

**Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic In Iran Increased to 133,048 With 114 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Government Spokesman Says the Gov't Plans to Increase Investment in Various Financial Sections by Three Times, Adding That 48 Petrochemical And Industrial Projects With \$17b Were Put Into Operation**

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**Iran, Finland Sign Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement**  
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**Tehran Slams Unilateral Sanctions as Crime Against Humanity**

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's UN ambassador says the sanctions imposed on his fellow countrymen, especially those hampering their access to medical and humanitarian items, are tantamount to "a crime against humanity" whose perpetrators must be held to account.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi said none of the provisions of the UN Charter can be interpreted as permission for unilateral sanctions because such coercive measures are contrary to the general principles of international law and violate the prohibition on interfering in the countries' domestic affairs.

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## Trump, Biden Destroying America's Image



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has criticized the incumbent U.S. president Joe Biden and the former president Donald Trump, saying they are tarnishing what is left of U.S. reputation.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks his meeting with a group of commanders, pilots, and staff of the Army Air Forces on the anniversary of the Army Air Force commanders' historical allegiance with Imam Khomeini (aka Homafaran Allegiance) at Husseiniyah of Imam Khomeini.

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**Macron Tells Putin He Seeks to Avoid War And Build Trust**  
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**Embiid Carries 76ers Past Bulls**  
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## Iran Calls for Serious Decision by West

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the Western signatories of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), must make an effective and serious decision to remove the entire anti-Iran sanctions that violate the landmark agreement.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remark in a phone interview with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, early on Tuesday as the two diplomats discussed bilateral relations between Tehran and Beijing as well as the process of talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna on the removal of unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

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## Shahrbabak Copper Complex Co. Wins Silver Statue in 10th Iran National Project Excellence Award

The National Project Management Award is held every year by the Iran Project Management Association as the official representative of International Project Management Association (IPMA) that this year in its 10th edition, Shahrbabak Copper Complex Company could win the silver statue which is the highest level of awarded statue in the ceremony.



Engineer Hossein Ebrahimi Nasab, manager of Babak Copper Complex said: "In order to present the capabilities and achievements of Shahrbabak Copper Complex Company in the field of project management, Khatunabad smelter development project as the first representative of Shahrbabak Copper Complex projects entered the evaluation challenge in the 10th Iran National Project Excellence Award." He added, "In this regard, a three-day face-to-face evaluation session was held in the presence of evaluators of the Project Management Association in September 2021 and Khatunabad Copper smelter won the silver statue as the highest level of the statue awarded in the 10th edition of the event." Ebrahimi Nasab went on to say: "I felicitate this valuable achievement to all personnel of the complex and those who had a share in implementing the projects and also to our dear fellow citizens on this valuable achievement which has been attained for the first time by Shahrbabak Copper Complex, and we hope that holding such competitions would be a beginning for growth, excellence and growing institutionalization of scientific management of the project in the projects of Copper Company."





## Chadormelo

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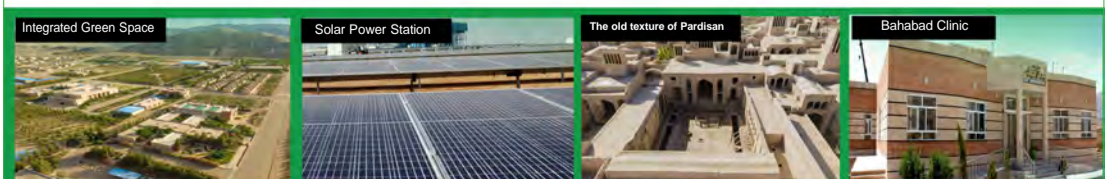


Chadormelo Mining and Industrial Company is one of the largest mining and industrial companies in the country and annually produces and supplies about 17 million tons of steel products. The company is also one of the top 10 companies in the capital market and stock exchange. In addition to shining in the field of production, Chadormelo has played an important role in the field of social responsibilities in Yazd province.



- Participation in water transfer from the Persian Gulf to Yazd province, Ardakan
- Construction and operation of Bahabad D Clinic Medical Center
- Construction of 4 schools with ten classes in Ardakan city
- Execution of the big project of Shahid Ghasem Soleimani cultural and sports complex
- Construction and operation of a 500 MW combined cycle power plant in Ardakan city
- Construction and operation of a ten megawatt solar power plant adjacent to the combined cycle power plant
- Construction project of Bahabad to Darband Yazd road with the participation of Chadormelo
- Scientific, health, cultural support and deprivation measures
- Creating more than 300 hectares of orchards and 218 hectares of trees
- Implementation of Aqda-Ardakan green belt project with a length of 35 km
- Extensive measures against Covid-19 (test kit, oxygen supply for Yazd hospitals, disinfection of urban thoroughfares, providing assistance to families with Covid-19)
- Equipping the ICU of Shahid Ziaei Ardakan Hospital
- Establish a 100-bed quarantine center

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## No Vienna Agreement Without U.S. Abandoning Illusions

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior Iranian security official says the U.S. has illusions concerning the Vienna talks warning that an agreement will not materialize if those illusions persist.

"The current U.S. administration has so far maintained [former U.S. President Donald] Trump's maximum pressure policy against Iran, trying to use empty promises to materialize objectives he failed to achieve by bullying," Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani said in a tweet.

"Without Washington abandoning the current illusions, the path to the Vienna negotiations won't be smooth."

## Independent States Can Foil Sanctions Through Boosting Relations

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

**TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi said here on Tuesday that independent countries through promoting level of their relations and meeting each other's needs can nullify threats and sanctions of the global dominating powers.**

President Raisi made the remarks in a meeting while receiving credentials of the new Cuban Ambassador to Tehran Alberto González Casals.

In the meeting, the president said anti-imperialism and anti-oppression stance of Iran and Cuba has let them be closer.

The president went on to say that the two nations should boost bilateral relations in cultural, trade and economic fields.

Islamic Republic of Iran has strategic relations with all countries which are in front line against the dominating powers, President Raisi noted.

After submitting his credential, the Cuban ambassador described Havana-Tehran ties as strong and brotherly, and called for developing the current level of economic cooperation.

Later in meeting with new Palestinian ambassador, the president described the unity and solidarity of all Palestinian groups and currents as the key to victory against the Zionist Regime and stressed, "The united actions of all Palestinians will ultimately lead to the goal of liberating the Holy Quds and this must not be disrupted".

Speaking after receiving the credentials of the new Palestinian ambassador, Salam Zawawi, President Raisi said, "Supporting the Palestinian people and the liberation of Holy Quds is the first issue of the World of Islam, and the Islamic Republic of Iran is a true supporter of the Palestinian people and the liberation of the Holy Quds".

The President said that the issue of Palestine should be considered as a top priority by all Islamic states and nations, adding, "Some have been involved in political games in paying attention to the priority of Palestine, and have slowed down the brave actions of the people of Palestine by relying on weak agreements and pacts, but did not notice that they are oath breakers".

Raisi pointed out, "The message that the Palestinian people are sending to the Zionist Regime and their Western supporters is a message of resistance and perseverance, and if the Zionists know that the Palestinians will stand strong, their calculations will change".

Referring to the actions of some governments in the region in normalizing relations



with the Zionist Regime, the President said, "These governments should know through public protest of all Palestinian people and groups that their treacherous act is rejected and condemned by them".

Raisi stated, "The action of some Arab governments in establishing relations with the Zionist Regime, not only does not create protection and security for them, but also doubles the problems of these governments and will add to the problems of the region and the Arab countries".

## Country's Economy Not to Be Left in Limbo Over Vienna Talks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says the Iranian administration will not let the country's economy remain in limbo while waiting for the result of the ongoing negotiations in the Austrian capital for the revival of the 2015 landmark deal.

Raisi made the remarks in a Monday meeting with visiting Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto in Tehran. Referring to Iran's historically cordial ties with Finland, Raisi said relations between the two countries have been consistently friendly following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, "but Finland's relations with other countries must not be affected by foreign parties."

