

IRAN NEWS Felicitates Its
Readers and All-Freedom Loving
Countries the Anniversary of the
Victory of the Islamic Revolution
Which Will Be on Friday

IRAN NEWS



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Growing Appetite for Malaysia's Palm Oil in Iran

PETALING JAYA (Dispatches) - Iran edible oil market offers great potential for Malaysian palm oil and palm oil-based products export, according to Plantation Industries and Commodities minister, Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin.

She highlighted the Islamic republic is the eighth top importer of Malaysian palm oil in 2021, with an increase of 26% from 321,106 tons in 2020 to 404,320 tons.

In regards to the opportunities between the two countries, Zuraida urged the private sector to redefine the business approaches to form partnerships and strategic alliances to explore new avenues for expanding the edible oil and palm oil business in Iran.

"The global reopening of economic sectors following the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in strong demand for Malaysian palm oil, including in Iran," she said in an address to the Palm Oil Trade Fair and Seminar (POTS) held in Tehran, Iran.

On the whole, palm oil exports contributed to RM102 billion in revenue last year, marking a 40% increase from RM73 billion in 2020.

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Japan's Idemitsu Kosan Yet To Consider Resuming Iran Oil Imports

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's second largest refiner Idemitsu Kosan said Feb. 8 it is yet to consider resuming Iranian crude oil imports, despite the recent US move to grant some sanctions relief to Tehran's civil nuclear program.

"At this moment, we do not have any plans to resume [imports of] Iranian crude oil," Yoshitaka Onuma, general manager of Idemitsu Kosan's finance department, told an online earnings press conference.

The US State Department notified Congress Feb. 4 that it was restoring a sanctions waiver to allow third-party participation in nuclear non-proliferation and safety projects, in particular with respect to rising stockpiles of enriched uranium in Iran, a senior State official said on the condition of anonymity.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 2015 set restrictions on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from US sanctions. The Trump administration reimposed sanctions on Iran's oil, petrochemicals, shipping, and other sectors, in 2018.

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IRGC Unveils New Ballistic Missile With Range of 1,450 km



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has unveiled a new ballistic missile with a range of 1,450 kilometers (900 miles), which enjoys high agility and is capable of striking its designated targets with pinpoint accuracy.

The missile, dubbed Khaybar Shekan, was put on display on Wednesday during a ceremony attended by Chief of Staff of Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, and a number of other high-ranking military officials and commanders.

The celebration ceremony coincided with celebrations in Iran commemorating the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which overthrew the US-backed Pahlavi dynasty.

Khaybar Shekan is reportedly among third-generation long-range missiles indigenously developed and manufactured by military experts at the IRGC's Aerospace Division.

The new missile uses solid propellants and is said to be capable of penetrating into missile shields with high maneuverability during its landing stage.

The modern design of Khaybar Shekan has reduced its weight by a third in comparison with similar missiles, and the preparation time to launch the missile has apparently decreased to one-sixths compared to conventional projectiles.

Moreover, the new ballistic missile enjoys considerable agility and high velocity when hitting its targets.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is consistently improving its missile capabilities to counter aggressors, oppressors, global arrogance as well as murderous Zionists," Bagheri said during the ceremony, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic will continue the trend both quantitatively and qualitatively.

He highlighted that enemies would not have cared about ethics, humanitarian principles, human rights and widespread condemnation if they could obtain anything other than huge costs and losses out of aggression on Iran.

Bagheri also hailed the "dynamic" deterrent power of the Iranian Armed Forces, saying the country is expanding both its inventory of military hardware and human resources.

A Pentagon study has recently acknowledged Iran's missile power, saying its arsenal is larger than that of any other Middle Eastern country.

"Iran has an extensive missile development program, and the size and sophistication of its missile force continue to grow despite decades of counter-proliferation efforts aimed at curbing its advancement," it said.

In comments after unveiling the missile, IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the materials used in the warhead of Kheibarshakan have increased its explosive power to several times greater than TNT.

He also noted that the preparation time for the launch of the missile has been practically reduced to one-sixth of the average duration.

"With its performance, the missile has extremely increased the power of the missile units of the IRGC Aerospace Force," the commander added.

Known as a third-generation long-range Iranian missile, 'castle buster' is propelled by solid fuel and is capable of penetrating into missile shields with high maneuverability during the landing stage.

The modified design of the missile has reduced its weight by a third compared to the similar missiles.

The advanced missile has been fully designed and manufactured by the local experts of the IRGC Aerospace Force.

Despite decades of Washington-imposed sanctions, Iran has made great achievements in its ballistic missiles program.

Last month, an American political analyst said Iran's missile program has disrupted the strategic military calculations of the United States in the Middle East, altering the balance of power in a region where Washington has long sought to maintain a military edge.

EU Optimistic About Resolving Differences in Vienna Talks

TEHRAN (MNA) - European diplomats are optimistic about efforts by Iran and the U.S. to close remaining differences on steps to revive the 2015 nuclear deal in the near future, EU high representative for foreign affairs Josep Borrell said.

Both sides are considering written proposals and "I see that we are in the last meters of the game," Borrell told reporters at the conclusion of a two-day visit to Washington, DC.

Borrell endorsed the U.S. interpretation of the quick timeline for wrapping up indirect U.S.-Iran talks in Vienna - the latest round of that diplomacy started in Vienna today. The talks will have to conclude before advances in Iran's nuclear program make the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal impossible to restore, he said.

Amid the indifference of the JCPOA parties toward continued US violations of the JCPOA, in December 2020, the Iranian Parliament passed the Law on "Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions and Protect Rights of the People" that prompted the Iranian administration to restrict the IAEA's inspections and accelerate the development of the country's nuclear program beyond the limits set by the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Islamic Revolution, Stronger Than Ever

On Friday, the Islamic Revolution will turn 43 and will be stronger than ever and the freedom-loving nations look at it as an inspiration to save their countries from the yoke of occupiers and colonialist states and it is now in stronger position than ever.

