of unremarkable. If the piece took away any shred of innocence left from this ghastly enterprise, it's that perhaps some of us thought our leaders, while failing miserably at building a nation thousands of miles away, were at least acting in good faith.

At the same time, the Post report is rage inducing, not just because of the sheer stupidity of American leaders continuing to fight a war they knew they could not win, but also how their unwillingness to take responsibility for a failed policy caused so much death, destruction and heartbreak, particularly among those American families who have admirably dedicated their lives to serving their country, and the countless number of Afghan civilians trapped in a cycle of endless war they have nothing to do with.

Of course, the «Afghanistan Papers» immediately recalled memories of the Pentagon variety leaked to the New York Times nearly a half century ago because they too were government documents outlining how numerous American administrations had lied to the public about Vietnam — another long, costly and unnecessary war with no military solution. But there's one major

difference: the war in Afghanistan doesn't have as direct an impact on the lives of everyday Americans as the Vietnam war did, when the military draft meant that everyone had to deal with the cold war proxy conflict in south-east Asia one way or another. Therefore, it's entirely possible, likely even, that this major and important report from the Post will drift into the wilderness just like the dozens of Trump-era stories that would have, for example, taken down any other US president in «normal times».

But there's one big question the Post report raises but does not address: why? Why did so many people — from government contractors and high-ranking military officers, to state department and National Security Council officials — feel the need to lie about how the war in Afghanistan was going? The easy answer is that there's a long tradition in Washington, particularly among the foreign policy establishment, that self-reflection, taking responsibility and admitting failure is a big no-no. Heck, you can get convicted of lying to Congress about illegal arms sales, and cover up brutal atrocities and still get a job at the state department. Did you torture anyone? No problem.

While DC's culture of no culpability certainly plays a role in this case, the more compelling answer lies somewhere near the fact that once the American war machine kicks into gear, no amount of facts undermining its very existence is going to get in the way. Indeed, the United States has so far doled out nearly one trillion dollars for the war in Afghanistan (the true cost of the war will be trillions more) and everyone's on the take: from defense industry executives, lobbyists and US political campaign coffers to Afghan government officials and poppy farmers to anyone and anything in between. What's more is that this military-industrial-congressional complex is largely insulated from public accountability, so what's the incentive to change course? The Pentagon's entire budget operates in much the same way: unprecedented amounts in unnecessary appropriations resulting in hundreds of billions of dollars in waste, fraud and abuse. Yet Congress continues to throw more and more money at the defense department every year without ever requiring it to account for how it spends the money. In fact, the war in Afghanistan is small potatoes by comparison.

The bottom line is that the Afghanistan Papers clearly show that a lot of people were killed, injured and subject to years, if not lifetimes, of psychological trauma and financial hardship because a bunch of men — yes, mostly men — in Washington didn't want to admit publicly what they knew privately all along. If we don't start holding these people to account — and it's not just about Afghanistan — the DC foreign policy establishment will continue to act with impunity, meaning that it's probably more likely than not that in 50 years there'll be another batch of «papers» revealing once again that we've failed to learn obvious lessons from the past.

Why did the Saudis kill U.S. sailors while three others filmed it?

By Doug Bandow

THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVE — The U.S. military is training Saudi Arabian pilots here in States, who later leave to slaughter Yemeni civilians thousands of miles away. Unfortunately, some of that violence was turned against us, when a Saudi trainee killed three American sailors at Pensacola Air Station on December 6. In fact, a half dozen Saudis were arrested in the incident. Three of them apparently filmed the murders, presumably to post online. Yet afterward President Donald Trump spent more time justifying the Saudi royals than supporting the victims' families. Every time a terrorist commits murder and mayhem, Americans ask why? U.S. officials usually insist that it is because we are so «good.» If only. Why terrorists kill should not be a mystery since they themselves tell us why. And none of them has said it is because the U.S. has the First Amendment, holds democratic elections, or leads the world in charitable giving.

Consider Mohammed Saeed al-Shamrani, the Saudi pilot-in-training at Pensacola. On Twitter he declared: «I'm against evil, and America as a whole has turned into a nation of evil.»

He explained: «I'm not against you for just being American, I don't hate you because [of] your freedoms, I hate you because every day you [are] supporting, funding and committing crimes not only against Muslims but also humanity.» Al-Shamrani's complaint is against U.S. foreign policy, which today so often means bombing, invading, and occupying other nations and killing their peoples. Drones have become America's newest form of warfare, on the upsurge under Trump. Alas, according to the New York Times: «Every independent investigation of the strikes has found far more civilian casualties than administration officials admit. Gradually, it has become clear that when operators in Nevada fire missiles into remote tribal territories on the other side of the world, they often do not know who they are killing, but are making an imperfect best guess.» Yet the administration has made it even more difficult to judge the impact of the attacks.

Almost a decade ago Faisal Shahzad, a Pakistani-born naturalized American citizen, attempted to set off a car bomb in New York City's Times Square. Thankfully, he failed to set the timer properly. Then he waited two days to flee the country, giving authorities the time to identify and arrest him. Ajani Marwat, the intelligence officer with the New York Police Department who investigated Shahzad, explained: «It's simple. It's American policies in his country. That's it. Americans are so closed-minded. They have no idea what's going on in the rest of the world. And he did know. Every time you turn on al-Jazeera, they show our people being killed.» A terrorist organizer in Pakistan told Marwat: «We don't have to do anything to attract them. The Americans and the Pakistani government do our work for us. With the drone attacks targeting the innocents who live [here], the sympathies of most

of the nation are always with us.»

At his September 2010 sentencing Shahzad declared himself to be «part of the answer to the U.S. terrorizing the Muslim nations. I'm avenging the attacks because the Americans only care about their people, but they don't care about the people elsewhere in the world when they die.» He vowed that «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 killing the Muslims, and stops reporting the Muslims to its government, we will be attacking U.S.»

Federal judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum made the obvious point that he targeted civilians. Shahzad responded that in a democracy it was civilians who «select the government.» How about children, asked Cedarbaum? Shahzad answered: «Well, the drone hits in Afghanistan and Iraq, they don't see children, they don't see anybody. They kill women, children, they kill everybody. It's a war, and in war, they kill people. They're killing all Muslims.»

Terrorism has become a tool of many nationalist and separatist groups. Pakistani-backed Muslim Kashmiris who object to rule by Hindu India routinely rely on terrorism. So do Palestinians in territory long occupied by Israel. Russia suffered numerous attacks from Chechens, including by «Black Widows,» whose husbands died in Chechnya's struggle for independence. Hindu Tamil Liberation Tigers targeted the dominant Buddhist Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, for a time becoming the most prolific suicide bombers on earth, conducting 168 such attacks between 1980 and 2000.

So, too, has America become a target of this horror, though Washington policymakers prefer not to talk about the causes of terrorism. Consider the 1983 bombings of its embassy and Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon. The Reagan administration foolishly intervened in a multi-sided civil war to back the «national» government, which ruled little more than Beirut. After Washington launched air and naval attacks on opposing forces, Lebanese Muslims saw aggression, not liberty, and responded accordingly.

In the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, Ramzi Yousef cited Washington's use of sanctions to kill Iraqi children as motivation for his actions. He uncannily anticipated then-UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright who, three years later, was asked on 60 Minutes about the sanctions-induced deaths of a half million Iraqi kids. She replied chillingly: «We think the price is worth it.» She never did explain why «we» were authorized to make that choice.

Polls found that large majorities of Arabs and Muslims shared these criticisms of U.S. policy despite expressing admiration for American values and products. University of Chicago's Robert A. Pape found that terrorists almost always confronted foreign occupation. After studying more than 2,100 suicide attacks, he concluded that «overall, foreign military occupation accounts for 98.5 percent — and the deployment of American combat forces

for 92 percent — of all the 1,833 suicide terrorist attacks around the world» between 2004 and 2009. The solution? Said Pape: «By ending the perception that the United States and its allies are occupiers, we can cut the fuse to the suicide terrorism threat.»

The horror of 9/11 made it almost impossible to question the official Bush administration meme that Americans were targeted because they were so good, virtuous, and free. But that simply wasn't the case. That doesn't mean the victims «deserved» what they got. Rather, there sometimes are awful consequences to terrible policies. With far greater reason than Washington wanted to admit, the attackers viewed a militarily interventionist America as being at war with them.

In 1996 bin Laden complained that «the people of Islam [have] suffered from aggression, iniquity and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist-Crusaders alliance and their collaborators,» and noted the blood «spilled in Palestine and Iraq» and the killings and interventions elsewhere. On multiple occasions he cited American support for Israel, sanctions against Iraq, and the military presence in Saudi Arabia. In an October 2004 video, he spoke of viewing dead Arab Muslims, after which it occurred to him that «we should punish the oppressor in kind — and that we should destroy the towers in America in order that they taste some of what we tasted, and so that they be deterred from killing our women and children.» Bin Laden was a moral monster, but he had a coherent and logical political objective, one inextricably tied to militaristic U.S. policies.

At least some top Bush administration officials understood the truth. After the Iraq invasion Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz observed: «We can now remove almost all of our forces from Saudi Arabia. Their presence there over the last 12 years has been a source of enormous difficulty for a friendly government. It's been a huge recruiting device for al-Qaeda. In fact if you look at bin Laden, one of his principle grievances was the presence of so-called crusader forces on the holy land, Mecca and Medina.»

Tragically, the Iraq war became another extremist recruiting bonanza. Indeed, studies in both Israel and Saudi Arabia found that most of Iraq's terrorists were new recruits not previously part of the jihadist movement, who were drawn by the war to attack Americans. The Pensacola murders similarly reflect America's misguided foreign policy. It is the primary trigger for attacks on Americans. Washington cannot escape the malign if unintended consequences of its actions. The U.S. regularly meddles in other nations' affairs. Worse, it routinely invades, bombs, occupies, drones, and sanctions other countries. When outraged foreigners strike back, innocent Americans become targets. The president should end our endless wars, as he promised. He should also rethink policies that make unnecessary enemies. The motto for statesmanship in this new age should be Hippocratic: first do no harm.

U.S. security agencies; slimmer than ever!

By Morteza Helali

TEHRAN — In recent days, along with media leaks in the United States, US security agencies have been more critical of analysts and citizens than ever before. News and analysis in some US media shows that the CIA and FBI have been monitored and, of course, heavily criticized by American public opinion. Here's a look at some of the analysis and news:

Barr Blasts Inspector General for Whitewashing FBI
As Antiwar reported, Attorney General William Barr on Monday disparaged the long-awaited findings of the Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz into FBI conduct in the investigation of alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign. Barr, in effect, accused Horowitz of whitewashing a litany of proven misfeasance and malfeasance that created the "predicate," or legal justification, for investigating candidate-and-then-president Donald Trump on suspicion of being in cahoots with the Russians. In grammatical terms, there can be no sentence, so to speak, without a predicate. Trump was clearly the object of the sentence, and the sleuths led by then-FBI Director James Comey were the subjects in desperate search of a predicate. Horowitz candidly depicted the predicate the FBI requires for a counterintelligence investigation as having to meet a very low bar. The public criticism from his boss was unusual. For the tenacious attorney general, doing a serious investigation of how the FBI handled the Trump-Russia inquiry has become a case of no-holds-Barr-ed, one might say.

Particularly damning in Horowitz's report was the revelation that the FBI kept the "Russia investigation" going well after countervailing and exculpatory evidence clearly showed that, in the unforgettable words of one senior FBI official, Peter Strzok, there was "no there there."

As Sen. Lindsey Graham put it yesterday, FBI investigators kept running through STOP signs in hot pursuit of a needed, but ever elusive, credible predicate. At a press conference, Graham pointed to page 186 of the Horowitz report to call attention to one of the most obvious STOP signs FBI sleuths should have heeded; namely, the fact that the FBI learned in January 2017 that the primary sub-source for Christopher Steele's "dossier" disavowed it as misstated and exaggerated – basically rumor and speculation. No problem: the FBI investigation continued.

Mincing no words, Graham called the FBI investigation into alleged Trump campaign ties with Russia a "criminal enterprise" that got off the rails. (Special Counsel Robert Mueller found no evidence of such a conspiracy.) Sparks will fly on Wednesday as Graham, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, pursues the matter in more depth when Horowitz testifies before the committee. Graham emphasized yesterday that the general goal is to ensure that such a "criminal enterprise" does not happen again. He added that one of the ways to prevent a recurrence is to make sure "those who took the law into their own hands need to pay a price." Uh-oh. I cannot remember the last time leaders of the "national-security state" had to pay a price.

Barr took unusually strong public issue with Horowitz's conclusion that there was adequate reason to mount an FBI investigation of the Trump campaign and suspected ties to Russia. Barr issued a formal statement asserting that the Horowitz report "now makes it clear that the FBI launched an intrusive investigation of a U.S. presidential campaign on the thinnest of suspicions that, in my view, were insufficient to justify the steps taken."

US Attorney John Durham, whom Barr picked to lead what has now become a criminal investigation regarding how that FBI's "intrusive investigation" was launched, issued his own formal statement of criticism, expressing disagreement with the IG's findings as to the predication of the investigation and "how the FBI case opened." Durham added that he had told the IG last month of this disagreement. In his statement yesterday, Durham spoke not of suspicions, but of evidence his ongoing investigation has already gathered "from other persons and entities both in the US and outside of the US"

Both Barr and Durham chose their words carefully, and so did former CIA Director John Brennan in his May 2017 congressional testimony about his suspicions that Trump's campaign might have been colluding with the Russians. Soon the spotlight is likely to turn onto Brennan and his carefully parsed testimony, which fell considerably short of qualifying as a predicate for investigation (but played a key role anyway).

On May 23, 2017, Brennan told Congress: "I encountered and am aware of information and intelligence that revealed contacts and interactions between Russian officials and US persons involved in the Trump campaign that I was concerned about because of known Russian efforts to suborn such individuals. It raised questions in my mind about whether Russia was able to gain the cooperation of those individuals."

CNN's coverage of Brennan's testimony is even more revealing (of CNN's bias) in retrospect. Moreover, Brennan famously told Congress, he doesn't deal with evidence. That was what Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy was wondering about, when he grilled the former CIA director, also on May 23, 2017, on what evidence he had provided to the FBI to catalyze its investigation of the alleged Trump-Russia collusion. Brennan replied: "I don't do evidence."

The best Brennan could do was start out by repeating his well-rehearsed statement, later contradicted by Mueller's report: "I encountered and am aware of information and intelligence that revealed contacts and interactions between Russian officials and US persons involved in the Trump campaign," adding that "that required further investigation by the Bureau to determine whether or not US persons were actively conspiring, colluding with Russian officials."

Referring to the Horowitz report yesterday, Law Professor John Turley noted:

"Despite this shockingly damning report, much of the media is reporting only that Horowitz did not find it unreasonable to start the investigation, and ignoring a litany of false representations and falsifications of evidence to keep the secret investigation going. Nothing was found to support any of those allegations, and special counsel Robert Mueller also confirmed there was no support for collusion and conspiracy allegations repeated continuously for two years by many experts and members of Congress."

And yet "debunking" is the name of the game. A New York Times headline this morning read, "Report on F.B.I. Russia Inquiry Finds Serious Errors but Debunks Anti-Trump Plot." And an "analysis" article by Mark Mazzetti was titled: "Another



Inquiry Doesn't Back Up Trump's Charges. So, on to the Next." Mazzetti writes:

"Engage in a choreographed campaign of presidential tweets, Fox News appearances and fiery congressional testimony to create expectations about finding proof of a "deep state" campaign against Mr. Trump. And then, when the proof does not emerge, skew the results and prepare for the next opportunity to execute the playbook.

"That opportunity has arrived in the form of an investigation by a Connecticut prosecutor [Durham] ordered this year by Attorney General William P. Barr – and the president and his allies are now predicting it will be the one to deliver damning evidence that the FBI, C.I.A. and even close American allies conspired against Mr. Trump in the 2016 election."

Horowitz Report an 'Appetizer'?

Mazzetti goes on to express doubt "that Mr. Durham will exhume any information that will fundamentally change the understanding of what happened in 2016." Maybe, maybe not. It is a safe bet, though, that President Trump has better insight into this. According to Mazzetti, Trump recently had been playing down expectations about the Horowitz inquiry – indicating it was only an appetizer for what's to come. "I do think the big report to wait for is going to be the Durham report," he said. "That's the one that people are really waiting for."

The president may be expecting Mueller-inquiry-type vindication once Durham's investigation is complete. It that proves to be the case and Trump receives post-impeachment acquittal from the Senate, as expected, he may be able to parlay that into four more years, a sobering thought.

■ Can we impeach the FBI now?

