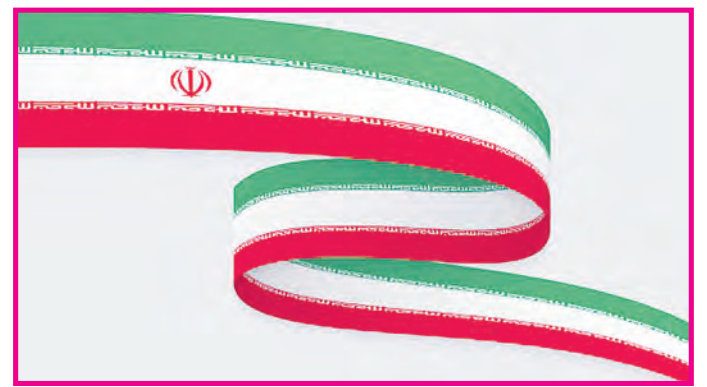


**IRANEWS Felicitates the 42nd Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution. The Next Issue Will Hit the News-Stands On Saturday, February 13**

# IRAN NEWS



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## Leader Pardons, Commutes Sentences of Over 3,840 Prisoners

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has pardoned or commuted the sentences of a large group of Iranian prisoners on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Ayatollah Khamenei on Monday agreed to pardon or reduce the sentences of 3,840 prisoners eligible for mitigating circumstances, including those found guilty in courts of common pleas and Islamic Revolution tribunals, the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces and the State Discretionary Punishment Organization.

The Leader's decision came in response to a letter from Iran's Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi regarding prisoners found eligible for receiving the clemency by the relevant judicial authority.

Every year on the anniversary of the victory of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran holds nationwide celebrations for 10 days.

The celebrations start on the anniversary of the homecoming of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, after several years of exile, and end on the anniversary of the victory of the Revolution on February 11 (the 22nd of the month of Bahman on the Persian calendar) to renew their allegiance to the Islamic establishment.

People from all walks of life also rally in different cities and towns each year on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution to mark the nation's victory that put an end to the monarchical rule of the US-backed Pahlavi regime.

## Biden Admin Urged To Make Up Its Mind About Iran Deal

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran's foreign minister has urged the Biden administration to make up its mind about the policy it seeks to adopt vis-à-vis Iran and the 2015 nuclear deal, and stop making "meaningless and ambiguous" remarks.

Mohammad Javad Zarif said U.S. President Joe Biden has to make a decision about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the nuclear deal signed between Tehran and world powers, which was abandoned by former US president Donald Trump in 2018.

"Biden has yet to make up his mind about what he wants to do. They ought to make a decision whether they are going to continue Trump's policy or adopt a new one," Zarif said in a televised interview on Sunday night.

**See Page 7**

## Biden Advised Not to Repeat Trump's Failed Policies Towards Iran



**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami underlined Iran's definite decision to increase power, advising the US new administration not to continue the failed policies of Donald Trump.

"The conditions indicate that resistance has yielded results. Growing stronger is our definitive path because in today world we should either be strong or surrender and there is no third way," General Salami said, addressing a ceremony to deliver 340 new speedboats to the IRGC Navy with the capability to fire different missiles and rockets and support diving operations in the Southern port city of Bandar Abbas on Monday.

"We tell the Americans that you have failed in the battlefield of pressure against the Iranian nation. Do not repeat the failed policies. The Iranian nation will not exchange its independence with (removal of sanctions); we have overcome the embargo and its consequences and defeated its architects; what (progress) you see today was achieved during the embargos era," he added.

General Salami also referred to the normalization of ties between a number of Arab states and Israel, and said, "We tell them not to overspend in the friendship with the Zionists, this is an unhappy marriage that will put both of you on the precipice of fire. Muslims do not accept such behavior from their rulers."

He warned that Zionists' presence will bring only 'fire', warning some regional countries of ties with the regime.

"We warn reactionary regimes of the region that Zionists are a cursed tree that only results in fire wherever it grows. Allowing them [to grow] is nothing but proof of enmity against Muslims. You should not indulge in friendship with Zionists," Major General Salami said.

The U.S. is no longer a world power, it is no longer able to pursue its desired policies anywhere, Salami said.

Americans should know that they have failed in the field of pressure against the Iranian nation, and should not repeat their failed policies, he added.

## Oil Market Could Take More Iran Supply If Sanctions Lifted

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The oil market could absorb more crude oil from Iran if U.S. sanctions are eased, according to Iran's governor to OPEC.

"Even if we produce around 4 million b/d, it won't be that considerable compared to our reverses," Amirhossein Zamaninia, who is also Iran's deputy oil minister for trade and international affairs, said on the sidelines of a petrochemicals conference in Tehran. "Thus, the market will have room for the amount of oil we have for exports."

Iran's government has targeted 2.3 million b/d of exports if the sanctions are lifted. Pre-sanctions production capacity was 4 million b/d.

Any sanctions relief for Iran under the U.S.' new Biden administration could complicate OPEC+ efforts to support the market and protect members' market share. Iranian oil flows have nosedived in the past two years due to US sanctions, crippling the country's oil export revenue, just as OPEC and allies led by Russia were cutting production because of a glut that was amplified by the pandemic.

Iran's crude and condensate exports, which averaged more than 1.7 million b/d in March 2019, slumped to around 800,000 b/d in recent months, according to S&P Global Platts estimates. Iranian oil minister Bijan Zanganeh, who was also attending the petrochemicals conference, said he would not confirm any figure for the OPEC member's oil sales when asked about a member of parliament saying in January they were 900,000 b/d.

Iranian oil exports were as high as 2.6 million b/d in May 2018 when the US withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal. Current output of about 2.1 million b/d compares with 3.7 million b/d at the start of 2017, according to Platts estimates. Iran is exempt from the OPEC+ cuts.

Asked if OPEC is concerned about new supply from Iran, Zamaninia said: "Our worry in OPEC and oil companies is both price and market. A delicate balance is needed here to be created. At the moment, given the decrease executed by OPEC, it seems that the balance has been created. And we hope this trend continues."

Zanganeh said he would not talk about sanctions and that he has not seen "anything" about any OPEC+ members showing concern about new supply from Iran. "We should see what happens," he said, when asked if he expects OPEC and allies to raise production quotas at their next meeting, which will be held March 4 by videoconference to decide on April quotas.

Apart from simple supply and demand, nothing impacts oil markets as much as geopolitics.

## No Mediation Needed For JCPOA Revival

**IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Iran says the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), which has been unilaterally pulled out by the former U.S. administration does not any mediation and will be done by Washington's return to its obligations.

"The United States must return to full compliance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 in order to return the JCPOA," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at his weekly presser on Monday.

"Iran has kept the path open to the U.S. and Europe to compensate their past violations [of obligations] and return to their commitments," he added.

The spokesman underlined that Tehran will not stop Washington from returning to rationality and logic and ending the arrogance that the former US government was suffering from.

Noting that the U.S. was the party to leave the negotiation table and the JCPOA, Khatibzadeh said, "We will wait for the other party to take proper action and return to all its obligations; then, we will follow the path of returning to our obligations." **See Page 7**

## Iran, Russia Discuss Joint Production of Sputnik V Vaccine

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The head of the Iran Food and Drug Administration announced that Iran is amid negotiation with Russia to jointly produce a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Deputy Minister of Health and the head of Iran Food and Drug Administration Mohammad Reza Shansaz traveled to Moscow as the head of a delegation.

The delegation is expected to finalize a joint cooperation agreement on the production of the Coronavirus vaccine with Russia.

