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IDF pride

Protest at Hebrew U after lecturer scolds student for wearing uniform

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Gershon Baskin shares his eight hopes for the New Year

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'City without Jews'

Hugo Bettauer's restored 1924 film to be screened with soundtrack

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DARLING STARLINGS

A murmuration of migrating starlings flies near the city of Rahat on Monday.
(Ronen Zvulun/Reuters)

Majority of 2018's immigrants are not legally Jewish

• By JEREMY SHARON

More than half of all immigrants to Israel in 2018 under the Law of Return were not Jewish, figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics have shown.

According to the CBS, there were 30,300 immigrants who came to Israel under the Law of Return, of whom 12,600 were Jewish and 17,700 were not.

The Law of Return allows for any person who has one Jewish grandparent to immigrate to Israel and gain citizenship. Jewish law stipulates, however, that a person is Jewish only if their mother was Jewish.

According to the Jewish Agency, 17,000 immigrants came to Israel from Russia and Ukraine in 2018.

There are approximately 400,000 Israelis, mostly from the former Soviet Union, who immigrated to Israel under the Law of Return but who are not Jewish, and this number

is growing every year, due to both natural growth and continued immigration.

Moshe Nissim, a former justice minister who authored proposals last year to change Israel's conversion authority in light of the challenge of the growing number of such citizens, said when publishing his recommendations that this population could grow to 500,000 in another 12 years.

According to a study in 2014 by Prof. Ze'ev Khanin, the chief scientist of the Aliyah and Integration Ministry and senior lecturer in political studies at Bar-Ilan University, approximately half of the immigrants coming to Israel from the states of the former Soviet Union aged 30 and above are not Jewish, along with 75% of younger immigrants from that region.

The growing number of such citizens – Zionist Israelis who are integrated into society but who are not Jewish according to Jewish law

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Trump: Iran 'can do what they want' in Syria

• By MICHAEL WILNER
Jerusalem Post Correspondent

WASHINGTON – US President Donald Trump acknowledged on Wednesday that Iranian forces have been emboldened in Syria, amid widespread concern over his decision to hastily withdraw US troops from the battlefield there.

Blaming the balance of power in Syria on his predecessor, Barack Obama, Trump said the country was "lost long ago" and that he did not want the US military fighting there forever.

"We're talking about sand and death," he stated. "We're not talking about vast wealth."

Israeli officials have expressed alarm at the president's policy ever since he announced last month a rapid withdrawal of roughly 2,000 troops stationed in the country's eastern provinces. The move led to the resignations of Trump's defense secretary, James Mattis, and his top counter-Islamic State official, Brett McGurk.

Trump claimed that Iran has been suffering under renewed US sanctions since he withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal with international powers, but he did admit that it remains a powerful presence in Syria. He spoke in the Cabinet Room of the White House with a movie-style poster promoting his sanctions laid out before him on the conference table.

"They're pulling people out of Syria, but they can do what they want there, frankly," he said.

Israel worries that Iran is constructing a "land bridge" connecting resources and military forces from Tehran

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PM's campaign edge: Strutting on world stage

ANALYSIS
• By HERB KEINON

After five days in Brazil, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu landed back in Israel on Wednesday evening – both literally and metaphorically.

Literally, in the sense that he physically returned to the country where he is prime minister, defense minister, foreign minister and health minister.

Metaphorically, for the last



five days he was far away, in Brazil – far away from Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit, from Naftali Bennett and

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'Post's Caroline Glick runs for Knesset

Joins Bennett and Shaked on Hayemin Hehadash 'dream team'

• By LAHAV HARKOV

Longtime *Jerusalem Post* columnist Caroline Glick is running on Hayemin Hehadash's list in the April elections, she announced on Wednesday.

"Caroline is a relentless Zionist fighter," party co-chairman Naftali Bennett said. "With her, we are building today the dream team of the Israeli Right in order to expand the right-wing block – so that Israel can be triumphant again."