But Americanconservative reported that The release of Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz's report, which shows that the Democrats, media, and FBI lied about not interfering in an election, will be a historian's marker for how a decent nation fooled itself into self-harm. Forget about foreigners influencing our elections; it was us.

The Horowitz Report is being played by the media for its conclusion: that the FBI's intel op run against the Trump campaign was not politically motivated and thus "legal." That covers one page of the 476-page document, but because it fits with the Democratic/mainstream media narrative that Trump is a liar, the rest has been ignored. "The rest," of course, is a detailed description of America's domestic intelligence apparatus, aided by its overseas intelligence apparatus, and assisted by its Five Eyes allies' intelligence apparatuses. And the conclusion is that they unleashed a full-spectrum spying campaign against a presidential candidate in order to influence an election, and when that failed, they tried to delegitimize a president.

We learn from the Horowitz Report that it was an Australian diplomat, Alexander Downer, a man with ties to his own nation's intel services and the Clinton Foundation, who set up a meeting with Trump staffer George Papadopoulos, creating the necessary first bit of info to set the plan in motion. We find the FBI exaggerating, falsifying, and committing wicked sins of omission to buffalo the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) courts into approving electronic surveillance on Team Trump to overtly or inadvertently monitor the communications of Paul Manafort, Michael Cohen, Jared Kushner, Michael Flynn, Jeff Sessions, Steve Bannon, Rick Gates, Trump transition staffers, and likely Trump himself. Trump officials were also monitored by British GCHQ, the information shared with their NSA partners, a piece of all this still not fully public.

We learn that the FBI greedily consumed the Steele Dossier, opposition "research" bought by the Clinton campaign to smear Trump with allegations of sex parties and pee tapes. Most notoriously, the dossier claims he was a Russian plant, a Manchurian Candidate, owned by Kremlin intelligence through a combination of treats (land deals in Moscow) and threats (kompromat over Trump's evil sexual appetites). The Horowitz Report makes clear the FBI knew the Dossier was bunk, hid that conclusion from the FISA court, and purposefully lied to the FISA court in claiming that the Dossier was backed up by investigative news reports, which themselves were secretly based on the Dossier. The FBI knew Steele had created a classic intel officer's information loop, secretly becoming his own corroborating source, and gleefully looked the other way because it supported his goals.

Horowitz contradicts media claims that the Dossier was a small part of the case presented to the FISA court. He finds that it was "central and essential." And it was garbage: "factual assertions relied upon in the first [FISA] application targeting Carter Page were inaccurate, incomplete, or unsupported by appropriate documentation, based upon information the FBI had in its possession at the time the application was filed." One of Steele's primary sources, tracked down by FBI, said Steele had misreported several of the most troubling allegations of potential Trump blackmail and campaign collusion.

We find human dangles, what Lisa Page referred to as "our OCONUS lures" (OCONUS is spook-speak for Outside

Continental US) in the form of a shady Maltese academic, Joseph Mifsud, who himself has deep ties to multiple U.S. intel agencies and the Pentagon, paying Trump staffers for nothing speeches to buy access to them. We find a female FBI undercover agent inserted into social situations with a Trump staffer (pillow talk is always a spy's best friend). It becomes clear the FBI sought to manufacture a foreign counterintelligence threat as an excuse to unleash its surveillance tools against the Trump campaign.

We learn that Trump staffer Carter Page, while under FBI surveillance, was actually working for the CIA in Russia. The FBI was told this repeatedly, yet it never reported it to the FISA court while seeking approval for its secret investigation of Page. An FBI lawyer even doctored an email to hide the fact that Page was working for the Agency and not the Russians; it was that weak a case. The Horowitz Report went on to find "at least 17 significant errors or omissions" concerning FBI efforts to obtain FISA warrants against Page alone. California Congressman Devin Nunes raised these points almost two years ago in a memo the MSM widely discredited, even though we now know it was basically true and profoundly prescient.

Page was a nobody with nothing, but the FBI needed him. Horowitz explains that agents "believed at the time they approached the decision point on a second FISA renewal that, based upon the evidence already collected, Carter Page was a distraction in the investigation, not a key player in the Trump campaign, and was not critical to the overarching investigation." They renewed the warrants anyway, three times, largely due to their value under the "two hop" rule. The FBI can extend surveillance two hops from its target, so if Carter Page called Michael Flynn who called Trump, all of those calls are legally open to monitoring. Page was a handy little bug. Carter Page was never charged with any crime. He was blown into a big deal only by the fictional Steele Dossier, an excuse for the FBI to electronically surveil the Trump campaign.

When Trump was elected, the uber-lie that he was dirty with Russia was leaked to the press most likely by James Comey and John Brennan in January 2017 (not covered in the Horowitz Report), and a process, which is still ongoing, tying the president to a foreign power, began. "With Trump, All Roads Lead to Moscow," writes the New York Times even today, long after both the Mueller Report and now the Horowitz Report say unambiguously otherwise. "Monday's congressional hearing and the inspector general's report tell a similar story," bleats the Times, when in fact the long read of both says precisely the opposite. Michael Horowitz, the author of this current report, should be a familiar name. In January 2017, he opened his probe into the FBI's Clinton email investigation. In a damning passage, that 568-page report found it "extraordinary and insubordinate for Comey to conceal his intentions from his superiors...for the admitted purpose of preventing them from telling him not to make the statement, and to instruct his subordinates in the FBI to do the same. By departing so clearly and dramatically from FBI and department norms, the decisions negatively

impacted the perception of the FBI and the department as fair administrators of justice."

Horowitz's Clinton report also criticizes FBI agents and illicit lovers Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, who exchanged texts disparaging Trump before moving from the Clinton email probe to the Russiagate investigation. Those texts "brought discredit" to the FBI and sowed public doubt. They included one exchange reading, "Page: '[Trump's] not ever going to become president, right?' Strzok: 'No. No he's not. We'll stop it.'"

If after reading the Horowitz Report you want to focus only on its page one statement that the FBI did not act illegally, you must in turn focus on what is "legal" in America. If you want to follow the headlines saying Trump was proven wrong when he claimed his campaign was spied upon, you really do need to look up that word in a dictionary and compare it to the tangle of surveillance, foreign government agents, undercover operatives, and payoffs that Horowitz details.

You may accept the opening lines of the Horowitz Report that the FBI did not act with political bias over the course of its investigation. Or you can find a clearer understanding in Attorney General William Barr's summary of the Report: "that the FBI launched an intrusive investigation of a U.S. presidential campaign on the thinnest of suspicions." You will need to reconcile the grotesque use the information the FBI gathered was put to after Trump was elected, the fuel for the Mueller investigation, and years' worth of media picking at the Russian scab.

The current Horowitz Report, read alongside his previous report on how the FBI played inside the 2016 election vis-a-vis Clinton, should leave no doubt that the Bureau tried to influence the election of a president and then delegitimize him when he won. It wasn't the Russians; it was us. And if you walk away concluding that the FBI fumbled things, acted amateurishly, failed to do what some claim they set out to do, well, just wait until next time. On a personal note, if any of this is news to you, you may want to ask why you are only learning about it now. The American Conservative has been one of the few outlets that's consistently exposed the Steele Dossier as part of an information op nearly since it was unveiled, and which has explained how the FISA court was manipulated, and which has steadily raised the question of political interference in our last election by American intelligence services. We claim no magical powers or inside information. To those of us who have been on the fringes of intelligence work, what was obvious just from the publicly available information was, well, obvious.

If you are reading any of this for the first time, or know people who are reading bastardized MSM versions of it for the first time, you might ask yourself why those outlets went along with Steele, et al. Their journalists are no dumber or smarter than ours. They do, however, write with a different agenda. Keep that in mind as we flip the calendar page to 2020.

■ JEDI Mind Tricks: Amazon versus the Pentagon and Trump

Amazon is one of the largest companies in the world, boasting revenues of more than \$230 billion last year. But last month the company sued the US Department of Defense over a paltry potential \$10 billion spread over ten years. Amazon lost out to Microsoft in bidding for the Pentagon's Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (yes, JEDI, because the most important part of a government program is coming up with a cool acronym) cloud computing program.

Amazon claims it lost the contract due to, well, JEDI mind tricks – "improper pressure" and "repeated and behind-the-scenes attacks" – played by US president Donald Trump on the Pentagon to set its collective mind against his perceived political opponent, Amazon president (and Washington Post owner) Jeff Bezos. If so, Trump's mind tricks pale next to the mind tricks used to justify the notion that the Pentagon needs a billion dollars a year to buy its own specialized, proprietary cloud computing system – one that the DoD's own fact sheet boasts is merely "one component of the larger ecosystem that consists of different cloud models based on purpose" – from Microsoft, from Amazon, or from anyone else.

The great thing about cloud computing is that it's a 50-year-old concept, generally available for years now in numerous off-the-shelf versions. The Pentagon doesn't need its own cloud computing system any more than it needs its own brand of staplers. Some JEDI knights might protest that the US armed forces need sturdier security than the everyday user, justifying a proprietary system. Per the fact sheet, "NSA, CYBERCOM, and the intelligence community provided input into JEDI's security requirements." ➡11

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-8746063

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

| items | Material Description | Quantity |
|-------|--|----------|
| 16 | P/F"BORSIG" CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR TYPE: GC 355/8. S/N 23-1714 7 | 133 |

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention to participate" letter via Fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 4,715 EURO or 225 ,567,716 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P. NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI.IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC' S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

E.MAIL: KALA.F.P@nisoc.ir Tel. No.: 061 341 24644 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹/۸/۱۹ نوبت دوم ۹/۸/۲۳

1398.5588

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt in Zafaranih
brand new, 3rd floor, 420 sq.m
2 master bedrooms, 2 Bdrs.
unfurn, spj, parking
\$6500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Mahmoodieh
1st floor, 168 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
semi furn, spj, gym, parking
\$3000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in South Dibaji
3rd floor, 75 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
unfurn, mountain view
elevator, storage, parking
\$800
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Fereshteh
16th floor, 320 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.
unfurn, spj, elevator, parking
\$5500
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Darband
200 sq.m., 3 Bdrs., furn
balcony, roof garden, lobby
green yard, 2 parking spots
Price: negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Niavaran
brand new, 140 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
furn & unfurn, laundry, terrace
swimming pool, gym, roof garden
mountain
& city view, elevator, parking
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa

Triplex Villa in Zafaranih
450 sq.m land, 800 sq.m built up
14 Bdrs., unfurn, balcony, elevator
parking, **\$5000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Duplex Villa in Niavaran
600 sq.m land, 700 sq.m built up
5 Bdrs., furn, terrace
beautiful garden, outdoor
swimming pool, parking
\$8500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa in Shahrak Qarb
duplex, 300 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.
semi furnished / unfurnished
green yard, storage, large terrace
backyard, outdoor swimming pool
parking
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Duplex Villa in Pasdaran
550 sq.m land, 630 sq.m built up, 4
Bdrs., unfurn, outdoor swimming
pool, parking
\$4000
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

Duplex Villa in Mahmoodieh
245 sq.m land, 300 sq.m built up
unfurn, yard, parking **\$3000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207



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
Price: negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in
Saadat Abad
administrative office license
brand new, 8 floors, units from 110
sq.m to 140 sq.m, elevator
11 parking spots
\$17000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Jordan
administrative office license
floors available, 1520 sq.m 3
,totally, unfurn, elevator
,roof top, anti seismic
parking spots 30
Price: negotiable
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Heravi
7 floors, 3500 built up
units between 110 sq.m &
160 sq.m, spj, elevator
40 parking spots
\$13 per sq.m
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole building in
Vanak - Molla Sadra
,administrative office license
10 floors, 10 units, each unit 400
sq.m, elevator, renovated lots of
parking
\$15 per sq.m
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Ideal Offers

Apt in Elahieh
1st floor, 70 sq.m, 1 Bdr.
unfurn, spj, gym, **\$800**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Niavaran
4th floor, 100 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
furn, balcony, elevator
storage, parking, **\$750**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in North Shirazi
one apt 120 sq.m on 7th floor with 2
Bdrs., another apt
185 sq.m on 5th floor with
3 Bdrs., furn, balcony, parking
\$1000 & \$1500
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Valiasr _ Park Way
brand new, 2nd floor, 110 sq.m
2 Bdrs., furn, parking, **\$1200**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Jordan
2nd floor, 148 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
fully furn, spj, parking, **\$900**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Zafaranih
ground floor, 150 sq.m
3 Bdrs., unfurn, spj, lobby
storage, parking, **\$1800**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Evian
300 sq.m, 3 Bdr., unfurn, spj
elevator, 30 sq.m terrace
storage, parking, **\$1800**
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 : 88745542

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Niavaran (\$2200) 20sq.m, 3bdrs S/p, S, J, pkg balcony, & F.F | Zaferanieh Apts (\$1800) 2bdrs, F.F (\$2400) 3bdrs, F.F | Elahieh Villa (\$4000) 1400sq.m, 6bdrs S/pool, S, J, pkg green yard, & F.F |
| Darrous (\$2500) 300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F Jordan (\$1800) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F with balcony | | |

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

maharaja
Indian Restaurant

**FIRST INDIAN RESTAURANT
IN IRAN**

PRIVATE PARKING LOT

Jahan Hotel (Exelsior) – Rahimzade Alley – Taleqani
Crossroads – Valiasr St. Tel: 66476855

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily

Advertising Dept



Tel:

021 - 430 51 450

Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



NASA says Boeing Starliner ready to fly as early as Dec. 20

Boeing's CST-100 Starliner space capsule is ready for its maiden voyage as early as Dec. 20, NASA officials said Thursday.

The space agency said the capsule passed a flight readiness review Thursday. The review included dozens of managers and engineers from the space agency, Boeing and launch provider United Launch Alliance.

The scheduled launch date is Dec. 20, but alternate dates because of potential delays go into the Christmas holiday, including Dec. 21, 23 and 25 through 28.

There's a lot riding on the mission, which will be an uncrewed flight that heads from Florida to the International Space Station. Starliner has been planned for years, along with SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule, to replace buying seats on Russian Soyuz capsules.

If all goes well, Starliner would carry astronauts to the space station in 2020 in what could be the first return to human spaceflight from U.S. soil since the space shuttle's last mission in 2011.

"We are looking forward to ending that gap," said Phil McAlister, director of NASA's commercial spaceflight development. He added, "This program will be opening up more people doing more things in space."

The spacecraft is scheduled to lift off on an Atlas V rocket from Launch Complex 41 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

Officials reviewed the flight plan and redundancies built into the spacecraft systems



and procedures for safety, according to a statement from NASA.

They also discussed how the data from the test flight will help prepare for the first crewed flight. Ken Bowersox, NASA's deputy associate administrator for human exploration and operations, led a readiness poll.

Starliner is smaller than Dragon, which SpaceX adapted for human use after using it for years to send cargo to the space station. Starliner is 16.5 feet high when coupled with

its service module. Crew Dragon is 26.7 feet high with its trunk.

Starliner crew modules are designed to fly up to 10 missions. Service modules are made for each mission. Boeing holds a contract for two test flights and six missions to the International Space Station. Future Starliner missions depend on NASA's needs for station crews and commercial demand.

According to Boeing, Starliner is designed to fit up to seven people, but NASA missions

will carry a crew of only four or five.

Three astronauts have been designated for Starliner's first missions: Mike Fincke, Nicole Mann and Chris Ferguson.

Boeing also plans to fly private passengers, selling an extra fifth seat on NASA missions. The company says potential customers include commercial and government-sponsored astronauts or private citizens flying as tourists.

Most flights on operational missions will be about six to 12 hours from launch to docking, but times will vary on specific missions depending on launch and rendezvous requirements.

Unlike Crew Dragon or the Apollo-era capsules, Starliner won't land in the ocean. It has parachutes and airbags to drop it into desert landing zones at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, Willcox Playa in Arizona or at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

Both Boeing and SpaceX are more than two years behind schedule, according to their contracts awarded in 2014. Boeing successfully tested Starliner's abort system Nov. 4 at White Sands Missile Range.

The earlier abort test saw Starliner accelerate to about 650 mph in five seconds, verifying that the engines and thrusters were capable of firing in the event of an emergency while astronauts sat on the launch pad or ascended.

(Source: UPI)

Core stage of new Artemis Moon rocket unveiled

NASA officially unveiled the core stage of its new Space Launch System Moon rocket for planned Artemis missions at the Michoud Assembly Facility near New Orleans.

A day of speeches and praise for the workers also focused Monday on the astronomical cost of the program, which recently was estimated at \$2 billion per rocket, according to the Office of Management and Budget.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said he believes the cost per rocket can be reduced if the space agency buys more of them.