The most important program of the delegation of the Ministry of Health of Iran is to negotiate with Russian officials, including the Minister of Health of this country, to sign a joint production document for the "Sputnik v" vaccine in Iran.

"The negotiations on a purchase agreement and joint production of the Sputnik v vaccine have been underway for several months," he said. "An agreement will be signed between the two sides."

"In this trip, we will hold final negotiations for the joint production of Russian vaccines in Iran."

Meanwhile on Monday, Health Ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said that some 67 more Iranians have died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to 58,536. **See Page 7**

## Speaker Calls for Lifting Trade Barriers

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Majlis Speaker Mohamad Baqer Qalibaf attended a meeting in the presence of Iranian and Russia businessmen aiming to help facilitate lifting barriers.

Insufficient understanding about mutual capacities, sanctions, customs barriers, COVID-19 outbreak and quality of products were among topics discussed by both sides.

Volume of Iran-Russia trade was \$2b in 2020. \$1,300,000,000 was related to Russia exports to Iran and the rest was for Iran's exports to Russia.

Thanks to various trade and industrial capacities, Iranian and Russian experts are not satisfied with the volume of trade and it is essential to take more effective steps to enhance level of trade relations between two countries.

Addressing the event, Qalibaf said fortunately leaders of two countries call for removal of problems in the way of free trade.

He also underlined lifting transportation obstacles.



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# Iran Sympathizes With India Over Deadly Flooding

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh expressed regret over the recent flooding in northern India which has killed several people.

In a statement on Sunday evening, Khatibzadeh also expressed sympathy with the Indian nation and government, especially the families of the victims.

At least seven people have been killed and more than 100 people are missing after a glacier burst, triggering flash floods in India's northern Uttarakhand state on Sunday.

## Qalibaf Delivers Leader's Message to Russian Duma Chairman

*IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK*

**TEHRAN –Majlis Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf has delivered the message of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, for Russian President Vladimir Putin to the Chairman of the Russian State Duma.**

Qalibaf sought to deliver the message to Putin in a bilateral meeting; however, after the Russian president declined to meet him, he handed over the message to chairman of the Russian State Duma Vyacheslav Viktorovich Volodin.

The Iranian top lawmaker had earlier said he was carrying an "important message" from Ayatollah Khamenei for Putin in his visit to Moscow.

"On my first official visit, I am carrying the Leader's message for [Russian President Vladimir] Putin," Qalibaf said upon arrival in Moscow on Sunday night, adding the message concerns the strategic ties between the two states.

"Relations between the Islamic Republic and the Russian Federation are based on a long-term strategic approach, and accordingly, the parliaments of the two countries will negotiate and cooperate to deepen, direct and lay the groundwork for bilateral ties."

Iran's top parliamentarian further touched on the West's oppressive sanctions on Russia and Iran, saying the two countries are working together in various economic fields to reduce the impact of the measures.

Moreover, he noted, the 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and world powers, the coronavirus pandemic, the import of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine, and the continuation of Iran-Russia cooperation in the healthcare sector are on the agenda of the talks in Moscow.



Later Qalibaf said Iran and Russia have enormous common grounds for cooperation on regional and international fields.

Speaking in a meeting with managers of Iranian institutions in Moscow, Qalibaf said Iran and Russia have close views preparatory for developing bilateral relations.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran attached importance to relations with Russian Federation in various fields.

He pointed to Supreme Leader's emphasis on reinforcing bilateral relations between Iran and Russia.

He noted that his visit to Russia is aimed at confidence building to ensure that relations between two countries will not be affected by the international developments.

Qalibaf arrived in Moscow at the invitation of Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin.

## Iran Ready to Support UN Role in Resolving Yemen Crisis

TEHRAN (MNA) –Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met and held talks with visiting UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths on Monday to discuss the latest developments in Yemen and ways to achieve lasting peace.

During the meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif pointed to the developments after the outset of the crisis in Yemen and especially the history of movements and initiatives taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran during these years and expounded on the outlook of the Islamic Republic of Iran for ending this great and catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the region as well as the need to alleviate the suffering of deprived Yemeni people.

The political discussion is the only solution to Yemeni crisis not imposition of war against this country, Zarif stressed.

Iranian foreign minister announced full readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to support any effective role of the United Nations in resolving this crisis given the very difficult conditions resulting from the war and economic siege imposed against Yemeni people.

For his part, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen Affairs Martin Griffiths evaluated awareness of the Islamic Republic of Iran's vision for peace and stability in Yemen as 'significant' and then elaborated the UN vision for resolving the crisis in Yemen through a ceasefire, economic contributions and resumption of political talks.

Martin Griffiths, UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Yemen arrived in Tehran on Sunday to discuss various aspects of the Yemeni crisis.

## Tehran, Baghdad Confer on Forming Joint Trade Committee

*IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK*

TEHRAN – Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and the Commercial Department of the Iraqi Embassy in Tehran have agreed on forming a joint trade committee in near future, the TCCIMA portal reported.

The decision was made in a meeting between the TCCIMA Head Masoud Khansari and the Iraqi Ambassador to Tehran Nasir Abdul Mohsen Abdullah on Monday.

Based on the proposal made by the TCCIMA head during the meeting, this joint committee will examine and assess the problems and demands of

the two countries' businessmen and offer solutions accordingly to facilitate economic cooperation between the two sides.

Referring to the establishment of joint trade committees between the TCCIMA and some of the embassies of neighboring countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Armenia, Khansari said that despite the high level of Iran's economic relations with Iraq, there are still some problems and obstacles in the way of the two countries' traders, and establishing a joint trade committee between the TCCIMA and the Iraqi embassy will improve the level of trade by addressing such problems.

Khansari also announced TCCIMA's readiness to set up a desk in the Iraqi embassy to facilitate economic relations between the businessmen of the two countries and reminded that TCCIMA is also ready to establish a corresponding desk for the commercial department of the Iraqi embassy in TCCIMA.

The official also announced the Tehran chamber's preparations for hosting an Iraqi trade delegation headed by the chairman of Baghdad Chamber of Commerce in the coming months.

"Issues and solutions for improving the economic relations between the two countries' private sectors will be discussed in a meeting with the head of the Iraqi Chamber of Commerce," he said.

"One of the suggestions of the Tehran chamber in this meeting will be to create a joint virtual exhibition to introduce and identify the production and economic capabilities of the two countries," he added.

Abdullah for his part expressed the full readiness of his embassy to cooperate with TCCIMA in order to resolve the existing problems and obstacles in the way of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

"According to the agreement between the governments of the two countries for increasing the volume of trade between the two countries to \$20 billion, the private sectors of the two countries can be the means for this leap."

## Iran Opens Largest CNG Tanks Production Plant in West Asia

TEHRAN (MNA) – A CNG tanks production plant was inaugurated in Qazvin province in the presence of Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami.

The large factory for the production of CNG and oxygen tanks was opened and put into operation in Qazvin province with a production capacity of 250,000 tanks per year.

In this industrial complex, two production lines are simultaneously producing various types of tanks, oxygen and industrial tanks, said Hatami in the opening ceremony on Monday.

This complex has the capacity to produce 10 to 130-liter tanks for various industrial and medical uses, and now the CNG tanks of this factory are used in national projects, he added.

He highlighted that launching this plant as the largest CNG tank production plant in West Asia and the first plant in Iran is one of the great achievements after the Islamic Revolution.

The CNG tanks production plant is equipped with the latest technology in the world, and high-tech testing equipment, technical laboratories with valid certificates and quality system located in this factory makes the final product of this factory with very desirable quality and even better than foreign samples.