When on February 11, 1979, the Islamic Revolution emerged victoriously in Iran and the Islamic Revolution was established, nobody thought that the country would become a major power in the region or even in the world but its founder the late Imam Khomeini and his successor Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei did believe strongly that the country can progress very fast after gaining real independence and cutting dependence on the aliens. And now the Islamic Revolution is getting 43-year-old as the country has become one of the major actors in the world political scene despite sabotage and hostilities of its enemies.

As Iranians celebrate the 43rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution that transformed their country from a U.S. ally into a bitter opponent, many nations like Yemenis, Afghans and Syrians and Venezuelans get inspiration from this revolution to expel aliens and especially the Americans out of their lands.

Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, Iran has always been a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause, and has marked the international Quds day. And now, it is also standing beside the people of Yemen in the U.S.-backed Saudi-led war against them.

Observers say all the free people of the world must look up to the Islamic Revolution of Iran and follow in the footsteps of its leaders in order to stand against the U.S. hegemony.

Iran's Islamic Revolution is being recalled globally by those who were of age to witness its immediate impact and for others who continue to feel its international legacy.

It is the revolution that continues to reverberate around the globe. Iran's Islamic Revolution ushering a new age by ousting the U.S.-backed Pahlavi regime.

One of the most inspirational things about the Islamic revolution for many of its international admirers, is the impact it's had inside Iran but the lasting legacy it's building globally.

For political observers, Iran's stoic path proved an innovative and bold new model where alliances could be forged and solidarity fostered.

As the revolution moves towards another remarkable milestone, the West still continues its opposition campaign despite a lack of success.

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Tehran, Yerevan to Continue To Deepen Relations

YEREVAN (Dispatches) - I am convinced that we will continue the efforts to develop interstate relations at a high level, to deepen them for the benefit of our peoples and for the sake of long-term peace in the region. This is stated in the message by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, addressed to the participants in Wednesday's international conference in Yerevan, entitled "Armenia-Iran: Historical Past and Present," and dedicated to the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The message also states as follows:
"Our [two] countries, overcoming many difficulties over the centuries, today show an example of reliable relations. The past 30 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations [between Armenia and Iran] have been marked by the expansion of cooperation. Iran is Armenia's key partner in economic, political, scientific, cultural, and other spheres. Iran continues to occupy a leading position in the field of [Armenia's] trade relations. There is a serious potential for the development of those relations, as well as for cooperation in the fields of science, culture."

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Leader Appoints Former Defense Minister to New Post in Army

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Commander-in-Chief of all armed forces issued a decree appointing Brigadier General Amir Hatami as the advisor to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in Army Affairs.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, who commands all armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, appointed the former defense minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami to the new post of the Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief

of the Armed Forces in Army Affairs.

Prior to this, in addition to the defense minister under former president Rouhani, Brigadier General Hatami was holding different posts such as deputy minister of defense, deputy chief of staff of the armed forces, deputy commander of Army intelligence and commander of units in the west and northwest regions of the country.

Moscow Welcomes Tehran's Stance

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has reiterated Iran's readiness to reach a good deal in Vienna talks, stressing, however, that there will be no swift progress in the negotiations unless the Western side adopts a realistic approach.

In a telephone conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday, Amir-Abdollahian described Moscow's position on Tehran's nuclear issue as constructive.

"The Islamic Republic is resolutely seeking a good agreement within the framework of its interests and rights," the top Iranian diplomat said.

"Iran stands ready to reach such an agreement as soon as possible, but without the Western side's realism and its tangible and real measures, no swift progress will be achieved in the negotiations."

An effective removal of sanctions is very important, he said, stressing that Iran will continue its consultations and contacts with Russia and other parties.

Amir-Abdollahian said agreements reached between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raeisi during the latter's visit to Moscow have been put on the agenda of relevant Iranian institutions for follow-up.



Lavrov, for his part, underlined the importance of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and removing the illegal sanctions.

All parties to the JCPOA, and in the first place the United States, must return to their commitments, he said, noting that Moscow has always stressed the need to stop destructive measures against the accord and understands Tehran's concerns.

Lavrov also welcomed the Iranian side's stance on the need to increase the speed of the Vienna talks and make them result-oriented.

Russia, he asserted, is fully committed to honoring its obligations in bilateral relations with Iran, and calls for enhanced cooperation between the two countries in various areas.

Earlier on Tuesday, envoys from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries resumed negotiations in the Austrian capital aimed at lifting sanctions and resurrecting the JCPOA.

No Coherence in U.S. Gov't On Making Political Decisions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top security official says there is "no coherence" coming from the United States on the revival of the 2015 Iran deal, asserting that the U.S. administration cannot impose the cost of its internal disputes on Iran.



On Tuesday, Iran and the other parties to the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), gathered in the Austrian capital, Vienna, to resume the eighth round of talks aimed at reviving the accord.

The U.S. has so far failed to remove its "maximum pressure" sanctions, which it imposed on Iran after the former pulled out of the JCPOA, and give guarantees that a future administration will not ditch the deal again.

"Voices from the U.S. [governing body] show that there is no coherence in the country to make political decisions in the direction of advancement in the #ViennaTalks," Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani wrote in a tweet on Wednesday.

He added, "The U.S. administration cannot pay for its internal disputes by violating #Iran's legal rights."

In a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden on Monday, a group of 33 Republican senators led by Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas said any deal with Iran on restoring the JCPOA requires Senate approval.

The senators warned Biden that they will do everything in their power to block a possible deal if he moves forward without them.

Iran Can Produce Fuel With Different Degrees of Enrichment



TEHRAN (IP) - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said that the country can produce fuel with different degrees of enrichment and has been able to designate 12 regions in the country for radiation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, 23 February 2021, to implement the law "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions and Protect the Interests of the Iranian Nation," approved by the Iranian Parliament, suspended oversight and voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol.

"We have started a movement to indigenize our industry in the Atomic Energy Organization and we will easily produce fuel with different degrees of enrichment," Mohammad Eslami, Vice-President and the Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) added.

Referring to the latest achievements of the country's nuclear industry, Mohammad Eslami added in a TV program on Tuesday night: "The first step we took was to conduct studies and plan to promote the effectiveness of the technology through radiation for all fields, especially in agriculture, food, and industry."