"NASA estimates the cost of a single SLS rocket in a given year to be between about \$800 million and \$1.6 billion, depending on the total number of rockets in an order," Bridenstine said in a statement.

He added: "NASA is currently in negotiations with Boeing, the lead contractor for the development of SLS, to determine the appropriate number of rockets and costs to support the agency's exploration architecture."

The Artemis program as announced over the summer envisions multiple lunar missions to carry astronauts back

to the Moon to establish a permanent presence.

"The more we buy, the more the cost per unit comes down," Bridenstine said during his speech Monday. "We have to think about how many we're going to buy when we get ready to take the first rocket out of the facility and test it."

The rocket's giant core stage is in final testing in New Orleans before it is shipped to the space agency's main rocket testing facility, Stennis Space Center in southern Mississippi, in the next few weeks.

The core, or first stage, makes up two-thirds of the rocket at 212 feet tall with a diameter of 27.6 feet. It stores huge amounts of supercooled liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen with four RS-25 engines. It's only meant to operate for a little more than eight minutes, reaching an altitude of 100 miles.

A second core stage for the Artemis 2 mission is being manufactured at Michoud. The Trump administration has set a goal of sending people back to the Moon by 2024 on the Artemis 3 mission, but funding approval from Congress is uncertain.

Bridenstine said some parts of the mission can be fulfilled even without additional appropriations, but that's not what

NASA would prefer. He said the agency has received approval for \$2 billion in commercial lunar lander science missions.

The NASA administrator sidestepped a question about making lunar rockets reusable -- as SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket is, along with its next-generation Starship rocket under development.

Bridenstine said the Artemis program is designed to be much more sustainable than the Apollo Moon program ever was. That's partly because NASA intends to build an orbiting lunar habitat, Gateway, that would stay there and help astronauts transition to lunar descent.

NASA and the administration have estimated the Artemis mission needs \$20 billion to \$30 billion to land on the Moon by 2024. "Apollo was not sustainable. The cost was too high because everything got thrown away on every mission," Bridenstine said. "We would like to see the Orion crew capsule have elements of it be reusable by Artemis."

SLS is the only rocket that is "human-rated," NASA's deputy administrator, James Morhard, said.

(Source: UPI)

SpaceX is flying cannabis to the ISS



An agricultural technology company has announced that it will be sending cannabis to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of a scientific experiment.

Plant cell cultures of hemp—a variety of cannabis which has very low levels of the psychoactive compound THC (tetrahydrocannabinol)—and coffee will be transported to the ISS aboard the next SpaceX resupply mission scheduled for March 2020.

The company, Front Range Biosciences—in collaboration with SpaceCells USA Inc. and BioServe Space Technologies at the University of Colorado, Boulder—wants to investigate whether the unique conditions in space can lead to genetic mutations in the plants.

Up to 480 plant cell cultures will be kept in a special incubator that regulates temperature aboard the ISS for around 30 days. The cells will then be returned to Earth where scientists from Front Range Biosciences will examine them to see how microgravity and exposure to space radiation has affected the gene expression of the plants.

"This is one of the first times anyone is researching the effects of microgravity and spaceflight on hemp and coffee cell cultures," Jonathan Vaught, co-founder and CEO of Front Range Biosciences said in a statement.

"There is science to support the theory that plants in space experience mutations. This is an opportunity to see whether those mutations hold up once brought back to earth and if there are new commercial applications," he said.

According to the company, the research could expand our understanding

of how plants react to the stresses of space travel. This in turn could have implications for growing plants on Earth. Learning how plants respond to unique environments—like space—can help agricultural technology companies to develop new, hardier varieties which can grow in harsh conditions.

This is significant because as the planet's climate changes, an increasing number of plants will not be able to grow in areas where they once thrived.

"These are big ideas we're pursuing and there's a massive opportunity to bring to market new plants that can better adapt to drought and cold conditions," Peter McCullagh, CEO of SpaceCells, said in a statement. "We expect to prove through these and other missions that we can adapt the food supply to climate change."

The team hope that they can conduct future experiments in which astronauts will harvest and preserve plants at different points in their growth cycle.

"This is a fascinating area of study that has considerable potential," said Louis Stodieck, Chief Scientist of BioServe Space Technologies at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

While cannabis is still illegal at the federal level, hemp—which contains no more than 0.3 percent THC—was removed as a Schedule I controlled substance in 2018. The plant is extremely versatile and can be used to make everything from textiles, rope, clothing and food, to paper, bioplastics, insulation and biofuel.

It also contains high quantities of the compound CBD (cannabidiol) which has been touted as a treatment for a host of health issues.

(Source: msn)

Scientists create new kind of artificial flesh



Artificial flesh is growing ever closer to the real thing. Scientists in Australia have now created a new jelly-like material which they claim has the strength and durability of actual skin, ligaments, or even bone.

"With the special chemistry we've engineered in the hydrogel, it can repair itself after it has been broken like human skin can," explains chemist Luke Connal from the Australian National University.

"Hydrogels are usually weak, but our material is so strong it could easily lift very heavy objects and can change its shape like human muscles do."

Having a squishy material with such remarkable properties could be huge for the development of next-generation soft robotics and biomedical devices. Creating a shape-changing hydrogel that has multiple functions has proved an ongoing challenge for scientists, even with natural inspiration from jellyfish, sea cucumbers, and Venus fly traps.

While some hydrogels can withstand mechanical stress, others have self-healing properties, and a few more have the abilities to memorize shapes or change colors.

As far as the ANU researchers know, no one else has been able to incorporate all these functions into one all-encompassing gel. At least, not at the speed and efficiency they've achieved.

Putting their material through multiple tests, the authors claim to have created the first dynamic hydrogel that is strong, tough, fatigue resistant, self-healing and able to change shapes and 'remember' them afterwards.

"The advantages of using such a multifunctional hydrogel is further demonstrated through an ability to lift heavy objects in a reversible and repeatable way

upon thermal stimulus," the team writes.

Using this material, the researchers made extremely thin films of 'flesh' without any breakage. When these films were heated or cooled, they then changed into different shapes, bending one way or the other before returning back to their original state along with the temperature.

Unlike many other hydrogels, which can sometimes take 10 minutes or more to change shape, the authors say their gel takes only 10 seconds to bend. Here, the key is said to be the gel's dynamic hydrogen bonds and dynamic imine (carbon-nitrogen) bonds, which work together to form "unprecedented properties".

Dynamic bonds have a high response to stimuli, which makes them perfect for environmental adaptation and self-repair, and imine bonds in particular have fast reaction kinetics that can enable rapid self-healing.

What's more, the authors say these materials can be easily prepared using simple chemistry, and if other polymers are added to the molecular mix, perhaps even more functions can be achieved.

If temperature is somehow used as a control, the authors think this gel could one day be moved like an artificial muscle.

"In a lot of science fiction movies, we see the most challenging jobs being done by artificial humanoid robots. Our research has made a significant step towards making this possible," says material engineer Zhen Jiang.

"We anticipate that researchers working on the next-generation of soft robots will be interested and excited about our new way of making hydrogels."

In the meantime, the team is hoping to turn their hydrogel into a 3D-printable ink.

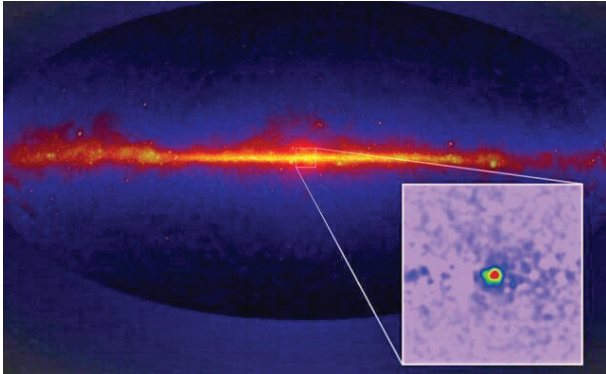
(Source: sciencealert.com)

Dark matter may explain mysterious gamma ray source at center of Milky Way

New analysis by astrophysicists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology suggests dark matter could explain a mysterious source of gamma rays in the center of the Milky Way.

Gamma rays are the most energetic electromagnetic waves. Throughout the Milky Way, astronomers have traced gamma rays to two sources: supernovae and pulsars. But at the center of the Milky Way, scientists have struggled to account for a glow of gamma rays.

Previously, MIT scientists developed simulations suggesting a collection of pulsars, rapidly rotating neutron stars, were responsible for the stream of gamma rays.



More recently, the same team of astrophysicists reexamined their model. The researchers attempted to trick the simulation by supplying it with a false dark matter signal. The model, unable to distinguish between the pulsars and dark matter, produced the same result as before.

The new research, published this week in the journal Physical Review Letters, suggests dark matter is back in play as a viable explanation for the Milky Way center's gamma ray emissions.

"It's exciting in that we thought we had eliminated the possibility that this is dark matter," researcher Tracy Slatyer, an associate professor of physics at MIT, told MIT News. "But now there's a loophole, a systematic error in the claim we made. It reopens the door for the signal to be coming from dark matter."

Most of the Milk Way's matter is situated on a flat plane. The galaxy is shaped like a giant spiral disk. But the gamma rays emanating from the galaxy's center appear more like a giant sphere, pushing out 5,000 light-years in every direction.

The original model developed by Slatyer and her colleagues was designed to determine whether the sphere of gamma rays in the Milky Way's galactic center appeared "smooth" or "grainy."

Because pulsars are so bright, they should produce a grainy appearance, while gamma rays traced to dark matter should yield a smooth sphere.

The model they came up with was tweaked to produce both a smooth and grainy sphere. When scientists supplied the model with data collected by the Fermi telescope, they found the grainy simulation best matched Fermi's observations.

"We saw it was 100 percent grainy, and so we said, 'oh, dark matter can't do that, so it must be something else,'" Slatyer said. "My hope was that this would be just the first of many studies of the galactic center region using similar techniques. But by 2018, the main cross-checks of the method were still the ones we'd done in 2015, which made me pretty nervous that we might have missed something."

Suspecting there was something amiss with their model, Slatyer and MIT postdoc Rebecca Leane began working to undermine it -- to poke holes in it.

Leane and Slatyer decided to rerun the 2015 simulations using fake Fermi data, a fictional map of the sky featuring a made-up dark matter signal. Despite the dark matter signal, the model still spit out a grainy sphere, once again implicating pulsars as the primary source of the gamma rays in the middle of Milky Way.

The researchers decided to run their model again, this time with a fake dark matter signal hidden in real Fermi data. Scientists ran the simulation several times, each time turning up the volume of the fake dark matter signal. The model failed to distinguish between the dark matter and pulsars.

The scientists had indeed found a "mismodeling effect." "By that stage, I was pretty excited, because I knew the implications were very big -- it meant that the dark matter explanation was back on the table," Leane said.

As usual, the latest findings, while exciting, mean there is a lot more work to do. Slatyer, Leane and their colleagues are once again working to rid their model of its bias and reexamine Fermi's observations of the mysterious glow of gamma rays.

Maybe it's been dark matter producing those gamma rays all along.

"If it's really dark matter, this would be the first evidence of dark matter interacting with visible matter through forces other than gravity," Leane said. "The nature of dark matter is one of the biggest open questions in physics at the moment. Identifying this signal as dark matter may allow us to finally expose the fundamental identity of dark matter. No matter what the excess turns out to be, we will learn something new about the universe."

(Source: UPI)

ESA awards first junk clean-up contract

ClearSpace-1 is planned for launch in 2025 and will be the first mission to remove an item of space debris from orbit. After a competitive bid process, the European Space Agency has awarded a service contract to a consortium led by the Swiss startup company ClearSpace, which is staffed by space debris experts from the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) research institute.

The service contract model is a different way of working on missions for ESA. Usually the agency takes an active role in defining how a mission works. In this instance, however, it is paying ClearSpace to remove a piece of space junk but not specifying how that should be done. In this way, ESA is hoping to stimulate a commercial market for comparatively low-cost space debris removal.

The contract with ClearSpace is worth about €100m (£84.3m) and will focus on removing the payload adapter that helped deliver the ESA spacecraft Proba-V into orbit. This 100kg object has been in orbit since 2013, looping around Earth in an 800km by 660km altitude elliptical orbit. ClearSpace-1 will meet its target, grasp it using four robotic arms, and tow it into the Earth's atmosphere where both spacecraft will burn up.

(Source: The Guardian)

Some 2,500 historical monuments in need of restoration in Iran

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Of the numerous historical buildings and structures that are scattered across Iran, some 2,500 ones are in need of restoration, an official with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts has said. Fortunately, the potential of public participation is used for restoring the country's historical monuments, ISNA quoted Mohammad Khayatian as saying on Tuesday.



Archaeologists and restorers commence a new round of work on the ancient Manujan fort in the southeastern Kerman province, January 2019.

Over the past couple of years, tens of historical places and monuments have been temporarily ceded to the private sector under supervision of the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places.

Affiliated with the tourism ministry, the Fund is in charge of concession with the aim of historical sites receiving better maintenance by repurposing them into thriving boutique hotels, eco-lodges, traditional restaurants or other profitable niches.

The country boasts hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

The world's first fully-electric flight proves that environmentally-friendly aviation is coming

The world's first fully-electric commercial flight landed in Canada in an achievement that could lead to major changes in establishing a cleaner aviation industry.

The six-seater sea plane plane took off from Vancouver on Tuesday and flew for about 15 minutes before successfully landing. According to the companies who operated the flight, Harbour Air and magniX, it marks the start of a new age of aviation: electric.

The flight was operated by Harbour Air, a short-haul Canadian airline and magniX who built the plane's electric engine. The plane itself was a 62-year-old DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver seaplane retrofitted with a 750hp electric moto. Greg McDougall, the CEO and founder of Harbour Air, piloted the historic flight.

"The transportation industry and specifically the aviation segment that has been, for the most part, stagnant since the late 1930s, is ripe for a massive disruption," Roei Ganzarski, CEO of magniX, said in a statement. "Now we are proving that low-cost, environmentally friendly, commercial electric air travel can be a reality in the very near future."

According to The Guardian, Harbour Air aims to electrify its entire fleet of planes. However, we're still a long way off from longer-haul airlines doing the same. The engine used in this test flight is only capable of powering the plane about 100 miles.

(Source: travelandleisure.com)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Classical Gardens of Suzhou

The classical gardens of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China date back to the 6th century BC when the city was founded as the capital of the Wu Kingdom.

Inspired by these royal hunting gardens built by the King of the State of Wu, private gardens began emerging around the 4th century and finally reached the climax in the 18th century.



Today, more than 50 of these gardens are still in existence, nine of which, namely the Humble Administrator's Garden, Lingering Garden, Net Master's Garden, the Mountain Villa with Embracing Beauty, the Canglang Pavilion, the Lion Grove Garden, the Garden of Cultivation, the Couple's Garden Retreat, and the Retreat & Reflection Garden, are regarded as the finest embodiments of Chinese "Mountain and Water" gardens.

The earliest of these, the Canglang Pavilion was built in the early 11th century on the site of an earlier, destroyed garden. Conceived and built under the influence of the unconstrained poetic freehand style originally seen in traditional Chinese landscape paintings, they are noted for their profound merging of exquisite craftsmanship, artistic elegance and rich cultural implications.

These gardens lend insight into how ancient Chinese intellectuals harmonized conceptions of aestheticism in a culture of seclusion within an urban living environment.

Garden masters from each dynasty adapted various techniques to artfully simulate nature by skillfully adapting and utilizing only the physical space available to them.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran's dotar instrument wins world heritage status

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's traditional skills of crafting and playing the dotar won world heritage status on Thursday, joining UNESCO's culture list as one of the most prominent social and cultural components of the folkloric music of the nation.

UNESCO accepted traditional skills of crafting and playing the dotar on the world body's list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Iran's tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said, CHTN reported.

The inscription took place during the annual meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which was held in the Colombian capital of Bogota.

Dotar (meaning "two strings" in Persian) is a folkloric plucked musical instrument with a pear-shaped bow crafted with dried wood or mulberry tree, a neck made of apricot or walnut wood, and two strings. Some believe one string is male and functions as the accord, while the other is female, playing the main melody. Performers play the dotar on important social and cultural occasions such as weddings, parties, celebrations and ritual ceremonies. Bearers and practitioners are mostly farmers, including male crafters and players and female players.

In recent decades, it has also been played in local, regional, national and international festivals. While playing, the players recount epic, historical, lyric, moral and gnostic narrations that are central to their ethnic history, pride and identity.