## Russians Keen on Investing in Payam Special Economic Zone

KARAJ (IRNA) -Payam Special Economic Zone (PSEZ) has recently been at the center of Russian investors who have announced that they are keen on investing in economic projects in the trade zone in Iran's Alborz province, an Iranian official said.

Managing-Director of Payam Special Economic Zone Nader Sanagoo Motlagh says the remarkable capacities of the PSEZ prompted Russian investors to compare it with similar free trade zones in India and express their readiness to increase investment in the economic zone more than ever.

Motlagh made the remarks after a meeting with Nikolai Mashkov, director of the Foreign Economic Cooperation Commission of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

According to the Iranian official, the Russian economic activists said they are prepared to establish different factories to produce home appliances, electronic products and foodstuff in the Payam Special Economic Zone and invest in the Payam International Airport.

The Russian investors proposed the formation of an organization in order to export fruits and agricultural products from Alborz province to Russia, the establishment of a mechanized warehouse to store commodities needed in Russia as well as collaboration in creating air logistics for Russia and countries in Central Asia in the Payam Special Economic Zone and the Payam International Airport, he noted.

The Russians have also expressed readiness to open an agency of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry and establish a branch of the City Bank as well as a Russian insurance institute aimed at expanding mutual cooperation and flourishing investment in the trade zone, the official added.

He noted that the two sides agreed upon preparing comprehensive information in Russian and Persian languages on exemptions, advantages of the PSEZ and investment regulations and that the information will be available for the Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Payam Special Economic Zone and the Payam International Airport are affiliated to Iran's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. The airport provides freight and passenger services. Around 70 industrial and production units have been established in the special economic zone so far.

## Iran Polymer Output To Rise 120% by 2025

TEHRAN (Shana) – The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said Iran's current petrochemical production capacity stood at 80 million tons per year, adding the country's polymer production capacity would increase 120 percent by 2025.

Addressing the the 14th Iran Plast Exhibition on Sunday, Behzad Mohammadi said Iran currently supplied 9 million tons of polymer annually which is planned to reach 21 million tons once several petrochemical plants come on stream in the country by 2025.

He pointed to the presence of 14 knowledge-based companies in the exhibition, and added 200 businessmen from 10 countries including India, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Kurdistan region had planned to visit the Iran Plast exhibition.

Mohammadi, who is also deputy petroleum minister for petrochemical affairs, said the virtual section of the showcase would be held with 72 Iranian and two foreign companies.

The Deputy Oil Minister pointed out that the total production capacity of the petrochemical industry has increased from 65.8 million tons at the beginning of the current calendar year, which began on March 21 to 80 million tons by exploiting 10 projects that were realized this year: "Currently, 40 million tons of feedstock equivalent to 900,000 barrels is consumed daily in 60 complexes of the country."

Mohammadi stated that currently 35 million tons of final and marketable products are produced in the country, of which 72% are exported and 28% are consumed domestically, and added: "77 types of chemicals and 18 types of polymers in the form of 334 grades are produced in the country and consumed by downstream petrochemical plants."

Noting that 9 million tons of polymers are currently being produced in the country, he said: "This number will increase to 21 million tons by 2025, taking advantage of the third-leap projects that are under way."

## Over 200 Stem Cell Companies Active in Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - Highlighting Iran's achievements in the field of stem cells, the Vice President for Science and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that over 200 stem cells and 5700 knowledge-based companies were active in Iran.

In response to a question on the role of knowledge-based companies in treating and providing community's health and their role in the use of up-to-date stem cell knowledge, Sorena Sattari noted: "During the COVID-19 pandemic, the knowledge-based companies gained significant achievements and right now Iran is no longer importing anti-coronavirus products."

Sattari said that Iran had produced 98 percent of its medicines and can meet the country's needs.

"In the immediate future, Iran's knowledge-based companies that are active in the vaccine production field will produce the home-made anti-corona vaccine," Sattari stressed.

"Many private companies that are active in medical and laboratory products have focused on producing indigenous coronavirus vaccine," Vice President for Science and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran Sattari added.

The unveiling ceremony of specialized accelerators, stem cells, reconstructive medicine, and knowledge-based companies' products was held at Tehran University of Medical Sciences with the presence of Vice President for Science and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran Sattari on Feb 8th, 2021 on Monday morning.

## 340 Speedboats Join IRGC Navy's Fleet

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's military has supplied the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy with 340 combat speedboats on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

The speedboats joined the IRGC Navy's fleet in Iran's southern port city of Bandar Abbas during a ceremony on Monday, attended by Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, IRGC Commander Hossein Salami and IRGC Navy Commander Alireza Tangsiri.

The speedboats, co-produced by the IRGC Navy and the Defense Ministry, are capable of carrying various types of rockets to attack enemy targets. They will be used in missions in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, as well as in the Caspian Sea.

Speaking at the ceremony, Major General Baqeri lauded the IRGC Navy, saying the force has successfully performed the task of establishing security in the region, especially in the Strait of Hormuz, through which more than two-thirds of the world's fossil fuel passes.





Industrial Development and  
Renovation Organization of Iran



Islamic Republic of IRAN  
Ministry of Industry, Mine & Trade



# IDRO in the Forty-Second Year of the Islamic Revolution

## IDRO Performance in the Field of Executive Projects Until December 2020

No.	Title of project	Total value of investment (billion Rials)	Employment	Progression
1	Plan to establish a bioethanol fuel production unit in Kermanshah province	6727	152	73.90%
2	The second phase of the reconstruction and renovation plan of Baluch Industries Development Company (weaving line and printing and dyeing line)	3900	282	20.00%
3	Production plan of water filters (membranes) in Ilam province	4457	75	36.00%
4	Supplementary plan of Esfarayen industrial complex in North Khorasan province	27429	230	97.06%
5	Establishment and commissioning of a system for launching and decommissioning of floating and floating parking (travel elevator) in Isaiko	1570	560	17.88%
6	Plan to create phase 1 of Garmsar Special Economic Zone (250 hectares) in Semnan province	2736	150	62.11%
7	Plan to create phase 1 of Jahrom Special Economic Zone (85 hectares) in Fars province	1060	80	58.50%
8	Plan to establish a bioethanol fuel production unit in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Provinces	9102	152	14.16%
9	Construction and completion plan of Kavosh research town infrastructure (leading block)	354	25	48.03%
10	Dry basin construction plan and support workshops	71810	5000	80.02%

IDRO projects

32

projects

### Investment projects

424800 billion rials, 11507 people

23

### General contracting projects

\$ 5,249 billion, 4,236 people

1

### Project management projects

6343 billion rials and 782 million euros

2

### Production Leap Projects

6

## Inauguration of a new spinning line and the beginning of the executive operation of the weaving line of Baluch Weaving Industries Development Company

1. Inauguration of a new spinning line with an investment value of 2,000 billion rials and employment of 150 people
2. Planning and starting the executive operation for the development of the weaving line and the renovation of the printing and dyeing hall in order to complete the production and job creation process of 195 people with an investment of 10 million Euros and 560 billion Rials.
3. Obtaining a cotton planting license from the Jihad Agricultural Organization of the province in order to complete the production chain from cotton planting to fabric production
4. Complete the infrastructure of the company complex
5. Completing the recruitment and training of 150 manpower required for the production hall of the new spinning line