Regarding the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran's cooperation, the Vice President said: "After the victory of the revolution, due to obstacles and selective behavior of the IAEA, Iran, unfortunately, could not benefit from the assistance of the organization."

Emphasizing that the Tehran reactor is a research reactor and has been completely peaceful, he added: "This reactor has never been supported and we produce these radiopharmaceuticals in the Tehran and Karaj reactors."

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization noted: "One of the activities we have in the program is the production of electron accelerators, which is an important part of our production in radiopharmaceuticals."

"Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) has generated about 50 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity into the grid in the seven years it has been operating, which has saved about 80 million barrels of oil," Eslami noted.

He said about the Arak heavy water reactor: "The reactor will be completed by the end of next year Iranian year. This reactor must be redesigned to address the concerns raised in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)."

First Iran, African Continent Symposium on Investment Opportunities

TEHRAN (IP) - The first significant symposium on new investment opportunities and new businesses between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the African continent was hosted by the private sector in Tehran on Wednesday morning.

This is a 2-day conference with the participation of ambassadors, economic advisers, and high-ranking trade delegations from different countries of the African continent, which is commenced today and will be wrapped up today at Tehran International Exhibition Permanent Fairground.

The conference presents some key solutions to solve foreign trade problems, establish economic ties between Iranian and African businessmen and traders, and introduce some of Iran's capabilities in the field of knowledge-based products.

South African ambassador to Tehran says that the South African economy offers a strong value of investing opportunities.

Speaking at the first major symposium on new investment opportunities and new businesses, Vika Mazwi Khumalo stated that Iran and Africa can invest in various fields, including the healthcare sector (Vaccine, vaccine manufacturing), Agricultural business, warehouse and logistics, green economy, and science and technology.

Khumalo noted: "We are eager to trade with Iran and develop our economy."

The first major symposium on new investment opportunities and new businesses between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the African continent was hosted by the private sector in Tehran on Feb.9, 2022.

Iran, Brazil to Broaden Bilateral Cooperation in Agricultural Field

TEHRAN (MNA) - Turning to upcoming visit of Brazilian Minister of Agriculture to Iran, Chairman of Parliament Agricultural Commission said that suitable ways will be paved for two countries to expand trade especially in agricultural field.

Mohammad Javad Askari said on Tuesday Brazilian Minister of Agriculture will pay a visit to Iran on Feb. 17-19 in the current year aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture.

He pointed to holding a joint meeting with the Brazilian Ambassador to Iran and Chairman of Iran-Brazil

Friendship Group, and stated, "In his upcoming visit to Iran, Brazilian minister is scheduled to pay a visit to the Iranian city of Shiraz."

Given the unique capabilities and potentials of Fars province in the field of producing agricultural products, "we would try to pave suitable ways for expanding trade and economic relations with Brazil in the fields of imports and exports."

Increasing Iran's balance of trade with Brazil aimed at prosperity and booming economy has been cited as one of the main objectives behind the visit of the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Tehran, Helsinki Underline Necessity of Fighting Terrorism

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy for International Affairs for Iranian Judiciary Kazem Gharibabadi and Director General of the Department for Africa and the Middle East in Finland Foreign Ministry Sofie From-Emmesberger emphasized fighting terrorism.

During the meeting which was held here in Tehran, both sides stressed developing legal and judicial cooperation.

Gharibabadi, who also heads the Judiciary's Office for Human Rights, elaborated on Iran's human rights and judicial diplomacy policies and expressed Tehran's readiness to negotiate with Finland on human rights and legal and judicial cooperation.

He slammed the political approach adopted by some countries with regard to human rights and the double standards in this regard.

He hoped for Finland to adopt a professional and independent approach during its membership in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Meanwhile, From-Emmesberger appreciated Iran's support for Finland membership in the UNHRC.

She also welcomed developing expert legal and judicial talks and exchanging experiences with Iran in this field.

Both sides emphasized fighting terrorism which threatens human rights in the world and supporting rights of the vulnerable groups like women, children and disabled people.



Tehran, Kabul React to Certain Media Plots to Damage Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Iran's Embassy in Kabul and the group of Afghanistan's Taliban stated on Wednesday that efforts made by certain media to disfigure bilateral relations are unsuccessful as the two countries enjoy strong and friendly cooperation.

Some foreign and adversary media have always been trying to misuse the issues of refugees and Hirmand River in east Iran to negatively affect Tehran-Kabul relations. Under different pretexts, they are after damaging ties between the two neighboring countries.

In a Twitter post, Iran's Embassy in Kabul referred to presence of four millions of Afghan refugees in Iran, reiterating that the country has always stood by the Afghan nation, especially when Western partners for Kabul did leave it alone and freeze its assets.

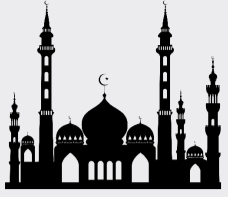
The Embassy noted that plots of opponents to damage the existing solidarity between the two countries are foiled through nations' vigilance.

In a related development, the BBC, too, has quoted Taliban spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, as saying that Afghanistan's ties with Islamic Republic of Iran are cordial, and Taliban is happy for these good relations.

During the past month, certain media and enemies have used the issues of Iran's water right from Hirmand River and some problems of Afghan refugees as tool for damaging Tehran-Kabul ties.

Meanwhile, a member of the Iranian embassy in Kabul believes it is natural that some problems are sometimes created for four millions of Afghan refugees who are living in Iran for four decades.

However, the Islamic Republic of Iran does not let anyone harm neighboring cooperation as it has always stood by the Afghan nation due to border, religious, lingual and cultural commonalities.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:18
■ Evening (Maghreb)	17:59
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:30
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:55

105. Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the Message (given to Moses):
My servants the righteous, shall inherit the earth."

106. Verily in this (Qur'an) is a Message for people who would (truly) worship Allah.
Surah 21. The Prophets (105 - 106)

President Inaugurates Petchem, Gas Supply Projects Worth Over \$1.5b

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – President Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday inaugurated petrochemical and gas supply projects worth 400 trillion rials (about \$1.5 billion) in a ceremony held on the occasion of the 43rd anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

As Shana reported, in the mentioned ceremony President Raisi inaugurated the projects for supply natural gas to 14 cities, 1459 villages, and 4,114 industrial units in Khorasan, Kermanshah, Sistan-Baluchestan, Fars, and Khuzestan provinces through a video conference.