According to the UN cultural body, traditional knowledge relating to crafting and playing the dotar is passed on informally through the master-student method, and the element is also present in local oral and written literature, which reflects the history and background of the bearers. The element fosters peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and understanding both among different communities and



with neighboring countries.

In December 2017, Iran's "the art of crafting and playing with Kamancheh" won the same world heritage status jointly with the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Kamancheh, a stringed instrument of the fiddle family, epitomizes some major elements of classical and folkloric music and performances that Iran and Azerbaijan have in common. Knowledge associated with the art of crafting and playing kamancheh has been passed down from generations

to generations from both families and in musicians. The stringed instrument has a membrane belly and is played either by soloists or in ensembles.

So far, 14 Iranian elements have been inscribed on the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including Chogan, a horse-riding game accompanied by music and storytelling; Qalishuyan rituals of Mashhad-e Ardehal in Kashan; and the traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf.

Gilan province selected to start Iran's comprehensive tourism plan



Travelers visit the historical Rudkhan castle in Gilan province, northern Iran.

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The northern province of Gilan has been selected as the first province to start the country's comprehensive tourism plan, which is to be developed under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Eelier this month, UNWTO advisor Marcello Notarianni

in a meeting with Vali Teymouri, Iran's deputy tourism minister, announced the UN body's readiness to expand cooperation with the Islamic Republic in order to help it develop a comprehensive tourism plan.

In a meeting with Gilan's Governor General Arsalan Zare on Thursday, Notarianni noted that Gilan's project, which is named after the ancient Silk Road, is to be implemented with the technical assistance from the World Tourism Organization and it will be financed by the European Union and the UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran.

Gilan is selected the first province because of its [immense] natural capacities and because of being a destination for tourists from Azerbaijan and other neighboring countries, Notarianni added.

"This comprehensive plan will serve as a roadmap to guide tourists from all over the globe to achieve a sustainable and competitive tourism [market]," he explained.

This project focuses not only on local communities but also on international tourism, he added.

"We are striving to focus on marketing, management, investment, education and interaction across different domains in all public and private sectors that are related to tourism in order to make them harmonious."

Zare for his part attached importance to the UNWTO cooperation, saying that each region of the world, which is introduced by the World Tourism Organization, has

somehow been thrived to draw an international attention.

The Iranian official voiced hope that this way Gilan province to host more travelers.

Tourism, according to UNWTO, has experienced continued expansion and diversification over the past six decades, and it has become one of the fastest growing and most important economic sectors in the world, benefiting destinations and communities worldwide.

"International tourist arrivals worldwide have grown from 25 million in 1950 to nearly 1.3 billion today. Similarly, international tourism revenues earned by destinations around the world have grown from 2 billion U.S. dollars in 1950 to 1260 trillion in 2015. The sector represents an estimated 10 percent of the world's GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally," the organization says.

Sophisticated Rasht, capital of Gilan province, has long been a weekend escape for residents of Tehran who are looking to sample the famous local cuisine and hoping for some pluvial action — it's the largest, and wettest town in the northern region. Gilan is divided into a coastal plain including the large delta of Sefid Rud and adjacent parts of the Alborz mountain range.

Bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the north, Gilan, in the far past, was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE.

World's oldest figurative cave painting depicts ancient hunting scene

Artistic expression is a vital part of the human story, and it's a story that began at least 44,000 years ago. The discovery of an ancient cave painting on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi has pushed the origins of figurative cave painting back further than ever before.

The painting was first discovered by Hamrullah, an Indonesian spelunker and archaeologist, while working on a government survey in 2017. After noticing a hole in the ceiling at a cement plant where the survey was being conducted, Hamrullah clambered up a wall, through the opening and shimmied up a tunnel to discover a cave decorated in ancient pigments.

The painting discovered by Hamrullah -- and since surveyed by an international team of archaeologists -- is described this week in a new paper published in the journal Nature. It depicts a collection of a human-like figures with animal heads, a hunting party. The humans are holding spears, and they look to be after wild pigs and miniature buffalo.

Until the discovery of the ancient mural, measuring some eight feet across on the walls of the cave Leang Bulu' Sipong 4, the oldest comparable artwork was a 19,000-year-old French cave painting depicting a bison hunt.

The Indonesian mural not only pushes back the roots of the human's artistic evolution, but expands its geographic bounds. Even at its earliest stages, artistic expression was a global phenomenon.

From upscale Bangkok spas and Phuket beachfronts to modest street-side shophouses, nuad Thai is ubiquitous, and an hour of the back-straightening discipline can cost



"When you do an archaeological excavation, you usually find what people left behind, their trash. But when you look at rock art, it's not rubbish -- it seems like a message. We can feel a connection to it," Maxime Aubert, lead author of the new study and an archaeologist and geochemist at Australia's Griffith University, told National Geographic. "Now we're starting to date it, not just in Europe but in Southeast Asia, and we see that it completely changes the picture of our human journey."

According to Aubert and his research

partners, the cave painting isn't just proof of symbolism and artistic expression, but also of believe in supernatural beings.

The animal heads painted atop the hunters' bodies don't make sense as camouflage. Instead, research suggest the figures are human-animal hybrids -- supernatural creatures. Similar supernatural figurines have been discovered elsewhere. In Germany, archaeologists found a 35,000-year-old ivory figurine featuring a human body and lion head.

"The depiction of the part-human,

part-animal hunters may also be the earliest evidence of our capacity to conceive of things that do not exist in the natural world," the researchers wrote in The Conversation.

The mythical elements and the narrative action fit with what researchers know about different human societies and their cultural commonalities.

"These depictions underline the great antiquity of narratives and storytelling," Nicholas Conard, an archaeologist at the University of Tübingen in Germany who wasn't involved in the research, told Science Magazine. "It is encouraging to find concrete evidence for narrative depictions at this early date."

Researchers can't be certain who painted the cave, but authors of the new study suspect the artist or artists were modern humans.

"We assume these ancient artists were Homo sapiens and that spirituality and religious thinking were part of early human culture in Indonesia," Griffith archaeologist Adam Brumm told Science News.

Scientists have previously found dozens of abstract paintings in the caves of Sulawesi, but never such an ancient depiction of figures and narrative action. Unfortunately, many of the region's cave paintings are deteriorating.

"We urgently need to determine why this art is disappearing and what to do about it," Brumm told Science News.

(Source: UPI)

Traditional Thai massage gains UNESCO heritage status

The body-folding, sharp-elbowed techniques of Thai massage have been added to UNESCO's prestigious heritage list.

Originating in India and practiced in Thailand for centuries, the massage was popularized when a special school opened in the 1960s to train massage therapists from around the world.

The addition of nuad Thai to UNESCO's list of "intangible cultural heritage" practices was "historic", said the Thai delegate at the UNESCO meeting in Bogot?, Colombia. "It helps promote the practice of Nuad Thai locally and internationally," he said.

From upscale Bangkok spas and Phuket beachfronts to modest street-side shophouses, nuad Thai is ubiquitous, and an hour of the back-straightening discipline can cost

as little as \$5.

Thai cafes forced to track customers' wifi use, sparking free speech fears

Doctors and monks were said to have brought these methods 2,500 years ago to Thailand, passing its secrets from master to disciple in temples and later within families.

Under Thailand's King Rama III in the 19th century, scholars engraved their knowledge of the field onto the stones of the famed Wat Pho temple in Bangkok.

Its nuad Thai school, which has trained more than 200,000 massage therapists who practice in 145 countries, opened in 1962.

Today, a therapist at a top-end spa can charge around \$100 an hour in Thailand, and two or three times more in

London, New York or Hong Kong where the Thai massage brand is booming.

But the training is "demanding", says Chilean Sari, a professional masseuse who travelled to Bangkok to learn the discipline.

"The technique is very precise; there are so many things to be aware of," the 34-year-old said.

The teachings focus on directing blood circulation around problem areas to solve muscle aches -- sometimes drawing wincing from clients unaccustomed to the force applied.

Studies have shown it can help relieve back pain, headaches, insomnia and even anxiety.

(Source: The Guardian)

Afghanistan: Oh, when will we ever learn?

“U.S. officials failed to tell the truth about the war in Afghanistan throughout the 18-year campaign,” the Washington Post’s Craig Whitlock reports, “making rosy pronouncements they knew to be false and hiding unmistakable evidence the war had become unwinnable.”

Whitlock bases that claim on a collection of candid, confidential interviews with more than 400 military and political “insiders” conducted by Congress’s Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Not that we really needed “The Afghanistan Papers” to tell us the war was unwinnable. That was clear from the beginning. Any mission beyond quick strikes on al Qaeda’s facilities and operators in Afghanistan was doomed to failure.

The idea of taking over the country and making it into a “western democracy” was transparent foolishness. More than one empire has foundered on the rock that is Afghanistan, and the American military adventure there was never going to be the exception. Nor do “The Afghanistan Papers” tell us anything else we shouldn’t have already known. They merely confirm a lesson we should have learned nearly 50 ago. In 1971, the New York Times published the Report of the Office of



the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force, better known as “The Pentagon Papers.”

That report, leaked to the press by American hero Daniel Ellsberg, revealed (in the words of the Times’s R.W. Apple) “that the Johnson Administration had systematically lied, not only to the public but also to Congress,” about the progress and prospects of

the US war in Vietnam.

Sound familiar?

War is always ugly. Optional and prolonged wars with nebulous objectives are always built on lies — lies stacked sky-high atop one another for no other purpose than to keep the ugliness going for as long as possible. Why?

U.S. security agencies; slimmer than ever!

➔ I suspect we’re talking about the same NSA, CYBERCOM and intelligence community we’ve listened to whine for the last 30 years about how civilian encryption technologies and other privacy protections are just too darn good and should be artificially hobbled to make them easier to crack. Global Firepower lists 2019 defense budgets for 137 of the world’s countries. Of those countries, 61 — nearly half — spend less than \$1 billion per year on their entire armed forces. That is, less than the Pentagon wants to spend per year on a single computing system. It’s not Amazon who’s getting screwed here, it’s the American taxpayer. JEDI is Pentagon budget padding at one end and corporate welfare at the other, not an essential element of a robust national defense. In other news, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper still hasn’t found the droids he’s looking for.

■ What’s Wrong With FISA?

Antiwar reported Congress enacted the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in 1978 in response to the unlawful surveillance of Americans by the FBI and the CIA during the Watergate era. President Richard Nixon — who famously quipped after leaving office that “when the president does it, that means that it is not illegal” — used the FBI and the CIA to spy on his political opponents.

The stated reason was national security. Nixon claimed that foreign agents physically present in the U.S. agitated and aggravated his political opponents to produce the great public unrest in America in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and thus diminished Americans’ appetite for fighting the Vietnam War. There was, of course, no evidence to support that view, but the neocons in Congress and the military-industrial complex supported it even after Nixon left office.

This view — there are foreigners among us who wish us harm — came to fruition during the presidency of Jimmy Carter, who pushed for the enactment of FISA. FISA’s stated purpose was to limit — not expand — the government’s surveillance powers by requiring the intervention and permission of a judge. Wait a minute. Government surveillance is a search under the Fourth Amendment, and government searches already required warrants from judges. So, what was new about FISA?

The Constitution requires probable cause of crime to be demonstrated to a judge before the judge can sign a search warrant. That was the law of the land until FISA came along. FISA set up the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, and it authorized the judges on that court to issue search warrants based on a lower standard of probable cause. Isn’t that contrary to the Constitution? Yes, it is. But a challenge has never reached a non-FISC federal court because the government has never used evidence that it admits was obtained from a FISC warrant in a criminal case for fear that a federal court will invalidate the FISA standard.

It gets worse. Because FISC meets in secret, and because only government lawyers appear before it, we have a dangerous recipe: Secrecy and no defense counsel produce tyranny. That combination has the standard for issuing search warrants sliding even further down the slope of tyranny and absurdity. FISA established probable cause of foreign agency as the standard that government lawyers must meet. That morphed into probable cause of foreign personhood. That morphed into probable cause of speaking to a foreign person. And that morphed into probable cause of speaking to any person who has ever spoken to a foreign person. All of this happened in secret.

This slow but persistent destruction of the right to be left alone, which is ostensibly guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment, came about not only by secrecy and the absence of adversaries but also by judicial gullibility and constitutional infidelity. Judges have a tendency

to accept uncritically the unchallenged applications presented to them. This is an inherent defect for FISC judges, whose decisions slowly and materially weakened the already unconstitutional FISA probable cause standard. FISC judges have granted 99.97% of all applications for search warrants.

All of this is presented as historical and legal background for an understanding of the report of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice on the FBI’s use of FISA to surveil the Trump campaign in 2016 and 2017. That report, released earlier this week, concludes that the original FISA statutory standard — probable cause of foreign agency — was met when Australian intelligence agents tipped off CIA and FBI agents to the boasts of one of Donald Trump’s foreign policy advisers that he had ties to the Kremlin.

The FBI then took that tip, added to it erroneous, incomplete and unverified materials, and persuaded FISC to issue warrants to surveil the Trump adviser and the campaign. The DOJ IG found that the beginning of the investigation was lawful and nonpolitical, but its expansion and continuance manifested substantial violations of DOJ and FBI protocols. There is more. FISA is not only unconstitutional; it is also inherently corrupting of government officials. When government prosecutors seek a search warrant pursuant to the Fourth Amendment, they are careful to document all their allegations. They know that if their target is indicted, the target’s lawyers will have access to their applications for the search warrant and can challenge its issuance. In the midst of a homicide trial, I once reversed and nullified a warrant that I had issued two years earlier when I learned that the government had intentionally kept exculpatory evidence from me; evidence that, had I known of it, would have dissuaded me from issuing the warrant. That is the beauty of our due process. The adversary system exposes the truth. There is no such exposure under FISA, and FBI and National Security Agency agents know that. They also know that their methods and applications to the secret FISC will never be exposed to defense counsel or to the public. Until now.

Now, we have seen in a case involving the president of the United States, a material alteration of a document, reliance on unverified allegations, substantial omissions, agents duping one another, applications signed by senior DOJ and FBI folks who never even read, much less questioned, what they signed — all done with the false comfort that their misdeeds would not come to light. My intelligence and law enforcement colleagues tell me that two generations of FBI agents have come of age believing that if they have a weak case, if they lack enough probable cause to obtain a search warrant, they can always get one from FISC. The FISA Court is repugnant to the Constitution and to the concept of an independent judiciary, and it took an IG report on the FBI and the president to demonstrate that.

■ FBI agents warn of ‘chilling effect’ from Trump and Barr attacks

As CNN reported, Some federal law enforcement officials are warning of a chilling effect inside the FBI amid attacks by President Donald Trump and Attorney General William Barr over the bureau’s handling of the Russia investigation.

Current and former FBI officials tell CNN they’re concerned that the harsh rhetoric coming from Trump and Barr has only worsened the bureau’s already tenuous standing with the President, leaving them wondering whether federal agents could be less aggressive the next time they have to pursue a sensitive investigation.

“We’re constantly told to be agile and use all the legal tools available to us,” said one FBI employee who works on counterintelligence matters. “But who is going to risk sticking their

neck out now only to have DOJ chop it off?”

Barr this week seized on findings in a blockbuster inspector general report to scold the FBI for using “intrusive” tools with only “flimsy” evidence, and he questioned whether they’d been motivated by bias. Those attacks were particularly noteworthy given that the report found no evidence of bias or improper motivation in the FBI’s decisions to use counterintelligence techniques. The report did however point out serious mistakes and mishandling of evidence by the FBI.

In his criticism, Barr has used language that hews closely to conspiracies from Trump, who maintains that his campaign was illegally spied on. During a rally on Tuesday night, Trump used the word “scum” to refer to FBI employees he believes acted improperly.

“These comments will have a chilling effect on the workforce,” said one recently retired agent who has handled surveillance warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the kind abused according to the inspector general report.

■ Investigative tools

If there are more administrative hurdles, and concern that actions will be second-guessed, agents may decide to avoid certain investigative tools, the former agent said. That includes pursuing things like FISA warrants to surveil targets, a process that is frequently used by investigators, but was riddled with errors during the Russia investigation, the inspector general found.

As they sought to determine if members of the Trump campaign were colluding with the Russian government in the run-up to the 2016 election, FBI officials in Washington turned to what were standard measures for the bureau but that were used in extraordinary circumstances to investigate a presidential campaign.

Informants were deployed to meet and record conversations with certain campaign aides, and FISA warrants targeted Carter Page, a onetime foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign, allowing the FBI to eavesdrop on his calls and look back on his messages.

While he found no evidence of political bias in the FBI’s investigation, Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz called out “failure” among the ranks of the FBI for making a number of “basic and fundamental errors” as they sought permission to obtain the FISA warrants.