## Projects of 4 Specialized Tables of the Automotive Industry

Project piece

154

The value of contracts is

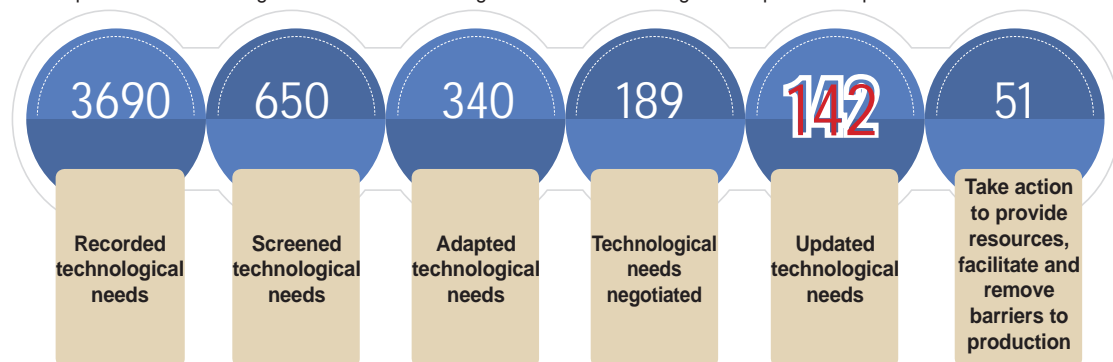
4460  
Billion Rials

Currency savings of

341  
Million Euros

## Supporting the Penetration of Technologies Created by Knowledge-Based Companies

This project was defined due to the need to develop domestic manufacturing by focusing on counting the technological needs of the industrial sector and meeting them with the help of the technological capabilities of knowledge-based companies and technologists. In this plan, the platform and the possibility of business cooperation between industrial companies with technological needs and knowledge-based and technological companies are provided.



## Project Findings in the Deprived and Less Privileged Areas



Holding public tender for identifying investors to implement investment projects identified in the target provinces in the newspapers, news websites and publishing tender call related to the projects and details of projects in the website of the organization.

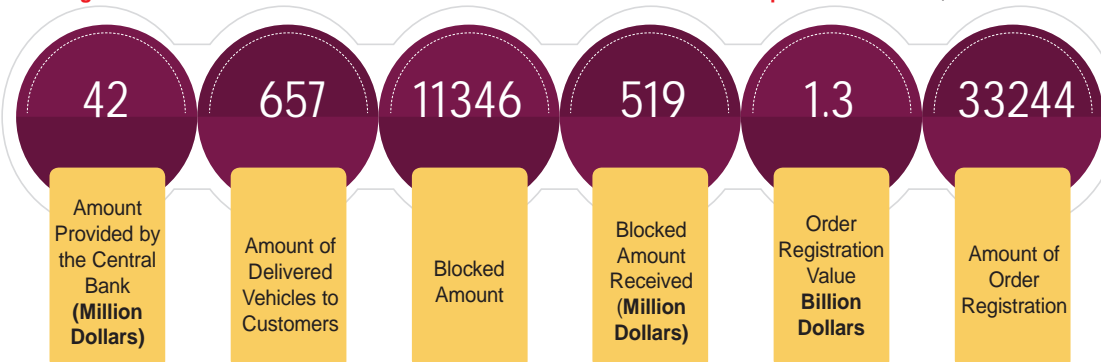
**Number of provinces studied:** 12  
**Number of large and medium designs identified:** 39  
**Investment value:** 193 thousand billion rials  
**Direct employment:** about 5,600 people

## Renovation of the Country's Commercial Transportation Fleet

In order to modernize and replace the worn-out transportation fleet, the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran was selected as the executor of the renovation project of the worn-out commercial transportation fleet to coordinate and cooperate with relevant agencies (Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade, National Development Fund, Program Organization And the state budget, the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the Central Bank and Ministry of Interior) to implement the plan.

**Total goal:** Production of 176550 devices.

**Required resources:** \$ 1.077 billion



## Development of Phase 14 of South Pars Gas Field

Implementation of Phase 14 project to a consortium consisting of Iran Industrial Development and Renovation Organization, Iran Industrial Design Management Company, Iran Offshore Engineering and Construction Company, National Iranian Drilling Company, Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex, Iran Power Plant Project Management Company, Company Arak Machine Building and Payndan Company have been assigned. The Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran is responsible for leading the consortium.

Contract amount:

\$ 5,249 million

Employment:

6089 people

89.18%

Progress until December 2020



## Afghanistan Gets First Doses of Covid-19 Vaccine From India

KABUL (Dispatches) - Afghanistan received half a million doses of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine from India Sunday, the first consignment to arrive in the country that was hit hard by the virus last year.

The AstraZeneca/Oxford University vaccine is being produced by Serum Institute of India, with the consignment of doses arriving in Kabul as part of a program by New Delhi to distribute the vaccine to its neighbors.

"We received 500,000 doses of vaccines for Covid-19 patients from the government of India," Afghanistan's Acting Health Minister Wahid Majrooh told reporters at Kabul airport as he received the consignment.



## Three Dead, 150 Missing in India River Torrent Disaster

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Three people were confirmed dead and at least 150 were missing in northern India after a broken glacier caused a major river surge that swept away bridges and roads on Sunday, police said.

The massive burst of water tore through the Dhauliganga river valley, destroying everything in its path, videos taken by terrified residents showed.

Three bodies had been found and a desperate search was underway for more, police said, and efforts are underway to clear villages in the stricken region of Uttarakhand state.



## Ecuadoreans Vote For President



QUITO (Reuters) - Ecuadoreans choose a new president on Sunday, with many voters weary of painful economic austerity measures and eager for a return to socialism, encouraging left-wing candidate Andres Arauz who hopes to win without needing a runoff vote.

The 36-year-old economist, a protégé of former president Rafael Correa, leads in polls on promises to make \$1 billion in direct cash payments to families and to disavow the conditions of a \$6.5 billion IMF financing package.

His main rival, Guillermo Lasso, has been hurt by his image as a conservative banker, and pollsters say the possibility of low voter turnout due to the pandemic could dent his support. Lawyer and indigenous activist Yaku Perez is third in the polls. An Arauz victory would extend Latin America's return to leftist policies, already evident in Argentina and Bolivia, a challenge for Washington as it duels with China for influence in the hemisphere.

"The response of citizens has been overwhelming all over the country, and we know that this will be reflected in the vote," Arauz said in Quito, where he accompanied his 106-year-old grandmother Flor Galarza as she voted.

Arauz is not casting his ballot in Sunday's election because he is registered to vote in Mexico, where he was studying to get doctorate in economics but abruptly quit the program to run for president.

A brutal coronavirus outbreak last year left bodies uncollected on the streets of Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil. Lockdowns around the world slashed fuel demand and prices for oil, Ecuador's main export, battering an economy also reeling from sharp cuts to government spending.

President Lenin Moreno, a former Correa ally, drove a pro-market agenda on hopes of reviving a sluggish and heavily indebted economy. His efforts sparked an angry backlash, with 10 days of violent street protests in 2019 against a planned fuel price hike.

The elections council said it expected relatively high participation, and acknowledged that lines were long in some centers due to social distancing.

Jomaira Alvarado, 28, a Guayaquil merchant who supports Lasso, complained about inadequate measures to guard against transmission of the virus.

"I came worried about getting infected with the pandemic, but here I am," said Alvarado at a voting center. "I have a lot of hope that we can finally eliminate the shadow of these bad governments."

Pollsters in recent days have started to see a slightly greater likelihood of Arauz winning a single round. Arauz allies are expected to make a strong showing in voting for a new legislature.

Financial markets are watching, and Arauz's rhetoric has already sparked a bond selloff. He has said he will continue paying the country's debts, but has said social investment will take priority and also has called for an investigation of last year's \$17.4 billion bond restructuring.

## Protests Sweep Myanmar to Oppose Coup, Support Suu Kyi

YANGON (Reuters) - Tens of thousands of people rallied across Myanmar on Sunday to denounce last week's coup and demand the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, in the biggest protests since the 2007 Saffron Revolution that helped lead to democratic reforms.