These projects were implemented with a total investment of 52 trillion rials (about \$196 million). Raisi also ordered the beginning of the executive operations for supplying natural gas to 10 cities, 1,239 villages, and 1351 industrial units in which 200 trillion rials (about \$757.5 million) has been invested.

Also, 11 gas transmission projects valued at 100 trillion rials (about \$378.7 million) were inaugurated.

Further in the mentioned ceremony, a petrochemical complex was also put into operation in southwestern Khuzestan Province by the president's order through video conference.

Over 12 trillion rials (about \$50 million) has been invested for establishment of the mentioned complex.

Pointing out that Iran has a lot of potentials, the President said, "The government pursues the development and progress of the country with a justice-oriented approach".

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of gas supply and petrochemical projects, Raisi congratulated the days of Fajr and the holy month of Rajab, emphasizing that government is proud to supply gas to border areas and deprived areas.



He said, "Today, gas supply projects to 169 villages in South Khorasan Province were inaugurated, which were mainly approved during the 13th Administration's provincial trips to the province".

The President referred to the capacity of the oil and petrochemical industry projects to create employment, production prosperity and economic growth and said, "By combining a professional and committed approach, the development of the oil industry in all dimensions will be seriously pursued".

Emphasizing that the country's oil, gas and petrochemical industry has a lot of potential for development, the President said, "By identifying and existing capacities in these areas, we can have a superior position at the regional and global levels".

Emphasizing that the inauguration of these projects was done on the basis of justice and hope, the President said, "The actions that the Ministry of Oil has put on its agenda with jihadist and revolutionary work, can put our country in a privileged position not only in West Asia, but to in the entire world".

Raisi stated that today, in different parts of the Ministry of Oil, jihadist spirit prevails, stating, "The fact that the enemies' cyberattack to petrol stations, which was done with the aim of creating turmoil in the country, was thwarted was because of the great effort of all those involved in this field".

The President said, "Increasing people's trust in the government is a great asset that should not be neglected in any way, and we should strengthen public trust as much as possible by working and providing double services to the people".

After the inauguration ceremony, Raisi also visited the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)'s Dispatching Center and was briefed about the condition of the country's gas network and gas supply by Oil Minister Javad Owji.

Oman-Iran Forum Explores Investment Opportunities

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Oman-Iran Business Forum, organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), discussed investment opportunities incentives provided by the Sultanate of Oman to investors as part of a media initiative launched by the OCCI.

The forum is convened on the sidelines of the current visit of an Iranian trade delegation to Oman under the auspices of Eng. Mohsin Zarabi, Chairman of the Oman-Iran Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Eng. Ridha Jumaa Al Saleh, Chairman of the OCCI, said that commercial exchange between Oman and Iran by the end of June 2020 stood at \$306,043,454. The figure comprises Omani exports worth \$175,207,219 and Iranian imports of \$130,836,260.

He described the opportunities made available in sectors of Oman Vision 2040 as promising and capable of opening vistas for firms operating in the sectors of industry, mining, food security and health. In his turn, Eng. Dhrabi laid emphasis on the importance of promoting economic ties and augmenting the volume of commercial exchange to serve the interests of the two countries.

He added that such meetings assume significance for the rapprochement of views among companies from both sides.

The forum saw the screening of visual displays, notably about the industrial estates in Sohar, Salalah, Al Mazyouna and the Special Economic Zone in Duqm and the advantages offered by the strategic location of each estate. The two sides mulled the conclusion of pacts and partnerships to help expand bilateral cooperation.

Knowledge-Based Momentum Law to Cause Ecosystem of Innovation to Boom

TEHRAN (IFP) - During a visit by Iran's vice president for science and technology to the exhibition of Iranian-made technologies, knowledge-based and creative companies have presented their achievements.

The 2-day exhibition was inaugurated on Tuesday with the visit of Mohammad Mokhber, Iran's First Vice President, and Sorena Sattari, Vice President for Science and Technology.

Sattari referred to the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi's determination to support the technology and innovation ecosystem.

At the opening ceremony of the event, Sattari pointed out that the permanent exhibition of Iranian technologies is a venue used to offer products and the capabilities of knowledge-based and creative companies.

According to Sattari, the exhibition hosts a variety of products such as medical equipment, laboratory equipment, agricultural machinery, information and communication technologies, creative technologies, mechanical engineering equipment and many products and goods in various fields that are growing significantly with the influence of knowledge-based companies.

Sattari, who is also the director of the National Foundation of Elites, expressed hope that the movement that has started to support the technology and innovation ecosystem will produce good results with the serious backing of the 13th government, and "we will see a significant leap in the sphere of knowledge-based economy".

Sattari also said the new law that was approved by parliament to support knowledge-based companies and will soon be approved by the Guardian Council will bring positive outcomes for companies.

150 creative, knowledge-based companies are participating in the exhibition.

Iran Produces Medicine Against Alzheimer's Disease

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian pharmaceutical company has produced an herbal medicine based on saffron that can prevent or reduce the symptoms of the Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia among the elderly population.

Ali Jalali, a member of the managing board of the Green Plants of Life, said the domestically-developed capsules, named SaffroTin, can help cure Alzheimer's and reduce the number of fatalities caused by the degenerative brain disorder.

SaffroTin also "eliminates the side effects of other medicines" typically used against the Alzheimer's disease, the official said. The effective substance in SaffroTin has been taken from saffron, an Iranian herb, Jalali added.

Research in the field of medicinal herbs show that crocin, a chemical compound used in SaffroTin, reduces the death of nerve cells and prevents the degeneration of the human brain.