Elaborating on negotiations among the remaining members of the Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), for the removal of anti-Tehran sanctions, Raisi said, "We have announced that if sanctions are removed, the way will be paved for an agreement. Iran has proven that it lives up to its commitments, but we will not leave our country's economy in limbo waiting for the results of the JCPOA [talks]."

Raisi underlined, "It was the Americans that violated the JCPOA and those who did not fulfill their obligations were the Europeans, while the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified Iran's peaceful measures in numerous reports."

In another part of his remarks, Iran's president pointed to the US' acknowledgment of the "disgraceful failure" of the so-called maximum pressure campaign against Tehran, Raisi said, "We hope that European countries will choose the path of independence from American domination, because the United States is not a reliable country."

Referring to his administration's approach to developing relations with neighboring countries, the Iranian president said, "We seek good relations with all countries in the region and we will continue this policy."

"Wherever there is a problem in our region, it is due to interference by foreigners," Iran's president said.

Haavisto, for his part, pointed to the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and Finland, saying, "We attach great importance to [relations with] Iran and there is a lot of potential to increase joint cooperation between the two countries."

Expressing dissatisfaction with the US policy toward the 2015 Iran deal, the top Finnish diplomat said, "It is unfortunate that the Americans have given up their commitments under the JCPOA."

## President Likely to Attend GECF Summit

TEHRAN (MNA) - Government Spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi has said that President Ebrahim Raisi has planned several attendances at regional and international meetings, adding that Raisi is likely to attend the GECF summit.

"The government will use any opportunity to play a role in global and regional summits. There will be bilateral meetings and trips ahead, the president has been invited to attend the GECF summit, and he will likely take part," Bahadori Jahromi in his weekly press conference on Tuesday.

The spokesman was referring to the invitation extended by the Emir of Qatar to take part in the

meeting of Heads of State and Government of Member Countries of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum late last month.

Regarding the restoration of some sanctions waiver on Iran, Bahadori Jahromi said that no change in Iran's policy had taken place and would not take place, adding that a temporary agreement was not and would not be on Iran's agenda.

"We have already stated that a good agreement with sufficient guarantees would be achieved, and the Iranian government is seriously determined to achieve an effective result, and the other side must show the same in practice."

Molnycke Health Care earlier refused to sell Iranian EB patients medical care items they needed, including Mepilex dressings, citing US sanctions imposed on Iran after Washington ceased its participation in the 2015 nuclear deal signed among Iran and six world powers.

Several children in Iran who suffered from Epidermolysis Bullosa lost their lives due to the lack of urgently needed medical equipment and some others were hurt by severe physical injuries, including amputation.

Many human rights groups have criticized the U.S. for cutting off banking ties with Iran through threatening the international banks with punitive fines by the US Department of Treasury which has resulted in cutting Iranian patients' access to necessary medical items.

## U.S. Not in a Position to Set Condition for Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The United States is experiencing failure in defeating the Iranian nation; so, the White House cannot set condition for the Islamic Republic on negotiation, an Iranian official warned.

Saeed Jalili, representative of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), addressed students in Tehran on Tuesday, noting that the enemy sought to put economic and military pressure on Iran, but following its failure to divert the Islamic Revolution, it wants to resort to propagate its false analysis.

The one, who is experiencing defeat, cannot set condition for Iran, because it is similar to the situation that the Nazi Germany wanted to call for negotiations after end of the World War II, which seems completely ridiculous, Jalili stressed.

The former nuclear negotiator went on to say that officials and people should avoid being affected by false implications, and that the West particularly the US acknowledged that the maximum pressure imposed by the Trump administration failed to bear fruit and decrease Iran's oil export to zero, while the Islamic Republic exports 1.2 million bpd; so, it is important to be vigilant when it comes to realizing realities on the ground.

Jalili also noted that this year's Ten-Day Fajr celebrations (43rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory) is of utmost importance, because the foe has explicitly declared that the maximum pressure on Iran doomed to failure.

The 2015 nuclear deal also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a document that proves the Iranian nation is right, because Iran complied with its commitments under the agreement, but the West especially the US did not abide by the contract they signed, he added.

Moreover, former US president Donald Trump ordered assassination of Iran's top major general, but millions of Iranians and other nations held mourning ceremonies to commemorate the revered martyr.

## Iranian Red Crescent Society, Hub of Friendship for ECO Members



TEHRAN (IRNA)- President of Cultural Institute of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Sarvar Bakhti has said that Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) can be a center of friendship in the body.

ECO is proud of the technical and scientific achievements of the Iranian Red Crescent, Bakhti said in a meeting with the IRCS advisor Shahrokh Ramin, according to the Tuesday report of the Tehran-based ECO Cultural Institute.

In the meeting, the ECO official highlighted considerable cultural and historical commonalities among the ECO members.

He further called for creating an opportunity for making use of Iranian Red Crescent's medical achievements and its related experiences.

For his part, the Iranian official voiced his organization's readiness to develop all-out cooperation with the ECO member countries.

Medical issue is among the effective ways which can enhance friendship among nations, Ramin noted.

To consolidate cultural affinities and spiritual and fraternal ties that bind the people of the Member States through social and cultural channels of thought and action, this is the objective of revival of cultural institute according to ECO website.

ECO member states include Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

## Iranian EB Patients File Lawsuit Against U.S. Officials

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Judiciary Spokesman Zabihollah Khodaian said some 295 Iranian Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) patients have filed a lawsuit against U.S. president and secretary of state for illegal sanctions which have caused problems for providing dressings.

Addressing press conference on Tuesday, Khodaian said EB patients need special dressings which are produced by a Swedish company but due to U.S. cruel sanctions against Iranian nation, import of these dressing faced problem.

He added that as a result of sanctions, some of these patients died.

He noted that the case is open and at finalizing document stage.



Industrial Development and  
Renovation Organization of Iran

# A Glance at the Programs of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran

## On the 43rd Anniversary of the Victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran

**T**he Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) as a developmental, inclusive, independent institution with a special law and with the aim of accelerating the industrialization of the country, during its fifty-four years of efforts in the field of industry has done important activities in creating large industries (a wide range of industries such as automobiles, agricultural machinery, marine, oil, gas and petrochemical equipment, aerospace, energy and power plants) and the dynamism of related industries, and has provided extensive and valuable services in the development of industry and the economy. This year, the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran has taken a step in line with the strategies of the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade, relying on the slogan of production, support and removing hurdles.



### Implementation of industrial development projects in deprived and less privileged areas

- Advancing 26 investment projects worth 360,001 billion rials and creating 11,114 jobs in 16 mostly deprived and less privileged provinces

- Supplementary plan of Esfarayen Steel Industrial Complex: capacity of 60 thousand tons per year with the aim of increasing the production capacity of the complex from 120 to 180 thousand tons per year with an investment of 94 million euros and 374 billion rials and employment of 230 people

- Production plan of water filters (membranes): Production capacity of 70,000 8-inch membrane modules per year with an investment of 9.03 million euros and 1,749 billion rials with the participation of the private sector in Ilam province and employment of 75 people

- Kermanshah bioethanol production plan: capacity of 66 million liters of 98% bioethanol and 66,000 tons of fermented meal with 34% protein as a by-product with an investment of 20 million euros and 3,025 billion rials with employment of 152 people

### Export-oriented Industries Development Plan on Jask to Goater Coasts

Measures taken on the basis of funds allocated to pay subsidies for facility interest equal to 1,435 billion rials, led to the operation of 13 projects with an investment volume of 2,853 billion rials and employment of 659 people and the start of construction operations and the creation of 8 projects with an investment volume of 1,509 billion rials and employment of 151 people in Jask to Goater region.

Shrimp larval reproduction unit (baby shrimp) in Hormozgan province (with a capacity of 50 million pieces - annual with an investment volume of 6 billion rials; product development and increasing the capacity of canned tuna in Sistan and Baluchestan province with an investment volume of 350 billion rials and processing Chromite in Sistan and Baluchestan province with a capacity of 79,000 tons - with an annual investment of 1320 billion rials are among the projects that can be opened in the Ten-Day-Dawn (Fajr) of 1400.