In a second day of widespread protests, crowds in the biggest city, Yangon, sported red shirts, red flags and red balloons, the colour of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy Party (NLD).

"We don't want military dictatorship! We want democracy!" they chanted.

On Sunday afternoon, the junta ended a day-long blockade of the internet that had further inflamed anger since the coup last Monday that has halted the Southeast Asian nation's troubled transition to democracy and drawn international outrage.

Pope Francis expressed "solidarity with the people" on Sunday and asked Myanmar's leaders to seek "democratic" harmony.



## Palestinian Rights Groups Urge Swift Action After ICC Ruling

GAZA (Dispatches) - Palestinian rights groups have welcomed the International Criminal Court's ruling that it has jurisdiction over the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and called on the court's prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to take swift action.

Friday's ruling opens the way for the ICC to investigate alleged war crimes committed in the 2014 Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the besieged Gaza Strip by both the Israeli army and Palestinian armed factions.

The 50-day war, which devastated the coastal enclave and left 2,251 dead on the Palestinian side, mostly civilians, and 74 on the Israeli side, mostly soldiers, has already been the subject of a five-year preliminary ICC probe and a string of critical reports. Bensouda said in December 2019 there was "a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip".

She named the Israeli army and armed Palestinian groups such as Hamas as possible perpetrators and asked judges to rule on whether the situation fell under the court's jurisdiction, before a formal investigation would be opened. Friday's ruling clears the way for Bensouda to investigate alleged atrocities.

Several Palestinian rights groups praised the ICC's "landmark decision", and stressed that immediate action must be taken by Bensouda in order to "ensure justice and accountability for Palestinian victims".

"A critically important step towards ensuring the rule of law, the decision also marks an important step towards ending impunity, while ensuring the dignity of the Palestinian people," read a statement by rights groups Al-Haq, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Al Dameer Association for Human Rights.

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement also welcomed the ICC ruling, and called on the body to "stop dragging its feet, resist pressure from the US, Israel and Western countries, and immediately do its job".

## U.S. to End Deals to Send Asylum Seekers Back to Central America

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States has moved to end agreements with three Central American nations under which former President Donald Trump's administration intended to send migrants and asylum seekers who arrived at the U.S. border back to those countries.

In a statement, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said President Joe Biden's administration is suspending the accords with the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, effective immediately.

Transfers under the U.S.-Guatemala accord were paused in mid-March of last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic after rights groups said hundreds of people were sent back, while the agreements with El Salvador and Honduras were never implemented.

The deals, also known as safe third country agreements, will be terminated as per the notice period stipulated in each, Blinken's statement reads.

"In line with the President's vision, we have notified the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that the United States is taking this action as efforts to establish a cooperative, mutually respectful approach to managing migration across the region begin," he said.

Since taking office on January 20, Biden has pursued several executive actions to overturn some of Trump's most hardline and divisive policies, particularly as they relate to immigration.

He signed executive orders on February 2 related to family separation at the US-Mexico border, and ordered a review of a policy that forced asylum seekers to remain in Mexico as their US immigration claims were being processed.

Biden said his efforts aim to "undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration that literally, not figuratively, ripped children from the arms of their families".

The policy shift has been welcomed by immigration advocates in the US, who have for years decried Trump's hardline policies on immigration as worsening human rights violations and risks faced by thousands of asylum seekers.

The orders came just weeks after thousands of primarily Honduran asylum seekers were blocked by Guatemalan security forces and returned home while attempting to reach Mexico and the US.

Migrant caravans have set off from Central America during the past few years amid rising poverty, political instability and violence in their home countries. Many participants in the most recent caravan said devastating hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic pushed them to leave.

In his statement on Saturday, Blinken stressed that the suspension of the agreements with Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala does "not mean that the U.S. border is open".



## Protests Erupt in Chile After Police Fatally Shoot Street Juggler

SANTIAGO (Dispatches)

- Protests have broken out and municipal buildings were set on fire in southern Chile after police shot dead a street performer, prompting an emergency government meeting.

The shooting took place on Friday in Panguipulli, a popular lakeside resort around 800km south of the capital Santiago, prompting hundreds to take to the streets in protest.

Some protesters erected burning barricades and threw rocks at police, while public buildings, including the municipal headquarters, were set on fire.

Chilean police have detained the officer involved in the shooting while their investigation proceeds, according to officials.

Interior Minister Rodrigo Delgado, who convened his staff on Saturday to discuss the situation, condemned the arson and promised justice would be served in the shooting.

The Chilean government has ordered police to hand over all records of the incident to the Public Ministry, which has launched an investigation.

Wider protests since late 2019 have put the country's Carabinero police force under intense scrutiny, with local and international watchdog groups alleging excessive use of force and human rights violations.

The shooting occurred after the juggler refused to cooperate with a police search by two uniformed men, the AFP news agency reported.

The check resulted in a dispute that ended with one of the agents firing at the street artist, according to a video widely circulated by local channels and on social media, the news agency said.

"We regret the loss of this young juggler. I hope that justice is done," Ricardo Valdivia, Panguipulli's mayor, told Radio Cooperativa.

Santiago residents banged pots and pans in anger over the shooting, while Chileans took to social media to call for reforms and condemn what happened.







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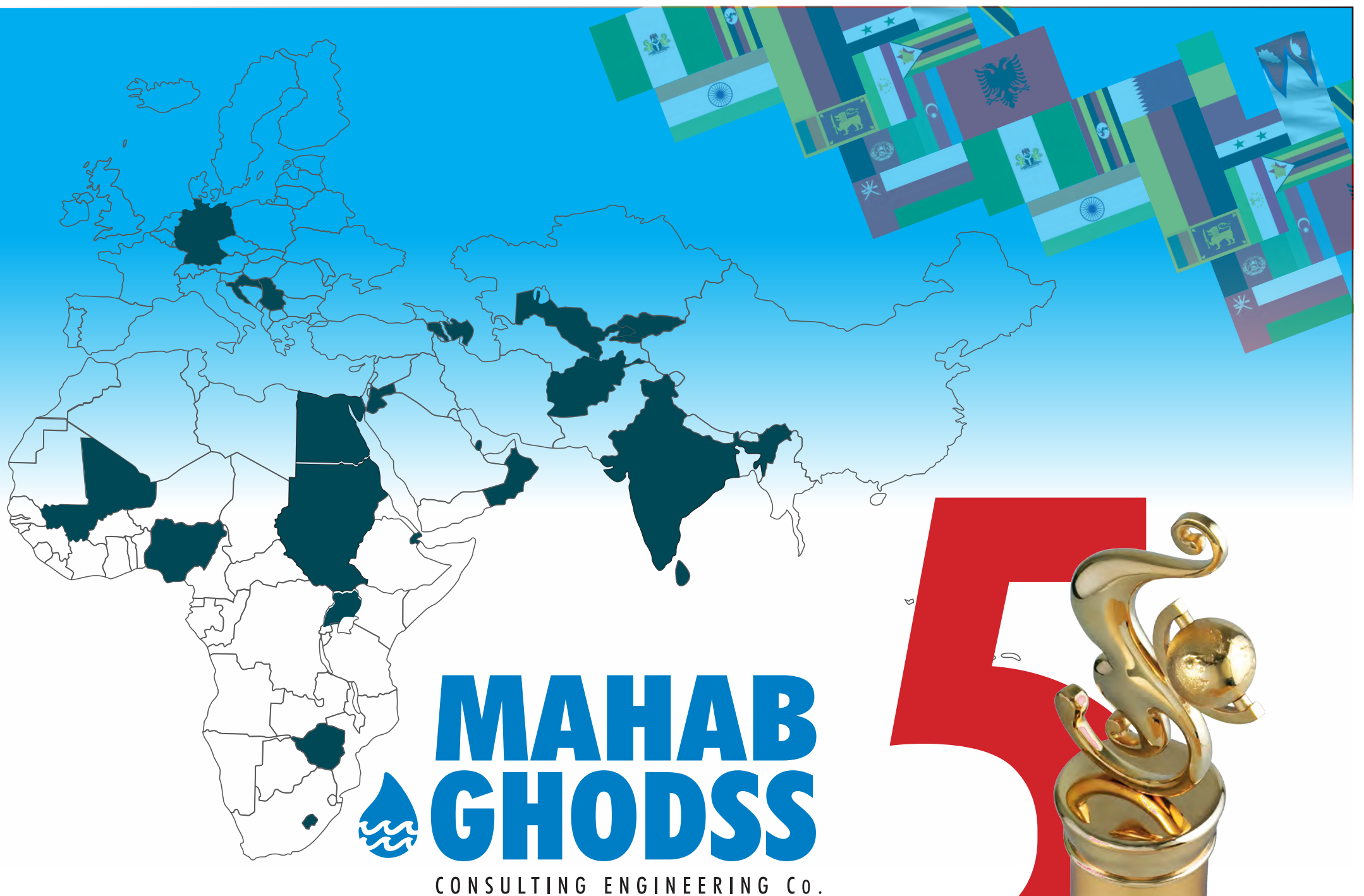
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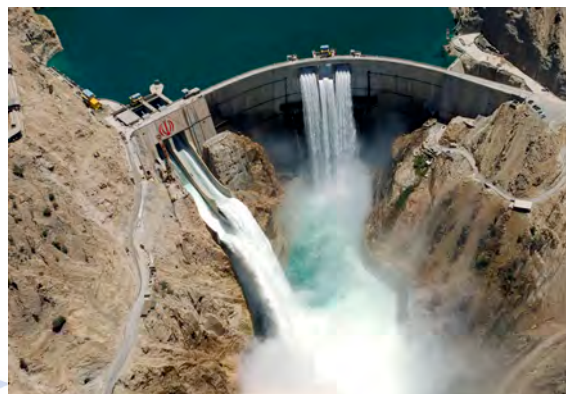