Sri Lanka Showcased as Healthy Travel Destination



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Iran Vipulatheja Wishwanath Aponu, Deputy Minister of Tourism of Iran Ali Asghar Shalbafian Hossein Abadi, Chairman of the Association of Air Transport and Tourism Agencies of Iran Hormatollah Rafiei and other officials at the 15th International Tourism Exhibition held in Tehran.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Iran, at the invitation extended by the Government of Iran participated in the 15th Tehran International Tourism Exhibition - TITE held in Tehran from January 29 to February 1, 2022. Thousands of visitors representing more than 30 countries participated in the event while the active domestic and foreign companies in the field of tourism showcased their services.

With the assistance of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, the Embassy showcased Sri Lanka as a healthy travel destination to Iranian travel agents and travellers through tourism promotional videos, tourism brochures and leaflets which were played and distributed during the event. The Embassy staff shared the details of prominent Sri Lankan travel companies that organize tours in Sri Lanka among the represented international tourist agencies to link each other.

During the Exhibition, Ambassador Vipulatheja Wishwanath Aponu met Deputy Minister of Tourism of Iran Ali Asghar Shalbafian Hossein Abadi and discussed ways and means to develop tourism exchanges between Sri Lanka and Iran.

He briefed the recent developments in the tourism sector in Sri Lanka and described the country's uniqueness as an amazing tourist destination particularly wildlife, authentic cuisine and unique Ayurvedic medicine system. The Deputy Minister assured his fullest support to further enhance tourism cooperation between the two countries.

At the meeting, Chairman of the Association of Air Transport and Tourism Agencies of Iran Hormatollah Rafiei appreciated the active participation of the Ambassador and his staff at the Exhibition. He further stated the interest of his Association to work together with the Sri Lankan Tourist Associations in promoting tourism and expanding people-to-people contact between the two countries.

Ambassador Wishwanath Aponu underlined that a joint venture in the tourism sector will bolster ties between Sri Lanka and Iran and helps to expand the bilateral cooperation in other sectors.

8 Marine Tourist Wharfs Inaugurated in Khorramshahr

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – During the Ten-Day-Dawn festivities for marking the victory of the Islamic Revolution, eight metal wharfs were designed and manufactured with efforts of local experts and were installed in 4 points of Karoun River.

According to the public relations office of Makin Darya Qeshm Industrial Group, Mehdi Zare, the top national entrepreneur and the CEO of the group, announced this news and said that the project for design, manufacture, transport and installation of eight metal wharfs for installing in four points of Karoun River was ordered by the Khorramshahr Port and Maritime Administration in line with developing and booming the marine tourism infrastructures in the epic-making city of Khorramshahr, and this project with reliance on the knowhow and capabilities of experts of this group with investment of 12b tomans came on stream during the festivities of the 43th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Zare said that if the marine-centered economic approach as well as expansion of marine tourism approach is taken by the country, due to having over 5800 meters of coasts, the country can eradicate unemployment in these areas by creating direct and indirect jobs if the domestic manufacturers are supported.

He added that these wharfs have been fully designed and manufactured by the experts of this group which has been put



on display in the most southernmost of the country, adding that it is expected this achievement leads to a change in the mindset in the country towards domestic manufacturers.

Then in the ceremony, Director General of Khorramshahr Port and Marine Administration Mr. Noorollah Asaadi said that

in line with boosting tourism and economic boom in the region, design and manufacture of these wharfs were handed over to the group in the legal framework.

He also announced the readiness of the organization to use all its capabilities and capacities for developing the marine tourism infrastructures in the region.

Then the manager of the project Mr. Seyed Mohammad Mirafzal pointed to the details of the wharfs and said that the dimensions of each wharf is 30m in length, 4m in width and 1m in height which can stand over 80 tons of load. He reiterated that all measures in manufacturing these wharfs are based on the Lloyd's Register ship-building standards and it has received the approval and certificates of the domestic ranking institutes.

Then design manager of Makin Qeshm Darya added that these wharfs can host docking of 3 tourism vessels with the length of 15 meters (100 tons) or docking of a bigger vessel with the length of 30 meters (200 tons), reiterating that all safety issues have been considered during manufacturing process and they will give a beautiful scene to the coasts of Karoun River.

Kuala Lumpur Urged to Issue Quarantine License for Iran's Agro Exports

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Visiting Malaysian Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin in meeting with Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad Syed Sadatinejad explored ways for broadening economic, trade and technical ties in the agriculture sectors of the two countries.

During the meeting in Tehran, Iran called for acceleration in issuing quarantine license for exports of its products to Malaysia. Sadatinejad also announced readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran for increasing exports of different types of agro products especially apple, dried fruits and dairy products and called for issuing necessary license for easing the exports.

He also expressed hope that talks on tariffs which are in the pipeline between the two countries would be finalized very soon.

Then Kamaruddin, for her part, enumerated the potential fields for improving agro cooperation between the two countries and announced readiness of her government for enhancing the level of economic ties between Malaysia and Iran.

In the meeting it was decided that the roadmap and the joint plan of action for improving the agreements between ministers of the two countries through cooperation of all related state and non-state cooperation and with endorsement of ministers would come into effect.



Australia PM Apologizes for Abuse, Bullying in Parliament

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Australia's prime minister apologized for widespread sexual harassment, abuse and bullying of political staff today, a year after a high-profile rape allegation rocked the country's parliament.

Addressing lawmakers, Scott Morrison apologized directly to former staffer Brittany Higgins who said she was raped by a male colleague in a minister's office in 2019.

"I'm sorry to Ms Higgins for the terrible things that took place here," Morrison said describing a decades-long culture of abuse in the corridors of power.



Europe to Cut Funds for Poland Over Unpaid Fine

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Commission said Tuesday it would take the unprecedented step of tapping into EU funding earmarked for Poland to collect a fine Warsaw racked up for refusing to close a coal mine.

The EU executive has informed Poland of its decision, which will be carried out next week, a commission spokesman, Balazs Ujvari, told AFP.

Polish government spokesman Piotr Muller said Warsaw would use "all possible legal means to appeal against this," Poland's PAP news agency reported.



Scholz Says Goal Is to Avoid a War in Europe



BERLIN (Dispatches) - European leaders have been taking part in marathon diplomatic talks aimed at de-escalating an increasingly tense situation on the Ukraine-Russia border.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz hosted French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish President Andrzej Duda in Berlin on Tuesday, on the heels of talks with US, Russian and Ukrainian leaders.