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, the party's other leader, called Glick "a courageous fighter symbolizing the real, pure, conservative Right. She will be a great addition to the Knesset from our side."

Glick expressed excitement in joining



NAFTALI BENNETT, Ayelet Shaked and Caroline Glick form the backbone of the new Hayemin Hehadash Party. (Hayemin Hehadash)

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Could a new documentary about Netanyahu swing the election?

ANALYSIS
• By LAHAV HARKOV

It couldn't be better timing for director Dan Shadur. After working on *King Bibi*, his documentary about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for three-and-a-half years, negotiating with distributors and showing it at film festivals, an election was called just a few weeks before it was set to be made available via the Yes Docu channel and Yes VOD.

Surely the documentary will hold even more interest for viewers now than it would have even two months ago. And that begs the question of what kind of impression it will make on viewers.

Is the documentary's wide release perfect timing for Netanyahu, or for his opponents?

The answer is neither – or both.

Like so many other things related to Netanyahu, *King Bibi*, first airing on Yes Docu next Wednesday, is like a Rorschach test, the inkblots some psychologists use to get inside a patient's head.

If you like Netanyahu, you'll see one thing; if you don't like him, you'll see something else entirely.

The film doesn't provide any new information, but still manages to shed light on how Netanyahu became



A STILL from the new documentary 'King Bibi.' (Screenshot)

"King Bibi." It is made up of existing footage of the prime minister, spanning his entire life. The focus is mostly on how Netanyahu's rhetorical skills buoyed him to the premiership and how they have served him since. In fact, the only parts that don't consist of existing footage are clips of a tape playing advice by Lilyan Wilder, the public-speaking guru who trained Netanyahu.

The prime minister's supporters will see clip after clip of Netanyahu speaking in English from the 1980s through last year and be impressed with his rhetorical skill and ability to captivate audiences, whether they consist of Charlie Rose or both houses of the US Congress. They'll be impressed by for-

mer US president Ronald Reagan expressing admiration for Netanyahu's book on fighting terrorism and being invited to speak to a congressional committee on that same topic some 17 years later. They'll boo at the multiple instances of former US president Bill Clinton intervening on behalf of Netanyahu's competitors for the premiership.

In its attempt to tie Netanyahu to prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, they'll see echoes of what many in the media have been trying to do for 23 years, despite clear evidence to the contrary. Notably, this documentary does not include the clip of Netanyahu saying

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HSBC: 'We divested from Elbit over cluster bombs, not BDS'

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

HSBC's decision to divest from Elbit Systems was a statement against the production of cluster bombs and had nothing to do with the BDS movement, the global banking giant said on Wednesday.

"HSBC's decision to divest from Elbit Systems was not the result of campaigning by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, and it is not indicative of support for the movement's objectives," Stuart Levey, HSBC's chief legal officer and group managing director, wrote to *The Jerusalem Post*, in response to its Tuesday editorial, "Bad banking."

"HSBC's decision was based on our long-standing defense policy whereby we do not invest in companies linked to the production or marketing of cluster munitions. We test our shareholdings against this policy, assisted by an external, evidence-based ratings provider," he wrote.

"Following a recent acquisition by Elbit Systems, our investment in the company is no longer consistent with our defense policy with respect to cluster munitions, and Elbit Systems joins a number of other companies, including some major US defense contractors, that are impacted by this policy," Levey explained. "This development is what

prompted HSBC Asset Management to divest its shareholding in the company held in a passively managed fund. That shareholding was valued at approximately \$600k and represented 0.01% of the total issued share capital of the

company," Levey said.

"HSBC has a banking operation in Tel Aviv and provides banking services to numerous Israeli companies. We have every intention of continuing

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Irish Music Session
every Friday evening from 5pm
מוסיקה אירית חיה כל יום שישי מהשעה 17:00
All Welcome | כולם מוזמנים
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