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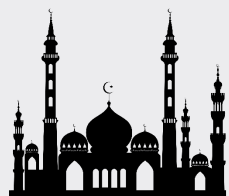
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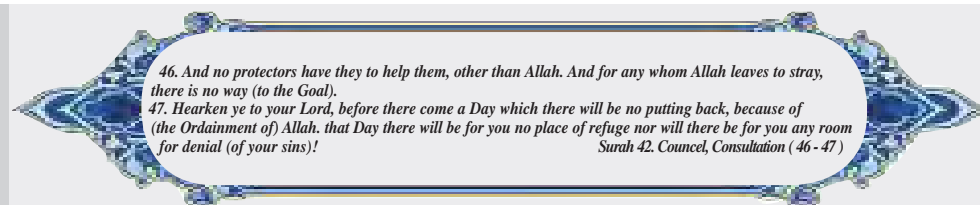
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■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:58
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:31
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:56



# IMF Chief Calls for Helping Low-Income Countries

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The head of the IMF on Friday urged advanced economies to provide more resources to low-income countries, warning of an emerging "Great Divergence" in global growth that could risk stability and trigger social unrest for years to come.

International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told reporters that 50% of developing countries were at risk of falling further behind, which raised concerns about stability and social unrest.

To avert bigger problems, she said rich countries and international institutions should chip in more. She also urged heavily indebted countries to seek debt restructuring sooner rather than later, and to boost conditions for growth." Last year the main focus was on the 'Great Lockdown.' This year we face the risk of 'Great Divergence,'" Georgieva told reporters during a videoconference. "We estimate that developing countries that have been for decades converging in income levels will be in a very tough place this time around."

Setbacks for living standards in developing countries would make it much more difficult to achieve stability and security for the rest of the world, she said.

"What is the risk? Social unrest. You can call it a lost decade. It may be a lost generation," she said.

Georgieva said advanced economies had spent about 24% of GDP on average on support measures during the pandemic, compared to 6% in emerging markets and 2% in low-income countries.

A former top World Bank executive, Georgieva said vaccination efforts were uneven, with poor countries facing "tremendous difficulties" even as official development funds were going down.

Only one country in Africa - Morocco - had begun vaccinating its citizens, she said, citing grave concerns about increased mortality in many African countries.

"We must do everything in our power to reverse this dangerous divergence," she said, noting developing countries could also miss out on a major shift underway in rich countries to more digital and green economies.

She said accelerating vaccinations could add \$9 trillion to the global economy by 2025, with 60% of benefits going to developing countries.

Georgieva said she was still working with IMF shareholders to win support for a new allocation of the IMF's own currency, or Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), which could provide resources to poorer countries.



Former U.S. President Donald Trump had blocked such a move, akin to a central bank printing money. Support from the United States, the IMF's dominant shareholder, is more likely under President Joe Biden whose administration is open to a new allocation, according to sources familiar with their views. The Biden administration has not addressed the issue publicly.

Georgieva said an SDR allocation of \$250 billion in 2009 had helped stabilize the global economy during the global financial crisis, and the current situation was more grave.

She said the IMF was completing a periodic review of long-term liquidity needs that might justify a new SDR allocation, but gave no further details.

Group of Seven finance officials will discuss a possible new SDR allocation when they meet on Feb. 12, the sources said.

## Biden Advised Not to...

FROM PAGE 1

IRGC chief highlighted that the Iranian nation will not exchange its independence due to sanctions and they have accepted its consequences.

The navy will be empowered and equipped with launching systems to counter enemy vessels, he added.

Meanwhile in the ceremony, Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces said that competent men who are responsible for defending against and attacking the enemy on speedboats turn these vessels into the unique power.

"The IRGC navy started its battle at sea against the United States, and today, day by day and moment by moment, it is growing and improving its capabilities and readiness," said Major General Mohamad Bagheri.

Stating that the IRGC navy's reliance on fast speedboats is not just equipment, he added, "With a new strategy and a revolutionary approach, this force [IRGC Navy] turned to new weapons and equipment."

"Building and using a fast speedboat is not something that other countries cannot do, but the factor that makes this small vessel an irreplaceable power is a competent man who is responsible for defending against and attacking the enemy on this vessel," General Bagheri noted.

"With some features such as agility, high maneuverability, high firepower, stealth as much as possible, and many other features, the speedboat plays an irreplaceable role in the sea," he highlighted.

General Bagheri went on to say, "The Navy is growing and progressing considerably in missile combat, mine combat, submarine and surface combat in addition to vessels."

"Existence of more than two-thirds of the world's fossil energy reserves and the transfer of 20% of this energy through the Strait of Hormuz has made the security of the people of this region as of great importance," he said, stressing, "The IRGC navy has been able to fulfill its responsibility for security in the region."

# KSC, a Great Collection in Organizational Culture

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Media and Information Center of Cultural Supreme Council believes Khuzestan Steel Company (KSC) is a great collection in the organizational culture.

Mr. Vali Mehdipoor says the organizational culture is very important in Khuzestan Steel Company and this group acts like a chain to meet its goals.

He added that the company, by institutionalizing the organizational culture among its staff, enjoys both material profits due to higher productivity and higher profits and helps other parts of this chain.