Implementation of large projects in oil, gas and petrochemical industries

Advancing the development project of phase 14 of South Pars gas field with the realization of 91.16% progress by the end of January 1400; Internalization of special goods for the development of phase 14 of South Pars worth \$ 170 million; Completion and commissioning of the first gas line (onshore section) of Phase 14 of the South Pars gas field in the Ten-Day-Dawn (Fajr) of this year, the total amount of the contract is 5249 million dollars and employs 6089 people per month.

### Implementation of transportation industry projects

Automobile industry

Participate in the preparation of the automotive industry transformation document and the definition and implementation of nine automotive industry transformation projects in coordination with the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade with the aim of organizing the automotive market:

- Car supply chain market restructuring project;
- Car supply chain restructuring project;
- Fleet modernization process project;
- After-sales service promotion project;
- Laying project and development of new technologies in the field of transportation;
- Project to expand car exports and production in other countries;
- Project to reform the financial structure and equity of car companies;
- Project to explain the capabilities and achievements of the automotive industry;
- Automotive Industry Rules Review Project.

### Implementation of new industrial projects

- Coordinating 211 projects in knowledge-based companies and industrial companies applying for technology in implementing the project to support the penetration of technologies created by knowledge-based companies, and introducing identified companies to use



the financial facilities to the Innovation and Prosperity Fund

- Preparing the ground for creating a hub for the implementation of the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution in the industrial sector: Holding 1400 hours of training courses entitled Pioneers / Ambassadors of Industry 0.4 in the industrial sector with the aim of introducing and exploiting different dimensions of the fourth industrial revolution.

### Renovation of covered companies and selected industries

- Baluch Industrial Development Company: 17% physical progress by the end of January 1400; Production capacity of 18 million square meters of fabric per year with an investment of 10 million euros and 886 billion rials and employment of 195 people

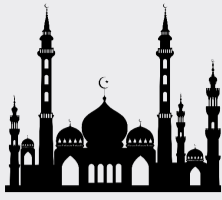
- Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Cultivation and Industry Company: Arranging a contract for management, supply and payment of salaries and wages of employees, including other expenses totaling 3500 billion rials by the Sugarcane Development and Ancillary Industries Company, start of sugarcane harvesting

- Tabriz Machine-Building and Casting Companies: 53% increase in production capacity in Tabriz Machine-Building Company, payment of 50 billion rials by IDRO to provide working capital, holding a performance assembly in 1399 after three years of uncertainty, retirees' claims and lack of arrears Complicating the company's activities to increase productivity;

- HEPCO Company: Support and participation in reactivation of HEPCO Company, ordering the production of mining machinery, organizing the import of various mining machinery in the country with the aim of strengthening the company in coordination with the Ministry of Silence and operating banks, pursuing sales agreements for 112 mining machinery and road construction Value of 10,022 billion rials.

### Development and deepening of interior construction

- Holding 5 specialized tables for the automotive industry with a contract size of about 7 thousand billion tomans in the internal direction



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:18
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:58
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:31
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:56

103. The Great Terror will bring them no grief; but the angels will meet them (with mutual greetings): "This is your Day, - (the Day) that ye were promised."  
104. The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books (completed), - even as We produced the first creation, so shall We produce a new one: a promise We have undertaken: truly shall We fulfil it.  
Surah 21. The Prophets (103 - 104)

## Iran, Finland Sign Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Iran and Finland have signed an agreement on avoiding double taxation as the two countries seek to expand trade and business ties.**

The double tax deal had been signed earlier in the day during the presence of the Finnish foreign minister Pekka Haavisto in the headquarters of the Iranian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance where he met Iranian finance minister Ehsan Khandouzi.

The report quoted Khandouzi as saying during the meeting that the tax agreement could enable Iran and Finland to restore their economic relations to the levels seen before the U.S. sanctions hit trade between the two in 2018.

While hailing humanitarian stances adopted by Scandinavian countries like Finland, Khandouzi said Iran hopes to increase its imports of pharmaceuticals from the country as a result of signing the tax treaty.

The minister said that Iran's growing trade relations with countries like Finland



shows that the country will no longer limit itself to economic ties with Britain, France and Germany as the three major European powerhouses.

For his part, Finland's Haavisto hailed Finland's booming relations with Iran and said that senior government authorities in the country are keen on expanding bilateral ties, according to remarks covered in IRNA's report.

The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement signed with Finland is Iran's 52nd, said the IRNA report, adding that the country prepares more such deals to boost trade and business ties with other countries.

The treaty comes amid Iran's efforts to provide certainty for business and trade activity and to strengthen economic ties with the rest of the world as the country uses increased trade revenues to offset the impacts of American sanctions on its crude exports.

## Chabahar Port Ready to Attract Investment From CIS, Southeast Asian States



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** Director General of Marine and Ports Organization of Sistan and Baluchestan Province announces readiness of Chabahar Port for attracting foreign investments from CIS and Southeast Asian countries.

Behrouz Aqaei said that the climate for investment of interested countries for investing in Chabahar Port in the best possible way. He pointed to the interests of Chabahar Port in relation with investment of regional and extra regional countries, adding that Chabahar Port has effective role in easing the transportation among regional countries and the capabilities and capacities of Chabahar Port are in a way that they can encourage investors for investment.

He then pointed to the MoU on cooperation which was signed during recent visit of a trade delegation from Uzbekistan and said this MoU has been prepared in three axes. He added that the triple axis of the cooperation MoU includes long term investment of Uzbekistan in the developmental phases of Chabahar Port, exploiting the infrastructures of Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar Port for the transit and trade of Uzbek traders as well as joining of Uzbekistan to the three-way MoU between Iran, India and Afghanistan which were discussed.

Aqaei noted that political will of Iran and Uzbekistan is the close economic cooperation to witness improvement in the livelihood of the people and for this reason a high-ranking Uzbek delegation visited Chabahar Port and reviewed ways of cooperation.

He reiterated that one of the main goals of Chabahar Port is to protect its economic independence and like India which has had considerable investment in the port, other countries can use this climate and Chabahar Port welcomes investment from CIS and Southeast Asian states.

## Afghanistan, India Top Iran In Carpet Exports



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** A member of board of directors of Iran Carpet Manufacturers and Exports Association says Iran ranks fourth or fifth in the exports of carpet, and countries like India and Afghanistan have sped past Iran in exports of carpet while Iran had been the world top carpet exporters till a couple of years ago.

Reacting to the return of Iran's exported carpets from Turkey and Pakistan, Morteza Miri said that it was a mistake committed by a news agency which misinterpreted his words, adding that he said since the damaged exported carpets cannot be returned to the country due to the customs regulations, they are sent to Turkey and Pakistan to be repaired and for this reason several Iranian carpet weavers and carpet repairmen have migrated to those countries.

He said since the country faces several problems in trade, then the demands for Iran's carpet or goods fall due to those problems.

He added that carpet is a cultural phenomenon which needs gradual promotional programs which are not followed in this country unfortunately and therefore the climate for carpet trade today is not like the past.

Miri went on to say that Iran has fallen down in the carpet exporting countries rankings and now it is fourth or fifth which the country used to be first in the rankings till a couple of years ago and today countries like India and Afghanistan have sped past it. He reiterated that if the international problems are solved and promotional programs gradually begin, then Iran can retake its top position in the rankings.

He went on to say that unfortunately officials have been negligent about the significance of carpet as the carpet is a strategic commodity for the country and hand-woven carpet guarantees livelihood of 10 percent of the society in Iran and some 2m people directly and 200,000 people indirectly earn their livelihood in this industry which makes 10 percent of the total population.

## \$1.35b Oil, Gas Deals Signed Despite U.S. Sanctions

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** Iran has signed \$1.35 billion of deals to process natural gas extracted at its oilfields and develop another oilfield in its resource-rich Khuzestan province, Oil Ministry Javad Owji says.

About \$500 million of the deals involves building facilities to capture the gas from East Karoun fields, Owji said Monday, adding the Persian Gulf Holding Company will also sign similar contracts soon to collect gas from West Karoun fields. The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) also awarded an \$800 million contract to local upstream contractor Dana Energy to develop the 2 billion-barrel Sohrab oilfield.