On Wednesday Horowitz criticized the application process for the FISA warrants on Page. “Let me put it this way, I would not have submitted the one they put in,” Horowitz said.

Barr, in an interview with NBC News Tuesday, heightened the failure to an accusation of civil liberties abuse.

“The greatest danger to our free system is that the incumbent government use the apparatus of the state, principally the law enforcement agencies and the intelligence agencies, both to spy on political opponents, but also to use them in a way that could affect the outcome of the election,” Barr said.

As the head of the Justice Department, Barr is two steps above the FBI’s director, Christopher Wray, and defenders of the agency have called Barr’s pejorative use of the term “spying” inappropriate.

“For the boss of the boss of the FBI director to be criticizing how the FBI does that and to use those types of terms is not helpful,” said Robert Anderson, a former FBI assistant director for counterintelligence who signed off on numerous FISA warrants before becoming a top executive under former director James Comey.

Barr was looking at the situation through a political lens, rather than strictly at the facts of the case, Anderson said. He disagreed, however, that the political rhetoric could impede the

The prettiest answer, and it’s not pretty, is that generals and politicians hate to admit defeat. They can always be relied upon to convince themselves — and try to convince us — that “a corner has been turned” and that “there’s light at the end of the tunnel,” at least until they’ve managed to bequeath the losses to, and blame the losses on, their successors. The uglier answer is that war is profitable all around for politicians who want to be re-elected, officers who want to be promoted, and “defense” contractors who want to sell more guns, more bombs, more planes, more everything. It’s not so good for the rest of us, though. At a conservative estimate, the US government has burned through more than a trillion dollars dragging out the fiasco in Afghanistan. You’re on the hook for that bar tab. And you’re getting off easy. More than 3,500 “coalition” troops, most of them Americans, and somewhere between 100,000 and half a million Afghans (depending on whose figures you believe) have paid with their lives. Next time the politicians want to drum up or continue an optional war, they’ll tell us the same lies they told us this time, and last time, and the time before that. We’ve got to stop believing those lies.

work of rank and file agents. “I don’t know if it has a chilling effect at the workforce level because most of the men and women, analysts and linguists, are not tied to any of the political nonsense at headquarters,” Anderson said.

■ Ignoring the criticism

Agents and employees in the field have tried to ignore the political criticism and constant headlines, and some are disappointed in the actions of past FBI leadership, an agent told CNN. “We want to be proud of our agency,” the agent said, but after more than two years “we don’t have time to dwell on it.”

Agents continue to work their cases, putting in long hours, the agent said.

One of the concerns arising from the internal watchdog investigation is the finding of what the inspector general said were a series of missteps up and down the FBI chain of command, despite the fact officials knew the case was going to be highly scrutinized.

“You had the highest levels of the organization working on this, and they made such epic failures that they’re going to bring down the entire organization because of the incompetence in how they did their jobs,” the retired agent said.

FBI agents and employees are often accused of having swagger, viewing themselves as better investigators than those from other government agencies.

The problems identified in the inspector general report, along with the attacks from political leaders, hurts that pride, current and former employees say.

Panelist: one can be alarmed by misconduct of both FBI and Trump

In a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Wednesday, Republican chairman Lindsey Graham seized on these failures in questioning Horowitz, asking him whether they representative of the bureau on the whole.

“I certainly hope that that is not the way others are following these practices,” Horowitz said.

■ Wray’s response

FBI Director Wray has sought to support the agency in the aftermath of the report with a video message that went out to staff and a letter that was sent to former employees. In a series of interviews on Monday, Wray also pointed to the fact that Horowitz found that the investigation was properly opened, though he called the problems identified in the report “unacceptable and unrepresentative of who we are as an institution.”

In a response included in the report, Wray described more than 40 steps the FBI was taking to address recommendations made by the inspector general, including changes to make the processes for seeking FISA warrants “more stringent and less susceptible to mistake or inaccuracy.”

At the oversight hearing Wednesday, Graham, a close Republican ally of the President, suggested a broader overhaul of the FISA system would be necessary if law enforcement wanted to keep the power. “I would hate to lose the ability of the FISA court to operate at a time probably when we need it the most. But after your report, I have serious concerns about whether the FISA court can continue unless there is fundamental reform,” Graham said.

David Szady, a second former assistant director for counterintelligence at the FBI, underscored the value that law enforcement derives from FISA surveillance, but agreed that more oversight to that tool and others used by investigators in the Russia probe was a good thing.

“They’re just so intrusive. You’re talking about using techniques, whether they’re human sources or technical sources, against a US citizen, so you want to make sure your information is as solid as possible,” Szady said.

Soldiers who fight war

By John Feffer

One of the enduring myths connected to the Vietnam War is that the U.S. military could have won the war if the politicians and protesters back in Washington didn’t somehow handicap the generals. When George H. W. Bush launched the first Gulf War in 1990, for instance, he said that “this will not be another Vietnam. Our troops will...not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back.”

This myth doesn’t account for the determination of the Vietnamese to repel the US troops. It also doesn’t take into consideration the US troops themselves and how they felt about the war. If any hands were secured by any backs, it was often the GIs themselves who were doing the tying. As David Cortright writes in his contribution to the important new book, *Waging Peace in Vietnam*, which he edited with Ron Carver and Barbara Doherty, the US military by the early 1970s was in no condition to fight a war much less win one. By 1971, he points out, the AWOL rate had hit an all-time high of 17 percent. One in six soldiers were not showing up at their job.

Also by 1971, the military recorded nearly 500 acts of attempted damage to military equipment by the soldiers themselves. Then there was all the “fragging” that was taking place, 500 of them by 1972, in which soldiers rolled fragmentation grenades into the quarters of their superiors — either to send a warning or to outright kill them. Many veterans and even some active-duty soldiers were involved in protesting the war.

The US army, particularly by the early 1970s, was a house divided.



By this time, too, many Americans had turned against the war. Mass street protests were taking place in Washington. Respected figures like TV newscaster Walter Cronkite were urging the US government to negotiate and pull out troops. Opposition from the soldiers themselves occasionally made it into the headlines, for instance when John Kerry, representing the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1971. In that year, too, 700 veterans threw their medals over the fence in front of the White House, which merited a small article in *The New York Times*.

These acts of resistance, however, are largely ignored in the official narrative about the Vietnam War, which allows the “hand behind the back” myth to endure. *Waging Peace in Vietnam* provides a corrective. By assembling the accounts of dozens of veterans and activists, the book paints a much fuller picture of the resistance to the Vietnam War by GIs and their supporters. It documents the extensive antiwar newspapers published by soldiers in the United States, Europe, Asia, and even Iceland. It includes interviews with the people who set up GI coffeehouses on or near bases, which then became centers of resistance. It covers the uprisings by African American soldiers disgusted with the racism that permeated the armed forces. It provides snapshots of several of the 30,000 draft resisters who left for Canada at that time.

In one particularly poignant episode in the book, helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson recounts how he saw from the air the bodies of dead Vietnamese women, old men, and children in what would later become known as the My Lai massacre. He landed his copter and managed to rescue nine civilians from certain death at the hands of his fellow soldiers. Even more remarkably, Thompson told his crew to shoot at his compatriots in order to force them to stand down. “I’m not going to let these GIs kill any more of these people,” he radioed his friends in a nearby gunship. When Thompson testified before Congress at the end of 1969, the then-chairman of the House Armed Services Committee argued that the pilot, for trying to stop the massacre, should be the only soldier punished for what happened at My Lai.

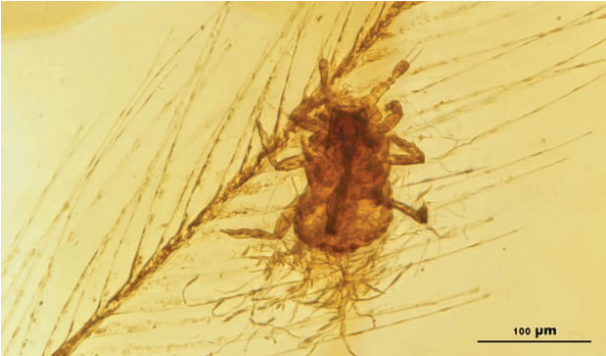
Thompson would eventually return to Vietnam, part of a wave of veterans who sought some form of reconciliation with the people they fought against. These veterans, including both the antiwar John Kerry and the pro-war John McCain, played an important role in effecting a remarkable rapprochement between what had once been two implacable enemies.

Given the myths about why the United States didn’t win in Vietnam, it’s no surprise that Washington has never learned the right lessons from the conflict. It would blunder into even more challenging quagmires in Afghanistan and Iraq. The war in Afghanistan is now 18 years old, nearly twice as long as US involvement in Vietnam.

And just as there’s a terrible continuity between these wars, there is also a hopeful parallel in the efforts of active duty soldiers and veterans to put an end to America’s endless wars in the Middle East. *Waging Peace in Vietnam* includes a chapter on the resistance waged by the latest generation of antiwar vets. It’s a useful reminder that those who know war best can be the most effective antiwar activists.

Dinosaurs had feathers ruffled by parasites, study finds

Dinosaurs may have been fearsome and intimidating creatures that dominated the prehistoric earth – but it did not stop them having their feathers ruffled by parasites, researchers have found. Scientists have discovered ancient pieces of amber, dating from about 99m years ago, that contain dinosaur feathers riddled with louse-like insects. One of the feathers even shows signs of having been nibbled.



The team said it is the first time feather-eating insects have been discovered from that era – despite many non-avian dinosaurs and early birds having been identified as having plumage. “This is the earliest recorded, or formally documented, [instance of] lice or louse-like insects feeding on feathers,” said Dr Chungkun Shih, a visiting professor at Capital Normal University in China and co-author of the research.

The discovery pushes back the origin of feather-munching insects by about 55m years. They were not the only parasites that might have troubled dinosaurs; previous research has shown that the beasts also endured blood-sucking ticks.

Writing in the journal Nature Communications, Shih and colleagues revealed how they found 10 tiny louse-like insects alongside two dinosaur feathers inside Burmese amber believed to date from about 99m years ago – or possibly earlier.

The team said the insects belonged to a previously unknown species, dubbed Mesophthirus engeli, and were nymphs – an immature stage of insect development. Among their features, the insects had tiny wingless bodies, of 0.14mm–0.23mm in length, strong chewing mouth parts with at least four teeth, and short, sturdy antennae. The team estimate that the insects would have reached about 0.5mm in length in their adult phase.

Shih said the size of the insects was a surprise, since fleas from the era were much larger than their modern counterparts. “Based on our studies of fossil fleas, we thought that if we were looking for lice, the size may be bigger than today’s lice, but [they] turned out to be very small,” he said. “That can explain why on compression fossils [in rocks] we cannot find any lice.”

Even within ancient amber, the insects are rare. Shih said the team looked at up to 1,000 pieces containing preserved bird or dinosaur feathers before making their discovery.

They said the insects in the amber seemed to have been feeding on the feathers, noting that one of the pieces of amber had four insects preserved on the feather, and another five near it, with one of the lice “preserved with its legs tightly hugged [around] a feather barb”. The feather itself shows signs of damage, with holes in the vanes that the team said were consistent with an insect chewing on them.

“This finding demonstrates that feather-feeding behaviours of insects originated at least in the mid-Cretaceous, accompanying the radiation of feathered dinosaurs including early birds,” the authors wrote.

The team said analysis of the two feathers, which were 12.7mm and 13.6mm in length, suggest they were likely to have come from two types of dinosaur, one of which was probably a pen-naraptoran – a birdlike theropod – although it is possible that they are two different types of feather from the same species..

“This is the first evidence that a feathered dinosaur actually suffers from a parasite which chews on their feathers,” said Shih.

Michael Benton, professor of vertebrate palaeontology at the University of Bristol, welcomed the study. “It’s amazing, and extra convincing that in a single specimen they find nine lice of the same species, each only a fifth of a millimetre long, clinging on to different parts of the feather trapped in amber,” he said.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Asia Road Link

(July 10, 2002)

Summary: The prime minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra has said that a road link connecting Bangladesh, Burma and his country is now almost a reality. Mr Thaksin, who’s currently visiting Bangladesh, said that the construction of the road would significantly improve communications between south and south-east Asia. This report from Alistair Lawson.

The Thai prime minister wants south and south-east Asia to become one of the world’s largest **business hubs**. He says that can begin by improving **air land and sea links** between his country and Bangladesh. Mr Thaksin told a function **held in his honor** that such developments would have significant economic benefits. THAKSIN SHINAWATRA: I am particularly keen on introducing air services between our **respective** second cities of Chiang Mai and Chittagong. I believe that this will open up new and exciting business possibilities.

Economists say that improving links between south and south-east Asia is **long overdue**. Poor communications **impede trade** between the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Association of South-East Asian Nations. The Thai prime minister said that he wanted to **ignite** this process by forming a joint business council with Bangladesh.

For its part, Dhaka wants more duty-free access in Thailand for some of its exports. Both countries agree that while **bi-lateral trade** has increased, it’s still **below its full potential**.

■ **Words**
business hubs: a business hub is an important center for buying and selling
air land and sea links: ways to get between countries by air, land or sea
held in his honor: arranged especially for him
respective: relating separately to the two countries
is long overdue: has been needed for a long time
impedes trade: causes problems for the development of trade
ignite: start
For its part, Dhaka: as far as Dhaka is concerned
bi-lateral trade: trade between two countries
below its full potential: less than it could be

(Source: BBC)

Last remaining glaciers in Pacific ‘will melt away in less than a decade,’ study says

The world’s last remaining tropical glaciers, which exist high in mountain ranges between the Andes and the Himalayas, are on course to melt completely in less than a decade due to the climate crisis, a new study has found.

The glaciers in Papua, Indonesia, are “the canaries in the coal mine” for other mountaintop glaciers around the world, said Professor Lonnie Thompson, one of the senior authors of the study.

“These will be the first to disappear; the others will certainly follow,” said Professor Thompson, a senior research scientist at the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Centre at the Ohio State University.

The glaciers, on a mountain near Puncak Jaya, on the western half of the island of New Guinea, have been melting for years, Professor Thompson said.

But that melt increased rapidly following a strong 2015-2016 El Niño, a climatic phenomenon that causes tropical ocean water and atmospheric temperatures to get warmer. El Niños are natural phenomena, but their effects have been amplified by global warming.

The study suggests the glacier will disappear in the next 10 years, most likely during the next strong El Niño.

Professor Thompson said it is likely other tropical glaciers, such as those on Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Quelccaya in Peru, will follow. “I think the Papua, Indonesia, glaciers are the indicator of what’s going to happen around the world,” he said.

Professor Thompson and his team have been monitoring the glacier since 2010, when they drilled ice cores to examine the composition and temperature of the atmosphere around the glacier throughout history.

Even at that point, the glacier was shrinking. The melt started at least 150 years ago, Professor Thompson said, but has quickened in the last decade. The researchers found signs of melting at both the top of the glacier and at the bottom.

During the 2010 drilling expedition, the team installed a string of PVC pipe sections, connected by a rope, into the ice. Their idea was to measure how much ice had been lost



by periodically measuring the rope sections left uncovered as the ice melted.

When the stake was measured in November 2015, about five meters of rope had been uncovered, meaning that the glacier surface was melting at a rate of about one meter per year.

A team went back in May 2016, and saw that an additional approximately 4.26 meters of rope had been uncovered – a rapid increase in melting over just six months.

The team also measured the extent of the glacier’s melt by measuring its surface area, which shrank by about 75 percent from 2010 to 2018. The ice field had shrunk so much that by 2016 it had split into two smaller glaciers. Then, in August 2019, a mountain climber scaling the peak took a photo of the glacier, showing its near disappearance.

“The glacier’s melt rate is exponentially increasing,” Professor Thompson said. “It’s similar to visiting a terminal cancer patient, and documenting the change in their body, but not being able to do anything about it.”

Globally, glacier melt is a major contributor to sea level rise, which, along with warming ocean waters, can lead to more frequent and more intense storms.

Professor Thompson said the mountaintop glaciers around the world contribute between a third and a half of current annual sea level

rise in the Earth’s oceans.

“They are much more vulnerable to the rising temperatures because they’re small and they’re warmer – they’re closer to the melting threshold,” he said.

“Ice is just a threshold system. It is perfectly happy at freezing temperatures or below, but everything changes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit (0C).

Climate change has increased the temperature of the atmosphere, which means the air around the glacier is warmer. But it has also changed the altitude at which rain turns to snow. That means that where snow once fell on top of the glacier, helping rebuild its ice year-by-year, rain is now falling. That rainfall is “the kiss of death” for a glacier, the researchers said.