The three were meeting over fears about Russia amassing military hardware and more than 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine. Scholz said the leaders were in agreement on the situation at present and what the consequences should be if Ukraine's territory and sovereignty were violated.

"Our common goal is to avoid a war in Europe," said the chancellor, flanked by Duda and Macron.

"The deployment of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine is very worrying and our assessment of the situation here is very much the same.

"Just as our attitude is that further violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine is unacceptable and would have far-reaching consequences, politically, economically and certainly also geo-strategically."

"We speak with one voice," said Polish President Duda, adding that the three countries would not give up in their efforts to de-escalate the tensions with Moscow and Kyiv.

"We have to find a solution to avoid war," said Duda. "As I've said, this is currently our main task. I believe that we will achieve it. In my opinion what's most important today is unity and solidarity."

French President Macron called for security talks with Moscow, in order to stress the inviolability of Europe's borders.

The French president is seeking to revive the "Normandy Format" peace talks — aimed at bringing to an end fighting in eastern Ukraine, in which more than 14,000 people have died.

Envoys from the four countries involved — France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine — are to meet on Thursday in Berlin.

Tuesday's meeting came after Russian President Vladimir Putin told Macron that Russia "would not be the source of an escalation." Earlier on Tuesday, Macron later met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who said he would welcome concrete steps from Putin for de-escalation, but added that he didn't "trust words in general."

It also follows Scholz's meeting with US President Joe Biden on Monday where the pair threatened Russia with grave consequences if it invades Ukraine.

Biden vowed that the Nord Stream 2 Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline, which has been completed but has not yet started operating, will not be allowed to proceed.

Kremlin Denies Putin Promised Not To Hold Maneuvers Near Ukraine

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Kremlin denied today that Vladimir Putin had promised French President Emmanuel Macron that Russia would stage no further maneuvers near Ukraine for now, pouring cold water on a tentative French assertion of diplomatic progress.

Macron, who visited Moscow yesterday, is the highest ranking Western leader to have met the Russian president since Moscow massed more than 100,000 troops near the Ukrainian frontier in what NATO countries fear is preparation for war.

Putin and Macron announced no breakthroughs at a news conference on Monday but a French official, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity, said overnight that Putin had promised to hold no new maneuvers near Ukraine for now.

The official also said Putin had promised to withdraw Russian troops from Belarus at the end of exercises there, which are set for later this month.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said reports of any undertaking not to hold maneuvers near Ukraine were "not right".

Putin had also given no new promise about when Russian troops would leave Belarus, Peskov said. They were expected to return to bases in Russia at some point after the drills, but "no one had ever said they would stay" in Belarus, he said.

Macron's Elysee Palace office appeared to row back from the French official's remarks on Tuesday, saying the official was mentioning points that were discussed by Macron and Putin, rather than a specific new promise by the Russian leader.

Macron defended his mission as having prevented a further deterioration of the crisis. He had never expected "for one second" that Putin would make concessions, he told journalists after arriving in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, where he was due to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Western countries, particularly the United States, say they fear Putin is preparing to invade Ukraine. Moscow says it is planning no invasion but could take unspecified "military-technical measures" unless a number of security demands are met, including a promise from NATO never to admit Kyiv.

Persian Gulf states that have established ties with Israel have sought to reassure the Palestinians that their countries are not abandoning the quest for statehood, despite Palestinian leaders having decried the deals as a betrayal of their cause.

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey will not turn its back on its commitment to a Palestinian state in order to broker closer ties with Israel, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said today, ahead of a planned visit by Israeli President Isaac Herzog next month.

The two countries expelled their ambassadors in 2018 after a bitter falling-out and relations have remained tense but Ankara has taken steps to mend strained regional ties, including with Israel.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Herzog would visit Turkey in mid-March, the first such trip in years, adding the two countries could discuss energy cooperation.

Ankara, which supports a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has condemned Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its policy towards Palestinians, while Israel has called on Turkey to drop support for the militant Palestinian group Hamas which runs Gaza.

Speaking to reporters in Ankara, Cavusoglu said a potential normalisation between Turkey and Israel may boost Ankara's role in finding a two-state solution, but said Ankara would not compromise on its stance.

"Any step we take with Israel regarding our relations, any normalization, will not be at the expense of the Palestinian cause, like some other countries," Cavusoglu said, referring to the rapprochement between Israel and some Gulf countries that has angered Turkey.

"Our position there is always clear," he added. "These ties normalizing a bit more may increase Turkey's role regarding a two-state solution as well, as a country that will be in touch with both countries, but we will never turn back on our core principles."

Persian Gulf states that have established ties with Israel have sought to reassure the Palestinians that their countries are not abandoning the quest for statehood, despite Palestinian leaders having decried the deals as a betrayal of their cause.

13m Face Hunger as Horn of Africa Drought Worsens

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - An estimated 13 million people in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia are facing severe hunger as the Horn of Africa experiences its worst drought in decades, the World Food Program (WFP) said.

Three consecutive rainy seasons have failed as the region has recorded its driest conditions since 1981, the UN agency said.

The drought has destroyed crops and inflicted "abnormally" high livestock deaths, forcing rural families who rely on herding and farming to abandon their homes.

Water and grazing land is in short supply and forecasts of below-average rainfall in coming months only threaten more misery, said Michael Dunford, WFP's regional director in East Africa.

"Harvests are ruined, livestock are dying, and hunger is growing as recurrent droughts affect the Horn of Africa," he said in a statement.

"The situation requires immediate humanitarian action" to avoid a repeat of a crisis like that of Somalia in 2011, when 250,000 died of hunger during a prolonged drought.

Food aid is being distributed across an arid swathe

of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia where malnutrition rates are high and some 13 million people are at risk of severe hunger in the first quarter of this year.

Some 5.7 million needed food assistance in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, including half a million malnourished children and mothers.

In Somalia, the number of people classified as seriously hungry is expected to rise from 3.5 million to 4.6 million by May unless urgent interventions are taken.

Another 2.8 million people need assistance in south-eastern and northern Kenya, where a drought emergency was declared in September.