Iran's bid to stop flaring the gas extracted alongside crude oil at its fields has hit stumbling blocks as foreign companies have put their deals with the country on hold in fear of sanctions.

Owji said more contracts with the aim of ending gas flaring will be signed in the next few days.

"By the end of this government, the fate of projects to collect gas flared at oilfields will be determined," he said. Oil producing countries often burn or flare a certain amount of natural gas that accompanies crude oil to the surface which is too small to be recovered or pipelined to a processing facility. The phenomenon, however, emits hazardous air pollutants during the flaring of the associated gas.

Former Oil Minister Bijan Zangeneh had once said Iran needed \$5 billion in investment to stop flaring gas at its oilfields.

Under a 20-year deal, Dana Energy committed Sunday to produce 160 million barrels from the Sohrab field and raise production to 30,000 barrels per day. Sohrab is one of the several fields straddling Iran's border with Iraq. It shares a reservoir with the 1 billion-barrel Huwaiza field in Iraq, which the country's state-owned Misan Oil (MOC) began to develop in 2017.

## Oman, Iran Discuss Trade and Investment

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Iran discussed enhancing trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

"A number of members of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry discussed during their meeting with the Iranian trade delegation, prospects for enhancing areas of trade and investment cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and increasing trade exchange and investment opportunities available in various economic sectors," Oman News Agency (ONA), said in a statement.

Iran and Oman at the first day of joint economic commission meeting reached agreements on cooperation in various issues, a trade Iranian official announced.

The 19th Iran-Oman joint economic commission meeting is underway in the Omani capital as of February 8, Farzad Piltan, head of Arab and African Office of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said according to a Tuesday report of Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade.

It is expected that the two will ink several agreements on cooperation at the end of the joint commission meeting on Wednesday, Piltan said.

Tehran-Muscat joint commission is being co-chaired by Iranian and Omani trade ministers.

About the talks between the two sides, Piltan said the delegations have started discussion about agricultural, health, energy, transportation, banking and economic issues; and they will continue negotiations about technological, scientific, educational and cultural areas. Latest situation of bilateral economic relations is to be reviewed in Muscat.

## Iran, World's 10th Top Steel Producer

**TEHRAN (IRNA) -** Iran ranks 10th in the world in terms of producing steel and has 62% share of steel manufacturing in the Middle East, an official said here on Tuesday.

Vice Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Vajihollah Jafari said Iran has exported over \$5.2b worth of crude steel and steel products. He added that over 30 million tons of steel ingots, 22 million tons of steel products and 100 million tons of iron ore are produced in Iran each year.

He went on to say that Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has indigenized over \$1b worth of parts and equipment in steel chain.

Iranian steel giants exported 3,811,617 million tons of steel during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21) and experienced an 18-percent growth compared with the same period last year. The exported steel products consisted of blooms, billets, slabs, all kinds of engineering alloy, rebars, sponge iron, and hot briquettes iron.

Iran enjoys 68 different types of minerals. It has 2.7 billion tons of iron ore reserves and 2.6 billion tons of copper ore reserves.

## Bushehr-Dubai Flights Resume After Three Years

**TEHRAN (IFP) -** Iran and the United Arab Emirates have resumed flights between Bushehr and Dubai after a three-year halt.

"The United Arab Emirates, especially Dubai, is one of the busiest destinations in the Middle East, and due to the commercial status of the city, there is a great demand for travel," Deputy Coordinator of Economic Affairs of Bushehr Governorate Ali Bastin said.

He added that many businessmen, economic agents, tourists and academics of the Bushehr Province need constant contacts with Dubai for their work.

Bastin said over the past three years, Dubai-bound travelers from the province had to spend several hours on roads to neighboring provinces or to fly to Tehran at a high cost, which has now been resolved with the resumption of direct flights between Bushehr and Dubai.

## CBI Governor Says Iran Spent More Dollars on Imports Past Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

Iran has been able to appropriate 31 percent more foreign currency for imports in the past 10 months amid sanctions, the chief of the central bank said.

Ali Salehabadi, chairman of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) told local television that from March 2021 the government has been able to provide \$48.6 billion for imports amid US sanctions on the country's oil exports and international banking. This amount from March 2020 to March 2021 was \$37 billion, Salehabadi said.

The central bank chief expressed satisfaction with the "reasonable" level of oil and other exports in recent months. Iran's battered currency that fell sharply in December has recouped more than 10 percent of its losses since mid-January.

## Trade Turnover Between Iran, EAEU Reaches \$4.64b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** The trade turnover between Iran and member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 10 months of the recent year under the Iranian calendar [started on March 21, 2021 - TASS] totaled over \$4.6 bln, head of the international cooperation department of the Iran's Customs Office Hossein Kakhaki said on Monday, cited by the ILNA news agency.

"The trade turnover between Iran and the EAEU reached \$4,637,832,000 in ten months of this year," the official said. "[Iran's] export accounts for \$979,974,000 from this figure, with the increase amounting to 17% against the like period of the last year," he noted.

"Import from EAEU countries over this period of time stood at \$3,657,857,000, which is 67% higher than in the last year," Kakhaki noted. Trade with the EAEU over first ten months "surged by 71%," he said.

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## Azerbaijan Releases Eight Armenian Prisoners

BAKU (Dispatches) - Azerbaijan has released eight Armenian prisoners in an effort to facilitate new talks with France and the European Union on the border conflict between the two countries, said French President Emmanuel Macron and European Council President Charles Michel.



Macron added that France had sent over a plane to pick up the released Armenian prisoners.

"Thanks to our diplomats as well as our soldiers who were mobilized for this operation," wrote Macron on Twitter. Last October, Azeri troops drove ethnic Armenian forces out of territory they had controlled since the 1990s in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region, before Russia brokered a ceasefire.

## Macron Tells Putin He Seeks To Avoid War and Build Trust

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron, the top Western leader to visit Moscow since Russia began massing troops on the border with Ukraine, told Vladimir Putin at the start of talks in the Kremlin on Monday that he aimed to avoid war and build trust.



Macron, who is expected to seek re-election in April, has positioned himself as a potential mediator on Ukraine with Paris voicing skepticism about predictions by Washington, London and other Western capitals that a Russian assault is imminent.

Macron told the Russian president he was seeking a "useful" response "that of course allows us to avoid war and to build bricks of trust, stability, visibility". Putin, for his part, said Russia and France shared "a common concern about what is happening in the security sphere in Europe".

"I see how much efforts the current leadership of France and the president personally is applying in order to solve the crisis related to providing equal security in Europe for a serious historical perspective," Putin said.

On the eve of his trip to Moscow, Macron told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper: "The geopolitical objective of Russia today is clearly not Ukraine, but to clarify the rules of cohabitation with NATO and the EU."

On his arrival, Macron told reporters: "I'm reasonably optimistic but I don't believe in spontaneous miracles."

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said ahead of the talks: "The situation is too complex to expect

decisive breakthroughs in the course of one meeting."

Russia has deployed more than 100,000 troops near Ukraine's borders. It denies planning an invasion, but says it is ready to take unspecified "military-technical measures" if its demands are not met, including a promise by NATO never to admit Ukraine and to withdraw some troops from Eastern Europe.

Washington has rejected those demands as non-starters but says it is willing to talk about arms control and confidence-building steps, which Moscow says are beside the point. "In recent days there has been nothing new on the topic of security guarantees for Russia. Our Western interlocutors prefer not to mention this topic," Peskov said.

The United States and its allies have ruled out defending Ukraine with military force but say they would respond to any invasion with sanctions, arms shipments and reinforcement of NATO countries nearby.

Last week U.S. President Joe Biden ordered nearly 3,000 U.S. troops to deploy in Poland and Romania to better protect NATO's eastern flank. A U.S. general arrived in Poland on Saturday and the bulk of the new forces due there were expected on Monday.

Germany announced on Monday it would deploy 350 troops to Lithuania to reinforce a NATO battle group there.