Mehdipoor went on to say that the organizational culture becomes more important in a condition where most of the industries in the country are challenging with the outbreak of the COVID-19



virus and some of them have closed down or suffered heavy losses but KSC with its deep organizational culture which have earned it through years of activities has been able to overcome the challenges resulted by the virus.

He said KSC is of those companies which has overcome the virus due to its long experience and record in the national steel industry as well as having a rich devise organizational culture, and its records and statistics about its production and sales as well as profits in the current year are all a proof for the positive performance of the company regarding the challenge of virus.

Mehdipoor noted that this organizational culture among the company's staff in different sections has been the major factor in the achievements of the company in the current special condition.

# Structuring at PR of Super PGS Refinery

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The manager of the public relations and international affairs of Persian Gulf Star Company explained the process of structuring and innovation in this department and in the super refinery of the company.

In an article, Ms. Narges Sedaghat highlighted the major actions of the public relations of the company to improve the quality of the performance in this department.

She said in the era of the science of communications, we see spread and popularity of technologies and tools for information and as the result, people and officials understand more the significance of the public relations in the offices, and it has raised the expectations for the public relations because the PRs are the tongue, eyes and ears of organizations and if they do not function their tasks well, we will see disruption in the whole system and communication channel with the organization will be cut, and it will have heavy consequences for both sides.

She then pointed to the background of the public relations in PGSC, saying that the PR in this company began its activities officially two years ago but before that, there were no public relations in the true sense and it has caused problem for the company to reflect its performance.

Sedaghat further said that the PR in the company since its establishment in 2019 tried to bring technology and discipline to the department through structuring and employing the latest tools for connection with the public and media to have better communication for reflecting the performance of the company.

She then pointed to the current condition created by the outbreak of virus which minimized the number of press conferences, exhibitions and cultural events and said the public relations should prepare themselves with agility for a special era.



## Iran, Turkey Negotiating To Renew Gas Accord

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The deputy petroleum minister for international and commercial affairs said on Monday that the present agreement for gas export to Turkey is valid until 2026 and the talks for extending the accord have started by National Iranian Gas Company.

Speaking in the 3rd Specialized Summit on Presenting Qeshm Free Zone Investment Opportunities in Oil and Energy Sectors, Amir Hossein Zamaninia said that according to the studies of International Energy Forum (IEF), Iran will keep its 8th place among natural gas producers until 2040 and will still be the biggest reservoir in the world.

He said that the biggest growth rates in gas export belong to Qatar, Russia, the US, Australia, Canada, and Algeria, adding that Iran needs to make some changes in domestic use of natural gas.

Admin...

FROM PAGE 1

"The Biden administration has not yet made any decision on what it is going to do, and their words are ambiguous and meaningless. They still have time to correct their remarks," he added.

In an unconsidered move on Sunday, President Biden suggested that Iran must "stop enriching uranium" before the U.S. lifts its sanctions.

During an interview with CBS' Face the Nation ahead of the 55th Super Bowl, he nodded his head in affirmation when he was asked if Iran must stop enriching uranium first. However, after hours of debate and controversy over the issue among international experts and journalists, a senior U.S. official later made it clear to Reuters that Biden meant Iran must stop enriching uranium beyond the limits under the JCPOA.

In his Sunday interview, the Iranian foreign minister said before returning to the JCPOA, the US needs to prove it would not happen again. How should Iran make sure "someone like Trump will not take office and tear apart the deal again?" Zarif asked.

"The Americans must prove the Trump experience will not be repeated. This is not a precondition, this is a subject of talks," he added.

The Iranian foreign minister stressed that the US must guarantee it will not repeat its previous moves, and also deal with the damages it caused on the Iranian nation by leaving the deal and re-imposing its sanctions.

"However, the first step is the implementation of commitments," Zarif said, making it clear that Iran's return to compliance with the deal is merely dependent on the U.S. return.

Zarif was echoing the remarks made by Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in early January about the issue of compensation. The Leader had noted that Iran's demand for compensation will be pursued in later stages.

The Iranian foreign minister says Tehran will not hold new talks on the JCPOA and the new US President Biden must return to the same nuclear deal.

Under his signature 'maximum pressure' policy against Iran, the former US president withdrew Washington from the deal back in May 2018 and restored those economic sanctions the agreement had removed. The U.S. also began threatening third countries with "secondary sanctions" if they violated the American bans.

## No Mediation Needed...

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to recent remarks by Foreign Ministry Mohammad Javad Zarif, the spokesman said the European troika should make up for their past mistakes and return to their compliance.

He said Iran has done its part in this direction, and now Europe can play a constructive role and leave the wrong path it has taken at this point, both by returning to its commitments and by playing a facilitating role in reviving the deal.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Khatibzadeh pointed to the current trip of Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf to Moscow and said, the speaker is scheduled to hold constructive meetings with senior Russian officials amid this critical situation. He also said Iran and Afghanistan strategic cooperation document has been finalized, said Iran Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh.

"The document has been finalized, considerable amount of time was spent on it," he said. He said there were two issues, the details of which were fleshed out during Deputy FM Abbas Araqchi's visit to Afghanistan, and because of that some details of the document were adjusted.

"The issue of water right could be reviewed between the two countries to find common ground or being followed via joint commission and water right management. We hope the Afghan side would announce its stance about it," he said. The Helmand River has been at the center of a dispute between Afghanistan and Iran over water rights and the construction of the Kamal Khan dam.

Khatibzadeh further said Iran has informed the International Atomic Energy Agency about the country's actions to reduce its commitments and limit IAEA's access.

The official indicated that the IAEA's access to Iran's nuclear facilities would be limited based on a parliament law. Iran's parliament has approved the Strategic Act to Revoke Sanctions that aims to force the West to return to full compliance under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The law includes a slew of measures, including limiting inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), increasing Iran's enrichment of uranium, and revitalizing the Fordow plant. "If the other side would return to their commitments we would return to ours, this would depend on the other side," he said.

Iran, Russia...

FROM PAGE 1

Some 7,321 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, some 707 of whom have been hospitalized, she added. Sadat Lari noted that 1,260,045 patients out of a total of 1,473,756 infected people have recovered or been discharged from the hospitals. Some 3,778 other COVID-19 patients are in critical condition and being treated in intensive care units, the spokeswoman said. She added that 9,722,969 tests have so far been carried out in Iran.



## Ibrahimovic Scores 500th Club Goal

MILAN (Dispatches) - AC Milan star Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored the 500th club goal of his career on Sunday against Crotone in Serie A.

The 39-year-old Swede scored after half an hour after combining with Rafael Leao against lowly Crotone at the San Siro for his 82nd goal for the club.

Ibrahimovic reached the landmark in 825 games, having made his professional debut for Swedish club Malmo in 1999.

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## Serena Has Great Chance At Australian Open

SYDNEY (Reuters) - The unusual circumstances ahead of the Australian Open could help Serena Williams claim her record-equaling 24th Grand Slam singles title, according to fellow American Chris Evert.

Williams, who turns 40 this year, has been stuck on 23 since winning the 2017 Australian Open, losing four finals since to remain one short of Margaret Court's record.

But Evert believes Williams, despite worries over a shoulder niggles, will be a big threat in Melbourne.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2021

# Medvedev Steers Russia To ATP Cup Title

MELBOURNE (AP) — After celebrating their ATP Cup triumph as teammates for Russia, Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev will go their own ways at the Australian Open next week and may meet at Melbourne Park as rivals in the quarterfinals.

Medvedev improved his winning streak to 14 matches and secured Russia's 2-0 victory over Italy in the ATP Cup final on Sunday when he beat Matteo Berrettini 6-4, 6-2 at Rod Laver Arena. Rublev had given his team a commanding start with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Fabio Fognini.