Water absorbs more energy – more heat – from the sun than snow does, so increasing the water on top of the glacier warms the glacier even more, accelerating the melting of the remaining ice.

“If you want to kill a glacier, just put water on it,” Professor Thompson said.

“The water basically becomes like a hot water drill. It goes right through the ice to the bedrock. So, when water starts to accumulate on top of the glacier, the glacier starts to melt much faster than current models predict as the models are driven by temperature

changes but don’t account for the effect of water accumulating on the glacier surface.”

Once water starts streaming through crevasses in the glacier to the bedrock, it also begins to lubricate the glacier along its bottom. This eventually creates a warm pool beneath the glacier, which may cause the glacier to slide, ever-so-slowly, down the mountain to lower elevations where temperatures are warmer.

Such was the case with this glacier, the researchers learned when they first drilled in 2010. The cores they brought to the surface showed meltwater at the base of the glacier as well as at the top.

That melt can affect the information scientists are able to learn from the cores, which normally provide year-by-year data records of the climate around the glacier. As the glacier melts, those year-by-year records can become blurred. In this case, however, the cores still showed evidence of El Niño events throughout the ice cores’ history.

Because so much of the glacier has melted, the cores hold data for only the last 50 years, despite the fact that these glaciers have likely occupied these mountaintops for the last 5,000 years.

The glacier’s disappearance is a cultural loss, too, Professor Thompson said. The indigenous people who live around the mountain worship it.

“The ridges and the valleys are the arms and legs of their god, and the glacier is the head,” he said.

When the team drilled in 2010, some of the elders of the indigenous communities protested: “In their words, they thought we were ‘drilling into the skull of their god to steal the god’s memories,’” Professor Thompson said.

“I told them that was exactly what we were doing. We needed to preserve those memories because the glacier was going to melt.”

That started a debate throughout the indigenous community, weighing whether the team should be allowed to continue its research mission to learn the history contained within the ice, or was it more important that the glacier remain undisturbed?

(Source: The Independent)

‘Spark of hope’ as species declared extinct is rediscovered

A rare bird believed to have gone extinct in the wild in 1987 is among several species which are making a comeback and offering a “spark of hope” for conservation efforts, experts have said.

The flightless, fast-running Guam rail was once widespread on the Pacific island after which it is named, but numbers plummeted when the brown tree snake was accidentally introduced at the end of the Second World War – with the last wild rail killed in 1987 by the predator.

Though still critically endangered, a captive breeding programme spanning 35 years has now helped establish the Guam rail on the neighbouring Cocos Island.

The news comes with an update to the IUCN Red List, which charts species known to be at risk of extinction. Amid the consistent annihilation of species as the Earth’s sixth mass extinction event gathers steam, the occasional glimmer of optimism remains in some quarters, where such conservation efforts are having their desired effect.

But despite the “genuine improvement” in the fate of 10 species seen in the update, 73 species have seen their places on the planet become more imperilled and a total of 30,178 animals and plants are on the list and deemed to be close to extinction.

The human-driven climate crisis is among the key threats to wildlife, the IUCN noted, while other factors include human overpopulation and overconsumption.

Important habitats such as coral reefs are being devastated by rapidly warming oceans while increased incidences of extreme weather are hitting plants and animals as well as people.

IUCN acting director general Dr Grethel Aguilar said: “This IUCN Red List update offers a spark of hope in the midst of the biodiversity crisis.



“Though we have witnessed 73 genuine species declines, the stories behind the 10 genuine improvements prove that nature will recover if given half a chance.”

She said: “Climate change is adding to the multiple threats species face, and we need to act urgently and decisively to curb the crisis.”

Another captive breeding programme as part of conservation efforts on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean has helped boost numbers of the echo parakeet, whose numbers now exceed 750 birds.

It has seen its status improve in the latest update to “vulnerable”, the lowest risk category for wildlife threatened with extinction, having previously improved from critically endangered to endangered in 2007.

Two freshwater species of fish have also seen a boost thanks to decades of conservation work to establish more sub-populations through reintroductions and shifting wild fish to new sites.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

FDA to penalize manufacturers producing unlabeled GM foods

Iran’s Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will penalize food manufacturers who have not labeled genetically modified (GM) food products, Vahid Mofid, the caretaker of the FDA department of food and beverages has announced.

All food products containing ingredients derived from GMOs must be labeled, including soybean and corn oil, rapeseed and cottonseed, he also noted.

He went on to say that eight laboratories in addition to the Energy & Power Industries Laboratories Company can test the products in terms of containing GM organism.

Labeling the products is merely done out of respect for the customer and providing the consumer with different choices and has nothing to do with the product’s safety and health, he concluded.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“chloro-, chlor-”

■ **Meaning**: green or chlorine

■ **For example**: This is the fundamental process by which **chlorophyll** ‘captures’ the energy of sunlight.

PHRASAL VERB

Pan out

■ **Meaning**: to happen or develop in a particular way

■ **For example**: We’ll have to see how things pan out.

IDIOM

Crystal clear

■ **Explanation**: to understand or has an obvious meaning

■ **For example**: There was no need to repeat the instructions. They were crystal clear.

سازمان غذا و دارو با محصولات تراریخته فاقد برچسب برخورد می کند

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو، وحید مفید در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اعلام کرد: تمام محصولات تراریخته در سطح عرضه کنترل می شوند و در صورتی که تراریخته باشند اما برچسب نداشته باشند، حتما برخورد می کنیم.

وی اضافه کرد: برخی محصولات در کشور مانند ذرت، سویا و کلزا از نوع تراریخته وجود دارد و فرآورده های غذایی در صورت استفاده از این محصولات تراریخته باید آن را روی برچسب خود اعلام کنند.

مفید افزود: هشت آزمایشگاه علاوه بر آزمایشگاه مرجع در کشور می توانند تراریختگی را تعیین کنند.

مدیرکل فرآورده های غذایی و آشامیدنی سازمان غذا و دارو گفت: درج تراریختگی در برچسب جلوی ترکیبات، صرفا احترام به مشتری و فراهم کردن قدرت انتخاب برای مصرف کننده است و هیچ ارتباطی با ایمنی و سلامت آن فرآورده ندارد.

Iraq top Shia cleric condemns killings, kidnappings of protesters

Iraq's top Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani Friday condemned recent killings and kidnappings of protesters, urging the state to assert control over the widespread use of weapons.

He also called on the armed forces to remain professional, loyal to the state and free from foreign influence, a representative of Sistani said during a sermon Friday in the holy city of Karbala.

Armed forces "must be loyal to the nation, and free from foreign interference," he said.

■ Iraq in shock as mob of 'protesters' lynch teenager

A group of "protesters" in Baghdad have, in an extremely brutal and shocking way, stabbed into death and cut the throat of a 16-year-old teenager before hanging him by his ankles.

The boy, identified as Haitham Ali Ismael, had been berating the protesters for three days for obstructing the street beside his house and making noise, but he had been largely ignored.

On Thursday, witnesses said, he



climbed up onto the roof of his house and began shooting in the air with a pistol in order to shoo the protesters

away from his family's home.

That prompted a mob of protesters to barge into his small house at the edge of

the Al Wathba Square where Haitham lived with his mother and stabbed him for 17 times.

Then they took him outside, pulled off his clothes, dragged him bleeding through the streets, hung him by his ankles from a traffic light pole and cut his throat.

Fadhil Muhammad, a tuk-tuk driver, says he "was standing there when they hung this young man by a rope and tied him to the pole and then the rope was cut and the victim's head fell on screws on the ground in the street and they entered into his head."

Then they threw the boy on the bed of a police pickup truck, Muhammad said, "and in front of the police they began to slash his neck."

Nearly two months of protests have, primarily, rocked Baghdad and the southern areas of Iraq. The protesters have been expressing frustration with a failing economy and have demanded reforms.

(Source: agencies)

Strikes in France continue on Friday

French commuters gritted their teeth on the ninth day of a crippling public transport strike Friday, pinning their hopes for an end to the daily misery on the government's offer of fresh negotiations with unions over a contested pensions overhaul.

Many travellers are reconsidering their holiday travel plans as unions stood united in their opposition to the government's plans to fuse the country's 42 pension schemes into a single, points-based system.

"It is very complicated," 23-year-old child carer Elsa told AFP at Paris' Gare de Lyon station, complaining of the overcrowded trains. Every day since the strike started, she has had to get up early to not miss her train into town, then walk a long way to work.

"If this (the strike) goes on, I will have to keep doing this. It is exhausting, but I

have no choice. Not all work can be done from home."

The overhaul unveiled by Prime Minister Edouard Philippe this week angered even the moderate CFDT union by proposing a reduced payout for people who retire at the legal age of 62 instead of a so-called "pivot age" of 64 -- a "red line" for unions.

They called for new mass demonstrations for Tuesday, the third since the action started on December 5 in the biggest show of strength in years by France's notoriously militant unions, which have vowed to continue fighting through the holidays if necessary.

Philippe said Thursday that he would call union leaders to "quickly resume the dialogue" and proposed talks "as soon as possible next week."

(Source: France 24)

Libya's Haftar announces 'decisive battle' to capture Tripoli

Libya's renegade General Khalifa Haftar has announced that a "decisive battle" to capture the capital, Tripoli, will commence imminently, eight months after he launched his offensive to wrest it from the internationally recognized government.

"Zero hour has come for the broad and total assault expected by every free and honest Libyan," Haftar said in a televised address on Thursday.

"Today, we announce the decisive battle and the advancement towards the heart of the capital to set it free ... advance now our heroes."

Libya has been in turmoil since 2011 when a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

In the chaos that followed, the country was divided with a weak UN-supported administration in Tripoli, overseeing the country's west, dubbed the Government of National Accord (GNA), and a rival gov-

ernment in the east aligned with Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA). Haftar says the GNA is backed by "terrorist" groups.

The GNA said on Thursday that the situation was "under control" and that its troops were holding their positions in the capital's south.

"We are ready to push back any more mad attempt by the Haftar putsch leader," said GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha on al-Ahrrar television.

Haftar had foreseen a quick victory, but despite promising in July that success was "imminent", his forces have remained bogged down on the outskirts of the capital.

At least 200 civilians and more than 2,000 fighters have been killed since the start of Haftar's assault on Tripoli, according to the United Nations. The fighting has also displaced some 146,000 people.

(Source: al Jazeera)

Russia's sole aircraft carrier burning in port

Russia's only aircraft carrier caught fire Thursday while undergoing a refit in an Arctic shipyard, the latest accident to raise concern over the future of the navy flagship. Russian news agencies quoted the Zvezdochka shipyard as saying the fire started during welding operations in an engine room of the Admiral Kuznetsov.

An official in the Murmansk regional government, Information Policy Minister Alexandra Kondaurova, told AFP that 10 people were hospitalized, one of whom was in serious condition.

Television footage showed emergency workers near the ship, which was spewing dark grey smoke from one side. The Northern Fleet said in a statement to Russian agencies that hospitalized servicemen suffered from smoke inhalation.

Interfax reported that the fire had spread over an area of about 600 square meters and quoted a source describing the blaze as "very serious."

Russia's Industry Ministry told AFP that once the fire is out, officials would launch a probe and evaluate the extent of damage.

The Admiral Kuznetsov, which is not nuclear powered, became fully operational in 1995 and is the flagship of the Russian navy. The repairs were expected to be completed by the end of 2020, with the carrier resuming active service in 2021.

The vessel was deployed to the Mediterranean

in 2016 and early 2017 to strike targets in Syria and help Moscow ally President Bashar Assad recapture rebel-held areas in the war-torn country.

The ship led a naval group off the Syrian coast, with fighters from the carrier hitting more than 1,200 targets during its mission.

It also stopped off the coast of Libya in January 2017 and took on board military strongman Khalifa Haftar, who Russia has reportedly backed in the country's long-running civil conflict.

Britain's then-Defense Minister Michael Fallon dubbed the Admiral Kuznetsov Russia's "ship of shame" for its role in the Syria conflict.

The ship suffered several mishaps during the mission, including the crash of two fighter jets into the sea while trying to land on the carrier.

The repairs and upgrades with a reported cost of up to 62 billion rubles (\$1 billion) were to focus on the ship's power plant and onboard electronic systems.

The collapse last year of a crane on the ship's deck, which killed one worker and caused major damage, raised concerns the work would be delayed and the carrier would remain out of commission beyond the 2021 deadline.

Russia's navy has battled problems with state financing, ageing shipyards and delays in fulfilling orders for new ships.



In the last six years, three fires have been reported on submarines under repair.

The Admiral Kuznetsov was to be the first of a new fleet of Soviet aircraft carriers, but the Russian navy has been hit by a huge drop in funding since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. The hull of what was to be its sister ship was sold by Ukraine to China, completed, and christened as the Liaoning.

The USSR had five aircraft carriers at the height of its power.

(Source: AFP)

Turkey summons U.S. ambassador over Armenian 'Genocide' resolution

Turkey's foreign ministry said on Friday it summoned the U.S. ambassador to Ankara over a resolution passed by U.S. lawmakers recognizing the mass killings of Armenians a century ago as a genocide, adding it conveyed Turkey's dismay over the decision.

The U.S. Senate on Thursday formally recognized the 1915-1917 murder of up to 1.5 million Armenians as genocide.

The Senate's passage of the repeat-

edly stalled resolution is expected to anger Turkey, which denies there was a genocidal mass murder, insisting the Armenians died as a result of World War I.

The resolution, which had already passed the House and was pushed in the Senate by Democrat Robert Menendez, had been blocked multiple times by allies of President Donald Trump, who has sought a closer relationship with Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Standing next to Trump at the White House during a visit to Washington in November, Erdogan warned that "some historical developments and allegations are being used in order to dynamite our reciprocal and bilateral relations."

The resolution declares that it is U.S. policy "to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance."

It is also policy to "reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate

the United States government with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide."

"It is fitting and appropriate that the Senate stands on the right side of history," said Menendez, fighting back tears.

"I am thankful that this resolution has passed at a time in which there are still survivors of the genocide who will be able to see the Senate acknowledges what they went through."

(Source: AP)

Ex-PM Tebboune wins race to succeed deposed Bouteflika

➔ The number of voters, thus, reached 9,692,077 out of more than 24 million electors, including 914,308 registered at the diplomatic and consular centers abroad.

The election was marred by attacks on polling stations in some regions. The opponents had gathered especially in Kabylie, storming the polling stations to prevent elections' supporters from casting their votes. They demanded the total dismantling of the system before the organization of any ballot, slamming this election as a charade to keep the ruling elite in power. A video had been circulating on social media, showing ballot boxes being seized and ballots scattered on the ground. However, state media, on the other hand, cast the participation as a high enough

turnout to vindicate the decision to hold the poll in spite of the boycott.

The Algerian authorities have created an inclusive body in an attempt at transparency in a nation where leaders were thought to be chosen in advance.

Algerians hope that this vote will chart a new era for the country where the highest office has stood vacant for eight months. The Speaker of the Council of the Nation, Abdelkader Bensalah was named an interim leader to replace former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who resigned under pressure from a pro-democracy protest movement that won the army's backing. The polls were originally planned for July 4. However, they were postponed due

to a lack of viable candidates.

Tebboune, for his part, promised, during the electoral campaign, to address the problems of development, create economic wealth and curb unemployment. For him, "the first step in the change lies in amending the current Constitution, which proved its ineffectiveness and being inappropriate for the current stage," urging the adoption of a new Constitution which would "really separate the prerogatives of State institutions and reinforce control to end eras of single decision-making circle power."

A previous poll set for July was scrapped for lack of viable candidates and interim president Abdelkader Bensalah's term has been extended.

Abdelmadjid Tebboune elected Algerian president

➔ "The turnout is satisfying and it will give the new president enough backing to implement his reforms," said Ahmed Mizab, a commentator on state television, saying it showed the decision to hold the elections was "propitious and right".

But Riad Mekerssi, 24, who has participated in all the Hirak protests since February 22 in Algiers, said the movement will continue no matter who wins.

"We have toppled Bouteflika, and we will topple all the system's men. We won't give up," he said.

Even without questions over his legitimacy, Tebboune will face difficult times.

Nearly all Algerian state revenues come from oil and gas exports, which have declined in both price and volume in recent years. The government has already approved a 2020 budget with a nine percent cut in public spending, though politically sensitive subsidies remain untouched.

(Source: AP)

After election victory, Boris Johnson promises January 31 Brexit

➔ Johnson has repeatedly said this period will not be extended past the end of 2020, when it is currently scheduled to end, but there is doubt over whether a comprehensive agreement could be concluded before then.

EU Council President Charles Michel said on Friday the bloc is ready to embark on trade talks with Britain and will do the utmost to protect European priorities after Johnson's win.