An influential Russian-backed separatist commander in eastern Ukraine urged Moscow to send 30,000 soldiers to reinforce rebel forces fighting in the breakaway Donetsk region and to operate new weapons systems he hopes Russia will supply.

## Morocco Reopens Airspace After 2-Month

CASABLANCA (Dispatches) - Morocco reopened its airspace on Monday in a bid to breathe life into its crisis-hit tourism sector, two months after it cancelled commercial flights over coronavirus fears.

The North African kingdom's latest move was welcomed by tourism businesses who have suffered two lost years due to the pandemic, as well as by Moroccans stranded abroad.

Passengers heading to the kingdom will still need to show proof of vaccination against the Covid-19 illness and a negative PCR test within the past 48 hours, the government said in a statement.

On arrival, they will undergo further rapid tests and some will be chosen at random for another PCR test, it said.



## Iraq's Parliament Indefinitely Postpones Presidential Election

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq's parliament on Monday indefinitely postponed a scheduled vote for the republic's president after most major political blocs boycotted the session.

The sweeping no-show deepens a political crisis in the war-scarred country which, almost four months after a general election, still hasn't chosen a new prime minister.

The assembly vote had been set for noon for the head of state -- a post with a four-year mandate held by convention by a member of Iraq's Kurdish minority, and currently occupied by Barham Saleh.

But a series of boycott calls had made it highly unlikely the 329-seat parliament in Baghdad's high-security Green Zone would be able to clinch the necessary two-thirds quorum.

Then, on Monday afternoon, with only a few dozen MPs in the chamber, an official speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed to AFP that "there will be no vote to elect the president".

The turmoil comes after October polls were marred by record-low turnout, post-election threats and violence, and a delay of several months until final results were confirmed.

Intense negotiations among political groups since then have failed to form a majority parliamentary coalition to name a new prime minister to succeed Mustafa al-Kadhemi.

The largest parliamentary bloc to emerge from the vote, led by powerful Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr and holding 73 seats, was first to announce a boycott, on Saturday.

It was followed on Sunday by the 51-member Sovereignty Coalition led by a Sadr ally, parliamentary Speaker Mohammed al-Halbussi.

The 31-seat Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) then announced it would also stay away, in order to "continue consultations and dialogue between political blocs".

Another key bloc, the Cooperation Framework grouping several Shiite parties, also said the session should not take place, citing the recent political turmoil.

The process toward a presidential vote had been further thrown into disarray when Iraq's Supreme Court on Sunday suspended the candidacy of Saleh's key challenger, Hoshiyar Zebari, 68.

The court cited corruption charges against Zebari, a former foreign minister from the KDP -- allegations he denies.

"I have not been convicted in any court," Zebari had said in a television interview on Friday as the charges resurfaced alongside forecasts he would unseat Saleh.

Incumbent Saleh, the other frontrunner out of some 25 candidates, represents the KDP's main rival in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The Supreme Court said it was suspending Zebari after receiving a complaint from lawmakers that his candidacy was "unconstitutional" because of the graft claims.



## The Great Achievements of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery in the Country's oil Industry

and commitment.

### Successful implementation of the second phase of the refinery capacity increase plan

The successful implementation of the second phase of the refinery capacity building project is one of the valuable achievements this year," Dadvar said. Continuation of production in this refinery is important due to the country's need to extract maximum gas from the South Pars joint field. Also, ensuring the security of the fuel basket is a vital issue in the country's oil industry. Relying on the technical ability of Iranian specialists in the world's largest gas condensate refinery, the achievement of these goals was achieved this year. In the implementation of this key project in the Persian Gulf Star Refinery, an innovative project was carried out for the first time in the country's oil industry. In order to continue the production operation, major repairs were performed on the furnaces of the distillation units. These repairs were carried out without the decommissioning of the operational units, in order to prevent the losses resulting from the cessation of production.

### Preservation of national assets

The CEO of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company said: "Other achievements of this huge project include reducing waste and burning torches." These lead to the preservation of national assets. With the implementation of this plan, the refining capacity of the Persian Gulf star reached 455,000 barrels per day. The capacity has increased by 95,000 barrels compared to the original design. This has led to an increase in the efficiency and profitability of the world's largest gas condensate refinery.

### Implementation of projects based on internal capacity

He added: "Currently, various projects are underway to improve the processes at the Persian Gulf Star Refinery." This can help support the production, storage and transportation of the product. Dadvar added: "In implementing the projects, our goal has been to rely on local knowledge and instill self-confidence in Iranian producers." We tried to implement an ongoing project with the cooperation of capable domestic companies.

### Repair of gas condensate transmission pipeline damage

He continued: in the rains of the past weeks in the province and the arrival of floods, the gas condensate pipeline of the Persian Gulf Star refinery was damaged. The placement of the pipes in the path of the flood had made the operation of repairing the damage very difficult. Specialists of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company carried out the connection operation of this pipeline for several days and nights in order to receive gas condensate from the South Pars joint field again. The CEO of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company stated: Despite these conditions, the production operation of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery did not face an interruption for a moment. The company delivered about 43 million liters of gasoline per day to the National Company for Refining and Distribution of Petroleum Products. One of the tasks of the Persian Gulf Star Refinery is to safeguard the South Pars joint gas field. A gas condensate ship was loaded from the tanks of these fields. With the planning, production supervision and international affairs of the Ministry of Petroleum, the condensate harvest was maintained at the desired level. These measures prevented the natural gas pressure in the country from decreasing due to the winter season and the needs of our compatriots.

### Attention to sustainable development

Dadvar added: "Persian Gulf Star Oil Company has been in line with the high goals of the system." The company has always tried to fulfill its duties as the largest gas condensate refinery in the world to the community, especially the people of Hormozgan province. We have achieved sustainable development. We hope

that these measures will lead to public satisfaction, increase social capital and improve the quality of services provided to the people of Iran and Hormozgan.

### Construction of residential houses in earthquake-stricken areas

The CEO of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company explained the company's actions to fulfill its social responsibilities. He said: "After the recent devastating earthquakes in the city of Finn, from the early hours of the earthquake, coordination and needs assessments were carried out by the Crisis Management Headquarters of Hormozgan Province." We started providing assistance to the residents of these areas. All kinds of machinery and equipment for road construction were sent. Rescue and relief services were provided to residents of the quake-hit areas after the demolition. We also carried out the rapid construction of residential units in the villages of Gishan Gharbi and Zarto. These measures have made significant progress during this period. Other measures in the field of social responsibility include: Continuation of construction of a 264-bed hospital in the Persian Gulf Star Oil, donation of more than 240 hospital beds, 10 ICU beds, 10 patient vital signs monitors, 16 surgical suction devices and two blood gas devices to the treatment network Hormozgan, launching the largest integrated corona vaccination center in Bandar Abbas, reconstruction and equipping Bandar Abbas Cultural Clinic, reducing the number of visits to Bandar Abbas medical network by establishing a refinery treatment center, supporting the holding of the final stage of the National Beach Volleyball Premier League in Bandar Abbas, supporting The 33rd Hormozgan Theater Festival, participation in the implementation of the Bandar Abbas electricity network peak project, supply of electricity and water required for the one million cubic meter desalination plant in Bandar Abbas. Dozens of other actions have been taken by this company. These measures show the seriousness of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company in creating sustainable development in the south of the country and a special focus on local communities.

### Environmental Protection

The Persian Gulf Star Oil Company is a pioneer in preserving the environment," Dadvar said. One of the most important benchmarks of the oil industry in recent times is green management. Green management means the convergence of economic responsibilities with environmental responsibilities. This approach can be measured and controlled in several dimensions. He continued: "Areas such as energy, water, office equipment, transportation, waste and raw materials are always monitored and optimized in the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company." The company has relied on a green management approach. With the optimal use of resources and the maximum reduction of pollution, this year we succeeded in obtaining a green management certificate.