WFP said US\$327 million was required to respond to immediate needs over the next six months and support pastoral communities to become more resilient against recurring climate shocks.

In 2011, failed rains led to the driest year since 1951 in arid regions of Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Uganda.

Experts say extreme weather events are happening with increased frequency and intensity due to climate change — with Africa, which contributes the least to global warming, bearing the brunt.



Angry Canada Truckers Block Busiest Bridge With U.S.

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Angry Canadian truckers were blocking the busiest crossing with the United States, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau prepared to face legislators later in the day to discuss the growing crisis.

Drivers demanding an end to federal Covid-19 vaccine mandates for cross-border traffic first arrived in Ottawa on Jan 28 and gradually took over the center of the Canadian capital.

As police slowly started to take back control the protesters - many of whom are demanding that Trudeau quit - moved their focus to the Ambassador Bridge linking Detroit and Windsor.

Trucks started blocking traffic late yesterday and a Canadian government website showed that the bridge was shut in both directions at 7:11 am ET (1207 GMT).

Canada sends 75 per cent of its goods exports to the United States and trucks play a crucial role. The bridge usually handles around 8,000 rigs a day, underlining the economic significance of the blockade.

"We got sent here to send a message and the message isn't getting through," Ottawa protest spokesman Tom Marazzo told reporters last night.

Trudeau, who has spent 10 days in isolation after catching Covid-19, is due to return to the House of Commons later today to face opposition legislators who are demanding he do more to end what one aide called a "national humiliation."

His government, though, says police forces should be able to restore order. "Individuals are trying to blockade our economy, our democracy, and our fellow citizens' daily lives. It has to stop," Trudeau told an emergency debate in the House of Commons on Monday night. "Those who are shouting at others because they're wearing a mask do not define what it is to be the majority of Canadians."



Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Niavaran Apt (\$2500)
250sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
fireplace
Fully Furn

Darrou Villa (\$3000)
800sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Jordan (\$1500)
2bdrs, S/p, F.F

Apt Sa`adat abad (\$1700)
160sq.m, 2bdrs, S/pool
balcony, pkg lot
F.F

Vanak office (\$2500)
200sq.m, pkgs

Zaferanieh (\$2700)
300sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Elahieh bldg (\$7000)
4storey, 10bdrs, pkgs

Farmanieh Apt (\$3000)
400sq.m, 4bdrs, balcony, F.F

Cell: +989121907875
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
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Energy Prices Lift BP Profits to 8-Year High

LONDON (Dispatches) - BP's profits hit their highest in eight years in 2021, lifted by soaring gas and oil prices, as the company boosted share repurchases and accelerated plans to cut emissions with increased spending on low carbon energy. BP's rebound to an annual profit of \$12.85 billion after a large loss in 2020, is likely to add to calls in Britain for higher taxes on energy producers to help reduce consumers' energy bills. The results were supported by higher oil and gas prices and production, partly offset by weaker oil trading results and the impact of higher energy costs on operations such as refining, the company said. Natural gas and electricity prices around the world have soared since the middle of last year because of tight gas supplies and higher demand as economies rebounded from pandemic shutdowns.



Russia May Use Field Hit by U.S. Sanctions for Gas Exports to China

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian gas giant Gazprom may tap a field hit by U.S. sanctions off the Pacific island of Sakhalin to provide China with gas under a recently signed deal, sources and analysts said on Tuesday.

Russia, already Beijing's No. 3 gas supplier, has been strengthening ties with China, the world's biggest energy consumer, reducing its dependence on its traditional European energy customers amid a standoff with the West.

President Vladimir Putin announced new gas supply deal with China on Friday, which would boost gas exports from Russia's far east where the pipeline network is not connected to traditional routes of its fuel exports to Europe.

Gazprom said it signed a long-term sales and purchase agreement with China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) for natural gas to be supplied via a far eastern route.

As the project reaches its full capacity, the amount of Russian pipeline gas supplies to China would grow by 10 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year, totalling 48 bcm per year, including supplies via the existing Power of Siberia pipeline.

Gazprom has not revealed the source base for the new deal. The company and CNPC have not responded to a request for comment.

Two sources said gas may come from the fields off Sakhalin, including the Yuzhno-Kirinskoye, which Washington put under sanctions in 2015 for Moscow's role in the crisis in Ukraine.

The field, part of the Kirinsky block in the Sea of Okhotsk, also contains oil, while sanctions are related to exploration for or production of, oil or gas in Russian deepwaters.

The sanctions prevent foreign companies from tapping hydrocarbons at such fields, and the possible gas exports from Yuzhno-Kirinskoye may show that Russia has learned how to get around the sanctions.

Moscow-based Sova Capital brokerage said gas for the deal could come from the Kirinskoye field "or more likely the Yuzhno-Kirinskoye field, which should launch in 2023 or 2024".

According to Gazprom's data, Yuzhno-Kirinskoye's reserves amount to 711.2 billion cubic meters of natural gas, 111.5 million tons of gas condensate and 4.1 million tons of oil. Production is seen there at 21 bcm per year.

"This will be Yuzhno-Kirinskoye, no doubt about that," a source said about the gas source for the new deal with China.

Gazprom said on its website that "Yuzhno-Kirinskoye is in the process of pre-development, with geological exploration completed within the boundaries of the field."

It has also said the company had been constructing production wells at the field using semi-submersible drilling rigs and it expected to put it on stream gradually in the period from 2023 through 2025.

Sakhalin-1 project is expected to begin LNG production in 2028.

Gazprom's own LNG plant on the region, Sakhalin-2, has not enough resources of gas to raise production and set up a third production line.

Turkey's Current Account Gap Seen at \$4b in December, \$15b in 2021

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's current account is expected to register a \$15 billion (TL 204.35 billion) deficit in 2021, lower than government expectations, a poll showed, mainly due to rising imports of energy and intermediary goods.

The median response of 13 economists in the Reuters poll was for a deficit of \$14.95 billion in 2021, compared to the government estimate of \$21 billion. Forecasts ranged between a deficit of \$14.32 billion and \$30 billion.