"My point is very clear: We are ready. We have decided what are our priorities," said Michel as he arrived at an EU summit where leaders would discuss the aftermath of the UK vote and Britain's planned departure.

"We expect a vote on the withdrawal agreement as soon as possible ... It's important to have clarity as soon as possible."

■ World leaders react

Several world leaders reacted to Johnson's win.

US President Donald Trump was among the first, writing on Twitter: "Congratulations to Boris Johnson on his great WIN! Britain and the United States will now be free to strike a massive new Trade Deal after BREXIT. This deal has the potential to be far bigger and more lucrative than any deal that could be made with the E.U. Celebrate Boris!"

"Congratulations, Boris Johnson, on your resounding victory. I look forward to working with you for the friendship and strong cooperation between our nations," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, according to her spokesman.

Russia's Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "Of course we hope every time that political forces that win elections in any country share the ideology of and aim to build good relations with our country. I don't know how appropriate such hopes are in the case of the Conservatives."

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis tweeted: "He is a charismatic leader, we share the same kind of thinking. He received strong mandate to deliver Brexit. I'm sorry that Czech Republic loses strongly ally in the EU."

Israeli foreign minister, Israel Katz, said Johnson's win was a "victory of values" over anti-Semitism, referring to allegations of anti-Jewish racism in the Labor Party.

(Source: al Jazeera)

U.S.-Taliban talks 'pause' after suicide attack on American airbase

U.S. officials have announced a "brief pause" in talks with the Taliban after the armed group launched a suicide attack on a U.S. base in Afghanistan, killing two civilians.

Special Envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad on Friday expressed "outrage about attack in Bagram" and said the talks in the Qatari capital Doha would resume after the Taliban "consult their leadership on this essential topic".

"Taliban must show they are willing & [and] able to respond to Afghan desire for peace," Khalilzad said in a tweet.

Wednesday's early morning assault, for which the Taliban have claimed responsibility, began when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-packed vehicle outside a hospital building near Bagram military base in Parwan province, north of the capital Kabul, according to local officials.

Khalilzad had renewed talks with the Taliban earlier this month on steps that could lead to a ceasefire and settlement of the 18-year-long war in Afghanistan, allowing a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country.

Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said Friday's meeting was "very good and friendly".

"Both sides decided to resume the talks after a few days of break for consultation," he said.

The assault on Bagram airbase came despite the resumption of talks between the U.S. and the group days before in Doha.

Peace negotiations began earlier this year but were suspended in September after an American soldier was killed in a suicide attack claimed by the Taliban.

U.S. President Donald Trump, during a surprise Thanksgiving visit to Afghanistan last month, said Washington had resumed talks with the Taliban and that the Afghan armed group wanted a ceasefire.

Tens of thousands of Afghan civilians, security officials and more than 2,400 American service members have been killed since 2001 when a U.S.-led military coalition dislodged Taliban from power.

About 13,000 U.S. forces, along with thousands of other NATO troops, are stationed in Afghanistan, with U.S. officials considering reducing the troop strength as part of any future peace deal.

But the Taliban has set the withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO troops, whom it calls occupying forces, as a condition to strike a deal.

The Taliban calls the Western-backed Kabul government a "puppet" regime and has so far refused to speak to them.

(Source: agencies)

World's biggest cricket stadium takes shape in India

The world's biggest cricket stadium, with space for 110,000 spectators, is taking shape in India and is likely to host its first international match early next year.

The new stadium in Ahmedabad, built at a cost of around \$100 million, will seat more fans than Australia's Melbourne Cricket Ground which can accommodate around 100,000 spectators.

According to reports, the Sardar Patel stadium is expected to host its first match in March with an exhibition game between an Asia XI and a World XI as the inaugural game.

The stadium will have more than 70 corporate boxes, four dressing rooms, a clubhouse and an Olympic-size swimming pool. Its construction began in January 2017.

It will overtake Kolkata's Eden Gardens, currently India's biggest stadium with a capacity of 66,000 -- down from 100,000 after a major rebuilding project.

India, the world's top-ranked Test team, has more than a dozen stadiums capable of holding international cricket matches. Test matches, however, often attract sparse crowds.

(Source: France24)

French veteran Ribery to undergo ankle surgery

French midfielder Franck Ribery will undergo surgery after suffering serious ligament damage to his right ankle, his club Fiorentina confirmed on Thursday.

Ribery, 36, had to be helped off the pitch after a clash with Lecce midfielder Panagiotis Tachtsidis on November 30.

"In order to solve the problem, a joint stabilisation surgical treatment has been proposed which will be performed in the next few hours," Fiorentina said.

"At the end of the procedure, the times for resuming competitive activity will be announced."

Some Italian media said the former Bayern Munich star will be sidelined for two months.

Fiorentina are on a run of four consecutive defeats and are struggling in 13th in the league, five points above the relegation zone.

(Source: Mirror)

Rangers manager Gerrard extends contract till 2024

Rangers manager Steven Gerrard has signed a two-year contract extension until the end of the 2023-24 season, the Scottish Premiership side announced on Friday.

Gerrard, who spent 17 seasons at Liverpool as a player and led the Anfield club to the Champions League title in 2005, took charge of Rangers in 2018 on a four-year deal and said earlier this week that he was close to extending the deal.

"I'm delighted to be extending my stay at this fantastic football club," Gerrard said in a statement.

"When (club chairman) Dave King approached me about the possibility of extending my contract with Rangers, it was a very easy decision to make because I'm very happy and feel that we are building something special together at the club.



"I'd like to thank the board for the backing they have given me already in my time at the club and also, most importantly, the Rangers fans who have given me and the team such tremendous backing both this season and last."

Rangers finished runners-up to Celtic in the league last season under the ex-England midfielder and are now in second place, two points behind their 'Old Firm' rivals after 15 games.

They had a chance to win their first trophy under Gerrard on Sunday but lost 1-0 to Celtic in the Scottish League Cup final.

(Source: Reuters)

'Clasico will be played', says Barcelona president Bartomeu

Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu said on Thursday the Clasico against Real Madrid next week will not be postponed again, amid renewed fears of unrest around the fixture.

Protestors from the Catalan separatist movement, Democratic Tsunami, have called for a "massive" protest outside Camp Nou, where Barcelona are due to play against Real Madrid in La Liga on December 18.

Spain's most prestigious fixture was originally scheduled for October 26 but had to be postponed following a wave of pro-independence demonstrations in the city.

"I can say that the Clasico will be played, it will not be postponed again," Bartomeu said at a Christmas press event in Barcelona.

"It is everyone's responsibility to ensure it goes ahead. We know that we live in a complicated period in Catalonia but that can be compatible with sport.

"Our stadium is a place for free expression, it always has been, and that is why we want to send out a message of normality and calm.

"The club is preparing for the Clasico with complete normality and we tell our fans to come with their family and friends.

"Together we have to deliver a Clasico that is a celebration of sport and of people. We want peace and calm."

Democratic Tsunami have urged protestors to gather at four points around Camp Nou from 4:00 pm (1500 GMT), four hours before kick-off.

"In an exceptional situation, we should act in an exceptional way," said a statement from the group on Tuesday.

The rally is the latest in a series of demonstrations that began two months ago when Spain's top court jailed nine Catalan separatist leaders over their role in a failed 2017 bid for independence.

(Source: Goal)

Jurgen Klopp agrees new deal with Liverpool until 2024

Jurgen Klopp has agreed a contract extension with Liverpool until 2024, the runaway Premier League leaders announced on Friday.

Klopp, who moved to Anfield in 2015, guided Liverpool to Champions League glory in June and they are currently eight points clear at the top of the Premier League.

"For me personally this is a statement of intent, one which is built on my knowledge of what we as a partnership have achieved so far and what is still there for us to achieve," the 52-year-old Klopp told Liverpool's official website.

"When I see the development of the club and the collaborative work that continues to take place, I feel my contribution can only grow."

A statement from owners the Fenway Sports Group (FSG) said Liverpool had taken "giant strides in re-establishing themselves as one of world football's powerhouses" under the German.

During Klopp's first campaign at Anfield, Liverpool reached the finals of both the League Cup and Europa League but ended the season empty-handed.

They lost 3-1 to Real Madrid in the 2018 Champions League final but regrouped and became European champions for a sixth time



after a 2-0 win against Tottenham in Madrid this year.

Liverpool lost just one match in the Premier League last season, racking up 97 points -- the best in the club's history -- but missed out on the title by a solitary point to Manchester City.

■ Premier League charge

So far this season, Klopp has overseen

Tahiti to host 2024 Olympics surfing, 15,000km away from hosts Paris



The Polynesian island of Tahiti has been chosen to host the surfing events at the 2024 Paris Olympics after being selected over beaches in southwest France and Brittany, organizers said on Thursday.

Tahiti lies 15,700 kilometers (9,750 miles) from Paris but was chosen because it offers near-guaranteed surfing waves in the summer months.

The events will take place at Teahupoo, a location that boasts some of the biggest waves on the men's World Cup circuit.

"It's an extremely pleasant surprise and recognition for our history that will restore honor to Polynesia, where surfing began," the president of Tahiti's surfing federation, Lionel Teihotu, told AFP.

According to the 2024 organizing committee there was no difference in the cost or environmental impact of the four possible venues.

Tahiti was preferred on "sporting grounds" -- a survey by Meteo France, the French meteorological center, suggests that Teahupoo offers a greater likelihood of good surfing waves during the summer months, the Paris local organizing committee said.

The choice of Teahupoo is controversial because it does not currently feature on the women's world circuit. The waves there are currently considered to be too dangerous for women surfers.

Organizers said they would get round the problem of hosting the Olympic women's surfing events with careful scheduling.

"We can put the women on at a time of

the day when the waves are less powerful," Teihotu said. "We have ways of planning that now and it will allow women to also surf at Teahupoo."

The choice of Tahiti has not gone down well with the other venues who bid to host the surfing although the decision did not appear to come as a great surprise.

"We realized over the weeks that Tahiti had the whip hand, we are not completely surprised," said Landes spokesman Philippe Courtesseyre.

The town of Lacanau and its partner Bordeaux questioned the idea of staging the surfing so far from Paris.

"This decision is very surprising as the late application of Tahiti is at the opposite end of the values that we expect for this kind of event, such as the carbon footprint, the hosting, the associated costs, the legacy," they said in a statement.

Biarritz, one of the most popular spots for surfers anywhere in Europe, said it would not give up hope of hosting the event until the International Olympic Committee had agreed.

"This is not a final decision," Biarritz spokesman Laurent Ortiz told AFP.

"It is the proposal of the organizing committee. So we will remain an active candidate until the beginning of January.

"As long as nothing is finalized, we will keep hope."

Organizers also approved the choice of Place de la Concorde in Paris to host the five 'urban' sports.

(Source: AFP)

Ex-NBA commissioner David Stern hospitalized after brain hemorrhage



Former NBA commissioner David Stern was admitted to a New York City hospital Thursday afternoon after suffering a brain hemorrhage, the league announced.

"NBA Commissioner Emeritus David Stern suffered a sudden brain hemorrhage earlier today for which he underwent emergency surgery," the NBA said in a statement. "Our thoughts and prayers are with David and his family."

New York's fire department responded to a 911 call at a Midtown restaurant at 1:59 p.m. ET. Fire officials then transported the 77-year-old Stern to Mount Sinai West medical center.

There was no immediate word on his condition.

Stern served as NBA commissioner from 1984 until 2014, a 30-year run that helped shape the league into the global force it is today. Under his watch, the NBA added seven teams and relocated six other franchises. The league's annual revenue from its television contract increased by 40 times, the average player salary jumped from \$250,000 a year in 1984 to more than \$5 million, and the value of franchises skyrocketed.

People in and around the league offered prayers of support for Stern, with Hall of Famer Magic Johnson tweeting that he and wife Cookie were praying "for my good friend who helped save my life."

Johnson announced he was retiring because of HIV in 1991 but returned the following year at the All-Star Game with Stern's backing, even while some

gress -- he had also seen commitment from the owners.

"When the call came in autumn 2015, I felt we were perfect for each other. If anything, now I feel I underestimated that. It is only with a total belief that the collaboration remains totally complementary on both sides that I am able to make this commitment to 2024.

"If I didn't I would not be re-signing. This club is in such a good place I couldn't contemplate leaving."

Assistant managers Peter Krawietz and Pepijn Lijnders have also agreed deals keeping them at the club until 2024.

Principal owner John Henry, chairman Tom Werner and FSG president Mike Gordon said in a joint statement: "We are absolutely delighted we have been able to reach an agreement with Jurgen, as well as Peter and Pep, on extending their time with the club.

"As we are sure our supporters would agree, it is truly wonderful news and we are all extremely thrilled, not only professionally, but personally too."

Liverpool reached the knockout stages of the Champions League with a 2-0 win against Salzburg on Tuesday and will play in the Club World Cup in Qatar later this month.

(Source: AFP)

Zlatan Ibrahimovic statue vandalized again with saw marks visible on feet



Malmo supporters have started an on-line petition to get the statue removed and Kaveh Hosseinpour, vice chairman of the club's official supporters group, said

following the first attack: "He basically stuck a knife in our backs, and then he came along with a sword and chopped off our heads.

"The statue is completely worthless now, just a piece of junk," Hosseinpour said. "The best way to solve that was if it was removed and put somewhere in Stockholm or something.

"Every game we go to, we are going to pass Zlatan knowing that there is a statue of an investor in Hammarby, not the statue of the football player Zlatan Ibrahimovic anymore."

The former Manchester United, Juventus, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain player is a free agent after leaving LA Galaxy.

During his time in MLS, he scored 52 goals and assisted 17 more in 53 starts for the Galaxy and arguably became the marquee player of the league, winning MLS Newcomer of the Year in 2018 and twice being selected for the MLS Best XI.

Ibrahimovic earned \$7.2 million last season, according to the MLS players salary database. He made \$1.5 million in 2018.

(Source: ESPN)

Sepahan move top of IPL

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Sepahan defeated Paykan 2-0 to move top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) table on Friday.

Giorgi Gvelesiani gave Sepahan the lead from penalty spot in the 21st minute and Omid Noorafkan extended the lead with a long-range shot in the 42nd minute.

Sepahan moved top of the table with 28 points, followed by Esteghlal (26 points) and Persepolis (25 points) with one game in hand.

“First, I would like to congratulate Paykan for their good performance. I am satisfied with the way we played against them. We could have scored more goals but our strikers missed their chances,” Sepahan coach Amir Ghalenoei said in the post-match news conference.

Earlier on the day, Shahr Khodro were held to a goalless draw by Nassaji in Mazandaran.

In Tabriz, Tractor edged Foolad 1-0, thanks to Reza Asadi’s 73rd minute goal.

It was Tractor’s first win after five matches.

Tractor parted company with Mustafa Denizli last week and are headed by Ahad Sheikhlari who takes charge of the team as interim coach.

On Saturday, Persepolis will meet Saipa in Tehran’s Shahr-e Qods Stadium.

Esteghlal will also play rock-bottom Shahin Bushehr at the Azadi Stadium.



IPL is the highest division of professional football in Iran. The league was also known as the Persian Gulf Cup from 2006. It is the

top-level football league in Iran since its foundation on Nov. 2, 2001.

Each year, the top finishing team in the

League become the Iranian football champions, and the lowest finishing teams are relegated to Azadegan League.

Iran ascend in FIFA Women’s World Rankings



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran defeated South Korea 1-0 to move up in the FIFA Women’s World Rankings released on Friday.

The Iranian team have climbed up one place to be ranked 70th in the world and seventh in Asia.

Australia are still the No. 1 Asian team, sitting seventh in the world while

Japan are close on their heels in the 10th position.

DPR Korea are third in Asia and 11th in the world.

World champions USA remain top, followed by Germany and the Netherlands.

The next FIFA Women’s World Ranking will be published on 27 March 2020.

Iran lose to the U.S. at FINA World Junior Water Polo



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran lost to the U.S. 27-4 at the FINA World Men’s Junior Water Polo Championships 2019 on Friday.

Iran, who had started the campaign with a 15-7 win over Kuwait on Thursday, will meet Italy on Saturday.

Iran have been drawn in Group C along with Montenegro, Kuwait, the U.S., and Italy.

Group A consists of Serbia, Japan, South Africa, Croatia and China.

Russia, Canada, Canada, Spain, Hungary and Egypt in Group B.

Brazil, Uzbekistan, Greece, Australia and New Zealand are in Group D.

The FINA World Men’s Junior Water Polo Championships 2019 is being held in Kuwait from Dec. 12 to 20.