### Full concentration of financial resources in Hormozgan province

The CEO of Setareh Persian Gulf Oil Company said: "Currently, we are cooperating with many banks in Hormozgan province." The refinery relies on the ability of specialized personnel and skilled domestic engineers. In addition to exporting various petroleum products, this refinery, with its full concentration of financial resources in Hormozgan province, has been a unique model for other industries active in the province. In the end, he mentioned the transfer of the tax file of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company to Hormozgan province from the beginning of 2021. He said: "Persian Gulf Star Oil Company is known as the largest economic enterprise in Hormozgan." Since the beginning of the year, this company has added more than 15.8 trillion Rials in taxes and duties to the total tax collections of the province. The company, indirectly, has created many resources for the development and prosperity of the province.

### Effective presence in East Asian markets

He said: "Maintaining the strategic position of the company and expanding export activities in the existing competitive market, became possible." This was done by negotiating and strengthening marketing channels. This is important for entering East Asian markets and creating opportunities to attract serious customers. Such activities affect the process of currency appreciation to the country and the achievement of valuable goals of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company. The CEO of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company pointed to the effective role of the world gas condensate refinery in determining the price of special products in the international ring of the Energy Exchange. He added: "Persian Gulf Star Oil Company has a decisive role in the market due to the scale of production and product diversity." Recently, due to the volume of production, the special working group for product pricing has had a good performance. The use of new global algorithms for price forecasting, planning and target market analysis has led to the introduction of two special products in the international ring of this energy market. He continued: "We owe this achievement to the efforts of all our colleagues in the Persian Gulf Star gas condensate refinery." These efforts are aimed at entering major international markets and increasing the sales margin of Iranian products during the period of oppressive sanctions. Our goal is to use all the country's export capacities. Despite global pressures, we achieved our goals using strength, expertise

## Fajr Intl' Music Festival to Host Italian, Dutch, Afghan and Egyptian Artists

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The 37th Fajr International Music Festival that will kick off here on February 11 will host artists from Italy, Germany, Afghanistan and Egypt.

Fajr International Music Festival is regarded as Iran's most prestigious musical event which was founded in 1986. The festival is affiliated with UNESCO and includes national and

international competition sections.

The Italian Jazz artist Giovanni Guidi's will perform in the festival on Monday, February 14 at 6:30 PM in Tehran's Vahdat Hall. In another performance in the International Section in The 37th Fajr International Music Festival, Mohammad Abu Zekri, a prominent Egyptian "Oud" player, will perform on Sunday, February 13 at the Niavaran Hall.



## Lebanon Banks Association Rejects Draft Gov't Financial Plan

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon's banking association on Monday rejected a draft government plan for tackling the country's financial crisis that proposes a haircut and partial bank bail-in on savers, saying it would cause a long loss of confidence in the financial sector.

A draft of the plan to plug a huge hole in the financial system, seen by Reuters last month, foresees returning just \$25 billion out of a total \$104 billion in hard currency deposits to savers in U.S. dollars.

Most of what's left would be converted to Lebanese pounds at several exchange rates, including one that would wipe out 75% of the value of some deposits. It estimates losses in the financial sector at \$69 billion and sets a 15-year timeframe for paying back all depositors.

"This hypothetical draft plan indicates it can eliminate the so-called 'losses' in order to balance the books. This approach... is a liquidation approach and will lead to a persistent loss of confidence for generations to come," the Association of Banks in Lebanon (ABL) said in a written statement to Reuters.

The ABL's approval is not required in order for the government to adopt and begin implementing the plan, but experts say support from the banking sector could contribute to solving the crisis. The ABL said it had no role in drafting the plan and had not seen an official version.

"If true, this reported approach in addressing the losses occurred in the financial sector is not acceptable at all, and will definitely not reverse the spiral downhill of the economy," it said.

The ABL said it would not endorse a plan that would lead to a "nominal haircut on customers' deposits" or totally wipe out shareholder equity, but was open to shouldering some losses from Eurobonds restructuring and private sector loans.

Lebanon's banks have been a major lender to government for decades, helping to finance a wasteful and corrupt state that went into financial meltdown in 2019.

The collapse has resulted in depositors largely being shut out of their savings and the local currency losing more than 90% of its value.

Lebanon's government began talks with the IMF in January as part of efforts to secure a bailout seen as crucial to begin charting a path out of the crisis. A viable financial plan is key to that process. A previous plan drawn up under a government in 2020 was shot down by banks, the central bank and powerful political parties, ending IMF talks at the time.



An IMF spokesperson said last week they could not comment on reports that the fund had rejected aspects of the government's plan during the talks that began in January.

A Lebanese official source told Reuters the IMF had asked Lebanese officials to "work on parts of the plan."

As part of efforts to plug the \$69 billion hole in the financial system, the draft plan envisions a bail-in of large depositors to the tune of \$12 billion, equivalent to 72% of shares in the banking sector, thereby reducing shareholders and creditors to less than a third.

The ABL said any bail-in should be assessed on a case-by case basis for each bank and should only come after "we get to a consensual and comprehensive agreement with the government, and after the government fulfills its legal obligation to restore Central Bank solvency."

The ABL also noted their "strong objection" to a proposal for bank shareholders to maintain majority shares in the sector in exchange for injecting \$1 billion in fresh capital.

## Spanish Oil Major Repsol Looking to Sell Parts of Its Canadian Assets



MADRID (Dispatches) - Spanish oil major Repsol SA is considering putting some of its Canadian assets for sale later this year as it looks to reap the benefits of higher oil and gas prices, four sources told Reuters on Monday.

Repsol is seeking buyers for its holdings in the Duvernay basin, in western Canada, which are still in early development stages, according to its website. The company's 170,000 acres (688 square kilometers) in the Duvernay could fetch about C\$750 million (\$589.9 million), according to an industry source.

The move by Repsol follows several global oil majors which have rushed to sell assets in the No. 4 oil-producing country over the past four years over concerns ranging from high production costs and emissions to scarcity of capital for fossil fuel projects. Imperial Oil Ltd (IMO.TO), whose majority owner is U.S. oil producer Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM.N), marketed its Canadian joint venture last month while Japan's JAPEX (1662.T) sold its stake in the Hangingstone oil sands project last year and Abu Dhabi's TAQA hired advisors to sell all of its Canadian oil and gas producing assets.

Repsol also owns assets in Alberta's Greater Edson and Chauvin basins, along with gas- and power-related infrastructure. Repsol has not made a final decision on any of the assets, the sources cautioned, adding that among the options it could consider are partial sell-downs or joint ventures.

Repsol, whose total annual Canadian production was 57,800 barrels of oil equivalent per day in 2019, could still choose to retain the assets as is, they said.

The sources requested anonymity as the discussions are confidential. A Repsol representative said the company does not comment on market speculation.

Repsol bolstered its Canadian business with the \$8 billion purchase of Talisman Energy in 2015. Four years later, with oil prices languishing, Repsol cut 30% of its Canadian staff as part of a global restructuring.

After the coronavirus pandemic pushed U.S. crude prices into negative territory for the first time ever in 2020, and investors applied greater pressure for fossil fuels companies to transition to cleaner energy, Repsol unveiled a five-year plan to cut upstream spending and boost low-carbon investments.

## Cyclone Kills 20 in Madagascar, Destroys Crops Before Harvest

ANTANANARIVO (Dispatches) - The cyclone that battered parts of Madagascar over the weekend killed at least 20 people, displaced 50,000 and destroyed crops that were close to being harvested, the head of the United Nations' food aid agency in the country said on Monday.

Cyclone Batsirai slammed into the Indian Ocean island late on Saturday, knocking down houses and electricity lines along the southeastern coastline until it moved away late on Sunday, leaving some towns and villages partially or totally destroyed.

"The impact was severe and harsh and we are still counting casualties," said Pasqualina Di Sirio, country director for the World Food Programme (WFP) in Madagascar.

With a population of nearly 30 million, Madagascar had already been dealing with the aftermath of Cyclone Ana, which killed 55 people and displaced 130,000 just two weeks earlier.

Cyclone Batsirai struck a different part of the island, further south, where the population is facing a precarious situation in terms of food supplies because of a severe drought.