The No. 4-ranked Medvedev has certainly been peaking, winning his last 10 matches against top-10 players, including a sweep of the top three at the ATP Finals last year and a close victory over Alexander Zverev in the semifinals here.

"It's a confidence boost," he said.

The Australian Open starts Monday but Medvedev and Rublev, who has won five titles and 45 singles matches since the start of 2020, get a day off before their first-round matches.

As for having such a run of big matches so close to a major, Medvedev said he wouldn't know for a couple of weeks whether it was ideal preparation for a major or not.

"Get the momentum going, sometimes it helps you — I did last year (when) I won two tournaments in a row," he said. "At the same time it's tiring. Played four tough matches, yesterday especially."

The Russians didn't lose a singles match during the group stage or the playoffs this week, and were the second team to win the ATP Cup after Novak Djokovic led Serbia to the inaugural title last year.

The first edition featured 24 countries and was staged in three Australian cities: Brisbane, Perth and Sydney. Because of restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, including a two-week quarantine for all international arrivals, this year it was cut to 12 teams and played entirely at Melbourne Park. Along with five other tuneup tournaments.

## Murray Questions

## LTA's COVID Protocols

LONDON (Reuters) - Former world number one Andy Murray has raised doubts about the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) health protocols at its high-performance training facility after he tested positive for COVID-19 and had to miss the Australian Open.

The three-time Grand Slam winner was forced to pull out of the first major of 2021 in Melbourne after he was unable to find what he called a "workable quarantine" following a positive test on Jan. 14.

"I stuck to all of the protocols. I couldn't pick it up anywhere else because I hadn't left my house or National Tennis Centre (NTC) for 10 weeks, and then there were some positive cases there," the 33-year-old told British media.

"When we went to the NTC in April, if there were six indoor courts, you could only practice on one, three and five. There wasn't any testing, but the gym was closed and it was restricted access.

"Whereas after Christmas you have an indoor venue where they are using all six courts and tons of people in the gym."

The LTA said it had consistently followed government guidance.

"It is impossible for LTA staff to police every part of the building continuously, ultimately individuals are responsible for their own behaviour and ensuring they follow the rules," the governing body said in a statement.

Murray said his wife Kim and three children had also tested positive.

"My family are OK. I was pissed off that I missed the tournament and wasn't able to go to Australia," he added.

"But the more important point is that it's not just about a tennis tournament when I am going back and giving the virus to all of my family and infecting them. I care about that."



Italy veteran Fognini was in the team that lost to Russia in the group stage last year. In the final, he said it was a bit of a blur.

"We played with the two best shape guys in the circuit at the moment," Fognini said. "Especially in my case, it's tough to say, but I don't have these kind of matches, this kind of speed during the point. At the moment was too much."

It appeared that Rublev and Medvedev hadn't looked too far ahead in the Australian Open draw, until Russia team captain Evgeny Donskoy raised the topic of their projected quarterfinal match at the post-match news conference.

"I'm just actually more happy for the guys that they're achieving the level that is going to be out of the limit soon because they're playing unbelievable tennis," Donskoy said. "Yeah, just wishing them to play the same like they played today in the main draw of Australian Open. If the level going to be the same, these guys going to see each other in the quarterfinals."

Medvedev, who is seeded fourth and opens against Vasek Pospisil, said: "Yeah, it's going to be great. You cannot change the draw. If it happens, it's perfect."

Rublev, who is seeded 7th and opens against Yannick Hanfmann, said "I wish."

"It's too far to say something about it now. We have to go match by match. Daniil have tough first round. Me, I have as well. We're not going to meet in second round, so we need to win couple of matches first."



# Evans, Sinner Sweep to ATP Titles

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - British veteran Dan Evans broke through to win his first ATP Tour title Sunday after 14 years of trying, while Italian teenager Jannik Sinner bagged the second of his short career.

The 30-year-old Evans finally got his hands on a trophy with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Canadian youngster Felix Auger-Aliassime in the Murray River Open.

"It was a good day, I played well and good preparation going into next week," said Evans.

"I've lost two finals so was good to get over the line. I'm delighted with how this week went."

It was a long time coming for eighth-seed Evans, who made his debut in 2007 and had reached two finals previously, losing them both.

But he has been in good form this week, clinching the title without dropping a set all tournament and showing no signs of fatigue ahead of the Australian Open, where he opens his campaign against fellow Briton Cameron Norrie.

He peppered Auger-Aliassime with changes of pace using his backhand slice, putting pressure on the 20-year-old who made too many unforced errors.

It was another disappointment for third seed Auger-Aliassime, who has now made seven ATP finals and lost them all.

"Credit to him for today. He did what he had to do, he played well," said the Canadian. "He was aggressive, mixing it up well, and I just didn't play a good match overall."

Sinner, who in November became the youngest ATP champion in 12 years when he won in Sofia, burnished his credentials by taking out the Great Ocean Road.

The 19-year-old battled hard to get past fellow Italian Stefano Travaglia 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

## Curry Scores 57 Points in Loss to Mavs

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry won his individual duel with Luka Doncic but the host Dallas Mavericks captured the team competition over the Golden State Warriors in a wild 134-132 victory.

Curry bombed in 11 3-pointers en route to 57 points, but they weren't enough in Golden State's effort to complete a two-game sweep in Dallas. The Warriors won 147-116 on Thursday night.

Doncic countered with a season-best 42-point performance, including a clutch 3-pointer with 44.5 seconds remaining that opened a seven-point lead.

Curry responded with a 3-pointer with 39.3 seconds left and a three-point play 10.7 seconds later to get Golden State within 131-130, but Maxi Kleber clinched Dallas' second win in its last nine games with a 3-pointer for a four-point advantage with 6.3 seconds to go. Damion Lee's tip-in with seven-tenths of a second completed the scoring.

Meanwhile Harrison Barnes scored 28 points as host Sacramento Kings defeated short-handed Denver Nuggets 119-114 despite Nikola Jokic's career-high 50 points.

The Kings have won all three meetings this season against the Nuggets and continued their recent hot stretch, winning for the sixth time in their past seven games. Denver has lost three of its past four. Jokic shot 20 of 33 from the field and carried the load for Denver, which was without Jamal Murray (averaging 19 points and 4.5 assists per game), who sat out with left-knee soreness. Murray has averaged 19 points and 5.4 assists per game.



## Kane Returns to Help Tottenham Back to Winning Ways

LONDON (Reuters) - Harry Kane scored on his return from injury to help Tottenham Hotspur to a 2-0 victory over West Bromwich Albion on Sunday and end a three-match losing run in the Premier League.

The England skipper's return after missing the last two games with an ankle injury was sooner than expected and Tottenham's talisman was quickly back in the groove.

After missing a couple of chances in the first half Kane struck in the 54th minute to move joint second on Tottenham's all-time scoring list alongside Bobby Smith with 208 goals.

Four minutes later Son Heung-min drove in Tottenham's second after a strong run by recalled Lucas Moura.

Tottenham moved up to seventh place with 36 points from 22 games, above Chelsea on goal difference before their match against bottom club Sheffield United later.

Sam Allardyce's West Brom are 19th with 12 points from 23 games, 11 points below 17th-placed Burnley, and their hopes of avoiding relegation are looking forlorn.

Kane and Son have both scored 13 league goals this season and again showed how invaluable they are to Tottenham. When Kane had to be substituted at halftime in the defeat by Liverpool there were fears the striker might be facing a longer spell on the sidelines and the Spurs gloom deepened with a toothless loss to Chelsea in midweek.

But his return produced a huge boost as Tottenham produced a dominant display, albeit against struggling opposition, to revive their challenge for the top four.