Jahanbakhsh determined to get back

The midfielder got his first Premier League minutes of the season when he entered the action against Wolves on Sunday afternoon as a second half substitute, and emphasized his desire to continue adapting to Graham Potter’s style of play with the Seagulls.

He said, “I have been working really hard and trying to get used to the way that the head coach wants the team to play. It’s obviously different to what we did last season, but it’s been a good week for the side.

“I try to work hard, as professional players you have to train well and be in a good shape for when the head coach gives you a chance.

“The new head coach expects new things from the players and obviously I try to train the way that he wants me to. I have always been working hard, and will continue to do so to be ready for when the head coach needs me.



“Every player wants to play matches, but I am very happy here. The team is playing well and I’m learning every day. I try to just adapt myself to the way the manager wants me to play, and I am going to work hard to get more chances.” The Iranian arrived on the south coast from AZ Alkmaar

last summer and made 24 appearances in all competitions during his debut campaign in England. He reflected on last season, and his development both on and off the field since arriving at the Albion.

“I’ve been here in England now for a year and a half, and perhaps I haven’t showed what I am really capable of, but I’m eager to make sure I do this season,” he continued.

“During the first year I had to learn a lot about the Premier League. I was pretty sure that this season would be quite a good season for me because I have learned a lot, with the country and everything else that comes with moving football club.

“It has been different to what I am used to, but I’ve been in a good shape and enjoying training, so I am going to work hard to get more chances.”

How foreign football coaches in Iran are collateral damage to US sanctions

Hundreds of Iranians demanded the return of Italian football manager Andrea Stramaccioni.

Stramaccioni, who previously managed Inter Milan and Udinese, quit as head coach of Tehran’s Esteghlal FC on Sunday over failed payments.

The reason? US sanctions.

Esteghlal FC — which under Stramaccioni’s stewardship has risen to the top of the country’s first league — is owned by the Iranian state and his salary is thus paid by the Ministry of Sport. But US sanctions against the Persian state prevent Iranian banks from using the international SWIFT system to carry out international transfers.

According to Euronews, because of the embargo, there are only two ways to pay

a foreign worker in Iran. The first one involves bringing cash to Dubai or the United Arab Emirates from where bank transfers can then be made; the second one involves money changers who move the salary from the Iranian branch to a foreign one and then to the final recipient’s account.

However, significant sums still raise red flags. Stramaccioni’s two-year contract with the club is believed to have been worth around €1.6 million.

Esteghlal FC’s goalkeeper, Hossin Hosseini, told reporters that these “informal” transfers of money alarmed Stramaccioni’s Italian bank which demanded the club stop the transfers but Esteghlal FC did not comply, leading Stramaccioni’s family account to be temporarily frozen.

“The club should have been clear when the contract was signed and say there would be problems with the sanctions,” Hosseini said.

He added that the players, who have largely rallied around Stramaccioni, had also not been paid in months or with cheques that bounced.

Former Belgium manager Marc Wilmots’s departure as the Iranian national team’s manager earlier this year after only six months in the job may also have precipitated because of the sanctions, according to a local journalist.

Another major problem impacting payments to foreign people is the currency’s devaluation. Amir Alizadeh, an Iranian sports business expert, told Euronews.

In Wilmots’s case, a website revealed that the local federation tried to blame FIFA for

allegedly not paying them what they were owed for qualifying for the last two World Cups.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei has also said that there is “no need” to hire foreign coaches.

Abbas Iraghchi, the country’s Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister has said that the matter would soon be resolved while a spokesman for the Ministry of Sport said that negotiations have begun with the Italian ambassador in Tehran to “resolved the problem”

Asked by Euronews about a possible return to Iran, Stramaccioni said: “my agent Pastorello and my legal representatives are working hard with the club. At the moment, however, I have not received any communications in either direction”.

(Source: Euronews)

FFA and NZF unite ‘As One’ to Bid for FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023

Football Federation Australia (FFA) and New Zealand Football (NZF) have joined forces to submit an historic co-confederation Bid to host the first-ever 32-nation FIFA Women’s World Cup in 2023.

FFA’s and NZF’s Bid — which has received the unified support of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand — promises to amplify women’s football in Asia and Oceania like never before as the two culturally and geographically aligned nations work ‘As One’ to deliver a truly inspired celebration of women’s football.

Confirmation of the ‘As One’ FIFA Women’s World Cup

2023TM Bid was made at AAMI Park in Melbourne on Friday, just hours before the Official Bid Book was to be submitted to FIFA at its global headquarters in Zurich.

If successful, a co-hosted FIFA Women’s World Cup in Australia and New Zealand would deliver an unparalleled experience for players and fans alike, with world-class venues in both nations utilized as diverse and vibrant local communities welcome the world for FIFA’s global women’s showpiece.

Australian Federal Minister for Youth and Sport, Richard Colbeck, said the Australian Government is committed to the joint bid which is a logical and compelling response to the

expanded 32-nation format that will be introduced in 2023.

“Our Bid for the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023 strongly aligns with the Australian Government’s commitment to inspire more girls and women to participate in sport and increase their physical activity for better health and well-being,” Minister Colbeck said.

Also bidding to host the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup are Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Japan, Korea Republic (expressing interest in a joint bid with DPR Korea) and South Africa.

(Source: Football Federation Australia)

Iran keeper Beiranvand selling Portugal match worn shirt to raise cash for charity

I → Beiranvand auctioned his shirt which he wore in the match against Portugal in the 2018 FIFA World Cup group stage.



The Iran goalie saved a penalty from Cristiano Ronaldo in the match which ended in a 1-1 draw.

The funds will be used to build a clinic, school and sports hall for the earthquake victims in Lorestan.

Beiranvand, who currently plays for Iranian club Persepolis, also was a candidate for the 2019 AFC Player of the Year.

10 countries expected to attend Takhti Int’l Wrestling Cup

IRNA — Some 10 countries are expected to attend Takhti Int’l Wrestling Cup to be held in northwestern Kermanshah, said head of the provincial Wrestling Department.

Mohammad Hossein Mohebbi said that the 40th Takhti Int’l Wrestling Cup will be held in Kermanshah city on January 8-10.

Noting that competitions will be held on three mats and ten weights, he added that five to seven wrestlers can take part in each weight.

Last year, Iran captured six gold medals and became champion of the ‘Takhti Cup 2019 International Freestyle Wrestling Tournament’.

Iran with 215 points, Azerbaijan with 112 points and Kyrgyzstan with 104 points ranked 1st to 3rd, respectively.

Gholam Reza Takhti (1930-1968) was an Iranian Olympic Gold-Medalist wrestler and traditional Iranian bodybuilding (known as ‘Varzesh-e Bastani’ in Iran) practitioner. Because of his chivalrous behavior and sportsmanship, he was the most popular athlete of Iran in the 20th century, although dozens of Iranian athletes have won more international medals than he did.

Ex-Italy U21 coach Mangia linked with Tractor

PLDC — Devis Mangia reportedly is a candidate to take charge of Iranian football team Tractor.

Turkish coach Mustafa Denizli stepped down as Tractor coach last week following poor results and now the Tabriz-based team’s officials are going to hire Mangia, La Gazzetta dello Sport journalist Nicolo Schira has tweeted.



Mangia started his coaching career at Varese in 2004 and took charge of Italy U21 in 2012.

Tractor were the favorites to win first ever Iran Professional League title at the start of the season but now sit ninth in the table.

Five weightlifters to represent Iran at Qatar Cup

TASNIM — Iran will dispatch five weightlifters to the 6th Qatar International Weightlifting Cup.

The competition will be held in Doha, Qatar from December 19 to 24.

Ali Miri, Ayoub Mousavi and Kianoush Rostami will take part in the men’s division and Elham Hosseini and Parisa Jahanfekrian will compete in the women’s division.

The event is approved by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) as an Olympic qualification event in the silver category.

Iran to send six skiers to Winter Youth Olympics

TASNIM — Six skiers will represent Iran at the 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games.

Artemis Hosseini and Roham Saba will participate at Alpine skiing.

Farnoosh Shemshaki and Amirhossein Bandali will compete at Cross-country skiing and Roxana Saveh Shemshaki and Ali Kalhoei will represent Iran at Ski mountaineering.

The 2020 Winter Youth Olympic Games, officially known as the III Winter Youth Olympic Games, and commonly known as Lausanne 2020, will be the third edition of the Winter Youth Olympics; a major international multi-sport event and cultural festival for teenagers.

The competitions will be held in Lausanne, Switzerland, the home of the International Olympic Committee between January 9 and 22, 2020.

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.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051450
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
» www.eshtarak.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

Liberality is better than kinship, and a liberal man is kinder than a relative.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting



■ An exhibition of paintings by Mina Anusheh is underway at Vista Gallery. The exhibit named "Remuneration" will run until December 20 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



■ Shalman Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Atefeh Heidari. The exhibit titled "Time Bound" runs until December 18 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.



■ Paintings by Ghazaleh Mahbub, Sima Baqerzadeh and Ghazaleh Abdollahzadeh are on display in an exhibition at Haft Samar Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Infinity" will be running until December 18 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahhari Ave.



■ A collection of paintings by Anahita Abutorabi is currently on view in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery. The exhibit will be running until December 18 at the gallery that can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.



■ Amin Nurani is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Asar Gallery. The exhibit named "End of the Day" runs until December 20 at the gallery that can be found at No. 16 Barforushan St., Iranshahr St.



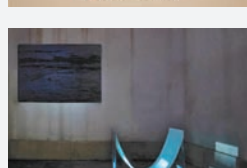
■ Saye Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Elham Qorbani. The exhibit entitled "Along the Nature" will run until December 18 at the gallery located at 3 Aqakhani Alley, Omidvar St. in the Niavaran neighborhood.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Mojtaba Taqvai is currently underway at Saless Gallery. The exhibition will be running until December 25 at the gallery, which can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.



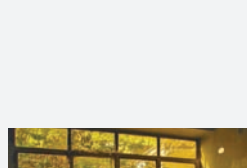
■ Ali Kiani-Amin is displaying his paintings in an exhibition at Dena Gallery. The exhibit named "Lovers Wound" will run until December 20 at the gallery located at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.



■ Sets of installation by Navid Salajeqeh are currently on display in an exhibition at Aran Gallery. The exhibition titled "Lightless Zone" runs until December 30 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neauphle-le-Chateau St.



■ Paintings and sculptures by a group of artists, including Mohammad Ehsai, Aidin Aghdashlu, Pegah Jamali, Vahed Khakdan, Ali Shirazi, Parivash Ganji and Flora Feizbakhsh, are on view in an exhibition at White Line Gallery. The exhibit named "White, Black, Gray" runs until December 23 at the gallery located at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jam-e Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.



■ Photos by Babak Haqqi are on display in an exhibition at Mojdeh Gallery. The exhibit titled "Between Moment and Soil" will run until December 20 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 27, 18th Alley off North Allameh Blvd. in the Saadatabad neighborhood.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi praises "The Barrage"

A R T TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi praised "The Barrage", a documentary by Iranian filmmakers Morteza Payeshenas and Hossein Momen about a battle between Iranian forces and ISIS terrorists in Syria.

"We felt the real story of the Syrians through watching this documentary," he said after watching the documentary during the 13th Cinéma Vérité festival at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex on Thursday.

"I was deeply affected by the story of the film and people at the theater were also deeply saddened," he added and noted, "I hope more films like this are produced."

"The Barrage" shows Payeshenas traveling to Syria to satisfy his curiosity as a documentary filmmaker. He is informed that Iranian forces have engaged in a disparately pitched battle with ISIS terrorists in Khan Tuman, a village in northern Syria. If there no auxiliary forces arrive, the terrorists will prevail in the battle.

He and his crew embark to cover the battle, but the situation is complicated after one of his cameramen is injured by an ISIS sniper. The area is now subjected to a heavy barrage of guns and artillery.

"I have had a previous experience of what happens in the film when I took part in Operation Beit-ul-Muqaddas 7 in the Shalamchah region during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war," Mousavi said.

"We were commanded to withdraw while we were under siege from Iraqi forces. 'The Barrage' caused me to recollect the withdrawal and I was deeply affected," he stated.

He also said that he is pleased with



Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi attends the 13th Cinéma Vérité festival at Tehran's Charsu Cineplex on December 12, 2019. (DEFC)

international festivals' high regard for Iranian documentary films and added, "As an organization that manages the country's diplomacy, one of our duties is to present

what is happening in the Iranian cinema, because the language of art is very effective."

The Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) is the organizer of

the Cinéma Vérité festival, Iran's major international festival for documentary cinema that opened last Monday and will run until December 16.

Austrian composer Eric Spitzer-Marlyn donates recording device to Film Museum of Iran



Austrian composer Eric Spitzer-Marlyn donates his recording device to the Film Museum of Iran on December 11, 2019.

A R T TEHRAN — Austrian composer Eric Spitzer-Marlyn visited the Film Museum of Iran on Wednesday, donating his old Nagra III tape recorder to the museum in Tehran during a special ceremony.

Spitzer-Marlyn is in Tehran to hold workshops during the 13th Cinéma Vérité, Iran's major international documentary film festival, which is currently underway in Tehran.

"This device is still working and I used it on several film projects," he said and added, "I still prefer to use such an old device instead of a new digital one."

"I wanted to do something when I

saw the enthusiasm of the young Iranian documentarians and film lovers during my previous workshops at the previous edition of the festival, so I decided to donate this device to the museum," Spitzer-Marlyn stated.

Iranian documentarian Ahmed Zabeti-Jahromi, who was in attendance at the ceremony, said that the museum will preserve the device as a memento of Spitzer-Marlyn's stay in Tehran, and it will remain in the memory of the museum forever.

Spitzer-Marlyn is known for his collaboration as a sound engineer with the famous German screenwriter and documentarian, Werner Herzog.

India's Smile festival picks films from Iran



A scene from "The Fisherman and Spring" by Seyyed Hassan Soltani.

A R T TEHRAN — A lineup of six Iranian movies are competing in various sections of the 5th edition of the Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFFCY) now underway in New Delhi, India.

"Here My Village" by Abbas Aram is competing in the official section, while "This Side, Other Side" by Lida Fazli has been selected to be screened in the short film competition.

"Here My Village" is about Farhad, a 12-year-old village boy who is crazy about photos and magazines. He tries to work hard to buy a second-hand camera, but he does not succeed.

"This Side, Other Side" shows that no border can block friendship and affection

between children, in hopes that the adult world, as well as the children's world, would be full of peace and friendship.

"The Fisherman and Spring" by Seyyed Hassan Soltani about a fisherman who is searching for spring after a long winter with the help of a little fish is competing in the animation section. "Beyond the Black" co-directed by Saeid Sodagar and Sepideh Eidi about a black crow that loves golden things is also an entry to this section.

The festival will also screen "Serok" by Zhihar Farajzadeh and "Snowy Heart" by Alireza Biglari in the films by children section.

The Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth will come to an end on Sunday.

Iranian children's literature discussed at Istanbul University

CULTURE TEHRAN — Several Iranian and Turkish scholars and students of the Persian language discussed Iranian children's literature during a meeting held at Istanbul University, the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) announced on Wednesday.

Iranian writer Tahereh Ibod, Persian language teacher at Istanbul University Davud Esharham and the Persian Language professor at Istanbul University, Ali Güzeyüz, were among the attendees at the meeting, which took place at the Oriental Research Center of the university.

Güzeyüz first introduced books by Ibod, including "Liya-Sim-Maris'in Deniz Masallari" ("Sea Tales of Liya Sand Maris") at the meeting and said that Turkish translators have shown an interest in translating books from Persian writers over the past few years.

Ibod also talked about the position of Iranian children's literature in the world and its significant role in the education of children and its impression on their characters and said, "A good story can register in the



Iranian and Turkish scholars discuss Iranian children's literature at Istanbul University.

minds of children so that they themselves feel as if they have experienced the events in the story."

Director Fereidun Jeirani to receive lifetime achievement award at Fajr

A R T TEHRAN — Veteran filmmaker Fereidun Jeirani will be honored with a lifetime achievement award at the 38th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran, the organizers announced on Friday.

Born in 1951, Jeirani began his cinematic career with writing "The Liegemen", which was directed by Mehdi Sabbaghzadeh in 1981. He also pursued journalism as a chief editor for Cinema Magazine 10 years later.

He shifted to filmmaking with his debut

feature "The Red" in 1998. "The Pink", "The Last Supper", "The Agitation", "Parkway" and "Asphyxia" are also among his noteworthy credits.

The 38th Fajr Film Festival will be running in Tehran from February 1 to 10.



A picture of Fereidun Jeirani is seen in a poster designed by the 38th Fajr Film Festival in honor of the filmmaker.