Di Sirio said the impact of the cyclone, particularly the destruction of rice crops that were about two weeks away from harvesting, had made a bad situation worse and would be felt for six months.



Fruit and vegetable patches had also been destroyed.

"This means major losses in terms of food security for the population," she said by telephone from the capital Antananarivo.

Emergency rescuers were struggling to reach the worst affected areas because 12 roads and 14 bridges were impassable, while rising river levels were threatening to displace more people, officials said.

The state disaster relief agency said more than 200 schools were partially or fully destroyed, leaving more than 10,000 children unable to attend lessons.

President Andy Rajoelina flew into the coastal town of Mananjary, normally about 500 kms (311 miles) by road southeast of Antananarivo. Land routes to Mananjary were cut off due to flooding and the town was reported to be devastated.

Rajoelina said on his Facebook page he was there to show solidarity with people who had lost loved ones and homes, and to see for himself what was needed in terms of aid.

The WFP was conducting an aerial survey of affected areas to better assess needs, but the results of that were not yet known.

Di Sirio said water levels were still rising, particularly in one area near two rivers and a canal, and people there may yet be forced to flee their homes.

## Tehran Slams...

FROM PAGE 1

He also complained that some UN member states - in breach of their international obligations - are the frontrunners in the use of illegal restrictive measures against other nations.

"For decades, Iran has been under the most severe economic and financial sanctions slapped by the United States. This has been unprecedented in history. The illegal measures have directly affected the lives of the most vulnerable Iranian citizens, including children, the elderly, and patients," the envoy added.

"It is a sad fact that some patients, including children with rare diseases, have lost their lives as a result of sanctions on the import of medicines and medical supplies."

Takht-Ravanchi further noted that unilateral coercive measures target the civilian population as part of a systematic policy and inflict suffering on people.

All sanctions, unilateral or multilateral, have adverse consequences for ordinary people and disproportionately affect children, women, patients, the elderly, and the poor, he said, adding that the bans also put people's lives at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent the delivery of humanitarian aid where it is most needed.

Additionally, the ambassador expressed regret that some countries, which pursue their own illegitimate political interests, consider sanctions their preferred means of exerting maximum pressure on developing states.

"As the president of our country said in his speech at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, unilateral sanctions against the Iranian people, especially those on medicines and humanitarian items, are equal to committing crimes against humanity. The countries imposing sanctions on others should not go unpunished for their heinous crimes," he emphasized.

In 2015, Iran and six world states - namely the US, Germany, France, Britain, Russia, and China - signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which was ratified in the form of UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

## Trump, Biden Destroying...

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the Army Air Force commanders' historical allegiance with Imam Khomeini in 1979, the Leader said that the move showed that the calculations of the United States and the Pahlavi regime were wrong and that they were hit from somewhere they have never thought.

Even today, Americans' calculations are wrong and they are being hit from somewhere they never thought, he added, saying that the incumbent and former presidents have joined hands to tarnish America's reputation.

Ayatollah Khamenei called media dictatorship one of the dictatorships of Western powers despite their claim to freedom of expression. He also pointed to the deletion of the name and photo of Martyr Soleimani in social media, saying that they [Western powers] ban any word or image that contradicts Western policies and, in return, make the most of the capacity of the social media to destroy Islam and the Islamic Republic.

He said the enemy is engaged in a multi-front war against Iran, stressing the need for a hybrid response to counter its economic, political, security, media and diplomatic aggression.

"In the face of such joint aggression, we cannot constantly remain in a defensive position and must mount an intensive and vigorous campaign in various fields, including media, security and economics in response," the Leader told a group of Iranian Air Force commanders and personnel in Tehran on Tuesday, calling on scholars and state officials to do their utmost in this regard.

Ayatollah Khamenei also dismissed Western claims of advocating freedom of expression, and lambasted media dictatorship as one of the different forms of Western dictatorship.

He cited Instagram and other U.S.-based social media platforms which censor the name and pictures of Iran's top anti-terror commander and icon, General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in a US drone attack in Iraq two years ago.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that Iran continues to make dramatic progress despite various plots hatched by the enemies, predicting a bright future for the Iranian nation.

During the meeting, the Leader also highlighted the importance of full vaccination to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and recommended people to heed medical staff advice in this regard and said that he had already received his third dose of coronavirus vaccine.

## Iran Calls for...

FROM PAGE 1

Expressing appreciation for the Chinese government's supportive position in the Vienna talks on lifting sanctions, the Iranian foreign minister outlined the country's policies with regard to the deal and stressed the need for realism on the part of the West.

"The Western side must make a serious and effective decision with regard to removing sanctions and demonstrate its meaningful departure from the failed policies of the previous US administration," Amir-Abdollahian told Wang in the phone conversation. "This will be possible by removing all sanctions contravening the JCPOA and adopting serious measures with regard to providing guarantees [that the U.S. will not abandon the deal again]."

The Chinese foreign minister, for his part, said Washington's 2018 withdrawal from the deal has damaged Iran and violated its legitimate rights.

Former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally left the JCPOA in May 2018 and re-imposed the anti-Iran sanctions that the deal had lifted. He also placed additional sanctions on Iran under other pretexts not related to the nuclear case as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign.

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, pointed in an interview with the Russian Kommersant daily newspaper on Monday to the process of talks in the Austrian capital on the removal of anti-Iran sanctions and said Moscow backs Tehran's demands.

"By and large, we are sympathetic towards Iran's demands," Ulyanov said. "In this case, Iran is the disadvantaged party. Iran did not withdraw from the JCPOA and did not deviate from its obligations on its own accord, but its actions were in response to the policy of maximum pressure from the United States. So, I reiterate that we have a very high understanding of Iran's demands."

Ulyanov touched on the ongoing talks in Vienna, stating that several fundamental issues remain in the negotiations that need to be resolved.

Asked about the amount of time needed for the final agreement, the Russian diplomat said, "Experience in these negotiations has shown that it is better to refrain from such assessments or from giving specific dates. We still need to resolve certain issues, some of which are relatively fundamental."

## Bordeaux Fire Coach Petkovic

**BORDEAUX** (Dispatches) - Bordeaux fired coach Vladimir Petkovic on Monday, the day after a 5-0 thrashing at Reims kept the six-time French champions anchored in the relegation places.

Petkovic arrived in July after leading Switzerland to the quarter-finals at the European Championship. They eliminated France in the round of 16. He has led financially troubled Bordeaux to four victories in 23 Ligue 1 matches and they sit 19th in the 20 team league, although they trail the two clubs above only on goal difference.

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## Greece to Combat Sports Violence After Fan Killing

**ATHENS** (Dispatches) - Greece's government today announced plans for tougher fan club rules and police checks following the murder of a teenager that saw eight more people prosecuted this week.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis today chaired a cabinet meeting that decided to toughen rules on the operation of fan clubs and intensify police checks, government spokesman Yiannis Economou told reporters. "We owe it to society to tackle fan and youth violence, especially to the young generation," Economou said.

# Embiid Carries 76ers Past Bulls

**NEW YORK** (Dispatches) - Joel Embiid had 40 points, 10 rebounds and two blocked shots to lift the Philadelphia 76ers past the host Chicago Bulls 119-108.

It was the seventh game that Embiid scored at least 40 points this season.

Tobias Harris scored 23 points, Tyrese Maxey added 16 and Seth Curry contributed 12 for the Sixers, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

DeMar DeRozan led the Bulls with 45 points, nine rebounds and seven assists. Nikola Vucevic added 23 points and Javonte Green had 17.

### Nuggets 124, Nets 104

Nikola Jokic had 27 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, Will Barton added 21 points, and Denver beat visiting Brooklyn.

Aaron Gordon scored 17 points, Monte Morris and Jeff Green scored 12 apiece, Bryn Forbes had 11 and Zeke Nnaji 10 to help Denver end a three-game losing streak.

Kyrie Irving finished with 27 points and 11 assists, Cam Thomas had 20 points, Blake Griffin finished with 19, Patty Mills scored 14 and Bruce Brown had 10 for Brooklyn, which has lost eight consecutive games.

### Bucks 137, Clippers 113

Giannis Antetokounmpo finished with 28 points, 10 rebounds and five assists and Jrue Holiday added 27 points with 13 assists as visiting Milwaukee used a third-quarter burst to earn a victory over new-look Los Angeles.

Bobby Portis added 24 points with 11 rebounds as the Bucks won their second straight game to open a four-stop Western



Conference road trip. An NBA Finals rematch against the Phoenix Suns looms Thursday. Norman Powell scored 28 points in his Clippers debut and Marcus Morris Sr. added 20 as Los Angeles lost for the third time in its last five games. Robert Covington, who also was making his Clippers debut, added 13 points. Powell and Covington were acquired in a trade Friday from the Portland Trail Blazers.

### Timberwolves 118, Pistons 105

Karl-Anthony Towns had 24 points and 12 rebounds and Minnesota extended its winning streak to four games by topping Detroit in Minneapolis.

D'Angelo Russell, who missed the previous four games with a shin contusion, contributed 22 points and eight assists, and Malik Beasley supplied 20 points off the bench. Anthony Edwards added 17 points and five assists for the Timberwolves, who won 128-117 in Detroit on Thursday.

Saddiq Bey led Detroit with 24 points and eight rebounds. Trey Lyles had 16 points and seven rebounds, and the Pistons have lost four straight and eight of their last nine games.

## Man Utd Striker Greenwood Dropped By Nike

**LONDON** (Dispatches) - Manchester United's Mason Greenwood is no longer being sponsored by Nike, the sportswear giant said on Monday, after the forward was arrested on suspicion of rape and assault of a woman.

The player was later also arrested on suspicion of sexual assault and making threats to kill.

Greenwood, 20, was released on bail last week pending further investigations but he remains suspended by the Premier League club until further notice.

Nike said last week they had suspended their relationship with Greenwood as they were concerned by the allegations.

They have now dropped the player altogether. "Mason Greenwood is no longer a Nike athlete," Nike said in a statement.

The allegations against Greenwood - including video, photographs and a voice note - were posted on Instagram and later deleted. He was first arrested on Jan. 30 and placed in police custody before being released on Feb. 2.

## Man United Top League of Transfer Losses With 1b Euro Net Spend

**LONDON** (Dispatches) - Manchester United returned to the top of the table on Monday but not the one they were hoping for as they were named the club with the biggest transfer losses in the last decade, splashing out more than one billion euros (\$1.14 billion) on players.

A study published by Switzerland-based independent research group CIES Football Observatory revealed United had a net spend of 1.075 billion euros since 2012, spending 1.545 billion on transfers while making 470 million back in player sales.

United broke the Premier League transfer record to sign Paul Pogba in 2016 for 89.5 million pounds (\$120.89 million) but are set to make no return on the French midfielder, who has failed to meet expectations and can leave for free at the end of the season when his contract expires.

Other costly yet unsuccessful signings include Anthony Martial, signed for 36 million pounds in 2015, and Donny van de Beek, who cost the club 40 million in 2020. Both players left on loan last month, for Sevilla and Everton, respectively.

Their local rivals Manchester City came second with a net spend of 984 million euros, splashing out more than United with 1.699 billion but bringing in 715 million from sales.

Paris St Germain were third with a net spend of 941 million.

Barcelona were fourth in the list with a far lower net spend of 650 million, although the Catalans have been in financial turmoil in the last year due to an inflated wage bill, which forced them to part with all-time top scorer Lionel Messi.

But while PSG, City and Barcelona at least have plenty of silverware to show for their indulgences in the last decade, United have largely underperformed on the pitch, above all since serial-winning manager Alex Ferguson left in 2013.

They have lifted only one league title since 2012, while City have won five, PSG seven and Barcelona five. United's last trophy came in 2017, the Europa League triumph under Jose Mourinho.

# Dutch Skater Wust Is First to Win at Five Olympics



**BEIJING** (Dispatches) - Dutch speed skater Ireen Wust has become the first person to win a gold medal in an individual event at five different Olympics after retaining her 1500 metres title in Beijing on Monday.

Wust, 35, smashed the Olympic record to beat Miho Takagi of Japan in 1min 53.28sec, with her Dutch teammate Antoinette de Jong taking the bronze.

She won her first gold medal at the 2006 Turin Olympics and has taken a title at every

Winter Games since -- a unique achievement in summer or winter Olympics.

It was also a record-extending 12th Olympic speed skating medal for Wust, who has six golds in total. Her victory was all the more remarkable because she had come into the Games just seventh in the World Cup rankings, which are topped by Takagi.

"This is just amazing. There's a lot of different emotions going through my mind right now. I mean, it's just bizarre that I was able to pull it off once again," Wust said.

"In Torino, I won my first Olympic title. I was the youngest back then (19). To do it again four, eight and 12 years later is just bizarre.

"There's something magical that gets to me when it comes down to the Games. There's something at the Games that brings out the best in me."

Wust is the Netherlands' most decorated Olympian.

## Senegal Welcomes Home Nations Cup Heroes

**DAKAR** (Dispatches) - Some swung from a billboard frame. Others danced on the tarmac. As Senegal's national soccer team touched down in the capital Dakar after winning their first Africa Cup of Nations, each of the thousands of faces there to welcome them home was ecstatic.

Star player Sadio Mane scored the winning spot-kick to seal victory for Senegal in a 4-2 penalty shootout, following a 0-0 draw with Egypt in the decider in Yaounde the night before.

It was a long-awaited victory for the West African country that fell to Algeria in the last Cup of Nations final in 2019. Senegal also reached the tournament's final stage in 2002, but lost to Cameroon in a shootout.

Sounds of fireworks, horns and cheers rang through the night in Dakar and into Monday morning, when hundreds of people wearing soccer jerseys or draped in Senegalese flags gathered outside the airport to await their team's return.

"We have lost these games for so long. I've been watching the team since the 1970s, waiting," said Thierno Niane, a 60-year-old computer programmer, who came from Dakar's suburbs hours ago to cheer on the team.

"Last night I was crying in front of my family - my wife and my kids," he added.

Senegalese dance music echoed from loudspeakers over the crowd of adoring fans as the team stepped out of the plane to a hero's welcome. Roads surrounding the airport flowed with a river of supporters as long as the eye could see.

Fans arrived by bicycles, motorbikes, cars and on foot, bringing the otherwise busy highways to a joyous standstill. Among them were government officials and opposition politicians, celebrating the country's victory together as one.

"We are very happy and very proud of our lions," supporter Amina Cisse said. "Our dreams came true."



## Overmars Quits Ajax Over Inappropriate Messages

**AMSTERDAM** (Dispatches) - Former Dutch international Marc Overmars resigned as sporting director of Ajax after admitting sending a "series of inappropriate messages" to female colleagues, while Dutch football authorities Monday called on victims to come forward.

The bombshell announcement on Sunday was greeted with shock in the Netherlands, with football commentators saying it would leave a large gap at the country's top football club.

It also came as the country was reeling from a similar scandal involving sexual abuse in one of its most popular TV talent shows, The Voice of Holland.

"We are shocked by the reports at Ajax and sympathise with all the victims," the Royal Dutch Football Federation (KNVB) said.

"As the largest sports association in the Netherlands, we are aware that, unfortunately, power relations can also play a role in the workplace in the sports world," it said in a statement.

"We would like to say to all victims of transgressive behaviour: please report, no matter how difficult it is," the KNVB said.

The 48-year-old Overmars, who won the Champions League with Ajax in 1995 before going on to play for Arsenal and Barcelona, late Sunday said he was "ashamed" of his behavior.

"I am ashamed. Last week I was confronted with reports about my behavior and how this has come across to others," the 86-time international said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, I didn't realize that I was crossing the line with this, but that was made clear to me in recent days. I suddenly felt enormous pressure. I apologize."

He added: "This behavior is unacceptable. I now see that too. But it's too late. I see no other option but to leave Ajax. This also has a major impact on my private situation. That is why I ask everyone to leave me and my family alone."

Overmars had been in his post at Ajax since the summer of 2012 and recently penned a contract extension until 2026.