Turkey's import-reliant economy, worth \$717 billion in 2020, has been prone to big trade deficits and a boom-bust growth cycle that was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

The current account recorded a deficit of \$36.72 billion in 2020, due mostly to a sharp increase in the trade deficit and declining tourism revenues due to the pandemic fallout.

The median estimate for December showed a deficit of \$4 billion, with estimates ranging between a deficit of \$3.5 billion and \$7.3 billion.

The foreign trade deficit, a major component of the current account, widened 49.3% year-over-year in December to \$6.79 billion, official data showed.

Shoring up the current account deficit has been Ankara's main priority under its new economic model, which officials say will be achieved through raising exports with a competitive exchange rate.

The manufacturing sector dependency on imported intermediary goods is one of the main obstacles for the economy to record a current account surplus, said Gedik Yatirim economist Serkan Gonencler, who expects the current account shortfall to stand at around 0.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021.

"The continuation of the narrowing trend in the current account deficit looks reasonable in 2022 with the expectation of strong exports and tourism income potential with current exchange rate levels and narrowing consumer goods imports," Gonencler said. "The increase in the cost of energy imports and the economy's dependency on imported intermediary goods can limit the velocity of the narrowing."

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been endorsing a model based on lower borrowing costs, which he says will boost production, employment and exports, and also eventually help Turkey to solve the chronic current account deficit problem and contribute to stabilizing the Turkish lira.



Aluminum Price Surge to 2008 Peak on Supply Woes

LONDON (Dispatches) - Aluminium surged today to a 14-year peak on stretched global supplies, particularly after China placed the city of Baise — a key producer of the base metal — in Covid lockdown.

The market also remains propelled by fears of a conflict between producer Russia and Ukraine, while rocketing energy prices have weighed on European output, according to analysts.

The metal used in everyday items jumped to US\$3,236 (RM13,542) per ton in afternoon trade on the London Metal Exchange, reaching a level last seen in 2008.

The market later pulled back somewhat to US\$3,223, which was some distance from the record pinnacle of US\$3,380.15 struck in July 11 of that year.

"We think the price rise is first and foremost due to supply concerns," Commerzbank analyst Daniel Briesemann told AFP.

"In Europe, several hundred thousand tons of production have been curtailed because of the high energy costs. "In China, another city of several million inhabitants was placed in quarantine on the weekend after new Covid cases were detected there."

The city of Baise, in southwestern China, had an aluminum production capacity of 1.7 million tons per year, according to the analyst. "It is feared that the city's lockdown will hamper the transport of aluminum, thereby further restricting supply," he added.

"In an aluminum market characterized by tight supply such news falls on fertile soil."

Italy Expects EU Carbon Price to Trade Around €80 Per Ton

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy expects the price of permits on the European Union's carbon market to trade at an average of €80 (RM383) per ton this year, giving the government more funds to curb soaring energy bills, a Treasury document seen by Reuters showed.

The price, if confirmed, would be up from an average of €69 in the fourth quarter of 2021 and allow Rome to raise almost €600 million of additional resources to cushion energy price spikes and offer relief to households and businesses.

The government has so far budgeted around €2.8 billion of proceeds from carbon permit auctions, part of which will go to cut system-cost levies weighing on companies.

But in the document the Treasury now estimates it can raise 3.36 billion euros this year based on a "reliable and conservative estimate" of €80 per ton, reflecting future contract prices.

Launched in 2005, the European Union Emissions Trading System (ETS) compels manufacturers, power companies and airlines to buy permits to cover each ton of carbon dioxide they emit.

Permit prices are heading closer towards €100 a ton, a level analysts say will spur further investment in low-carbon energy sources.

The Italian Treasury document, presented to parliament last week, said an average permit price of €89 per ton, based on the "peak observed last December", would raise €3.73 billion while €69 per ton would yield €2.9 billion.

In all three scenarios, Rome assumes an estimate of 42 million CO2 allowances.

The government has allocated some €10 billion since July to cushion sharp rises in energy bills, but ruling parties are urging Prime Minister Mario Draghi to introduce a new extra borrowing package to help families and firms.

The ruling right-wing League party has called for a deficit-hike worth at least €30 billion while the Treasury, keen to reduce the budget deficit this year to 5.6 per cent of national output from 9.4 per cent in 2021, is resisting pressure.

Italy's employers association Confindustria has calculated surging energy bills will cost industry some €37 billion this year compared to €20 billion last year and just €8 billion in 2019.

On Monday Italy's Energy Transition Minister Roberto Cingolani warned high energy bills could offset resources Italy expects from the EU Recovery Fund next year which are worth around €39 billion.

"The expected rise in energy costs risks having an overall cost next year that is more than the whole Recovery Plan package," Cingolani said during a conference.

Robust Imports Boost U.S. Trade Deficit to Record High in 2021

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. trade deficit surged to a record high in 2021 as imports increased sharply amid the restocking of shelves by businesses to meet robust domestic demand.

The sharp widening in the trade gap reported by the Commerce Department on Tuesday mostly reflected a shift in spending toward goods from services during the COVID-19 pandemic. With businesses eager to rebuild depleted inventories against the backdrop of stretched global supply chains, the deficit is unlikely to shrink much this year, cutting into economic growth.

"The need to replenish inventory in the United States will keep imports strong even as domestic demand transitions back to services," said Tim Quinlan, a senior economist at Wells Fargo in Charlotte, North Carolina. "Eventually as domestic demand begins to slow and the global recovery continues, we expect trade to become more of a neutral force on growth next year."

The trade deficit increased 27.0% last year to an all-time high of \$859.1 billion. It was at \$676.7 billion in 2020. The trade gap represented 3.7% of gross domestic product, up from 3.2% in 2020. The deficit subtracted 1.39 percentage points from GDP growth last year.

The economy grew 5.7% in 2021, the strongest since 1984, after the government provided nearly \$6 trillion in pandemic relief, which fueled consumer spending on goods.

The goods deficit shot up to a record \$1.1 trillion last year from \$922 billion in 2020. Imports of goods hit an all-time high of \$2.9 trillion.

They were driven by imports of industrial supplies and materials, which increased to their highest level since 2014. Food imports were the highest on record as were those of capital, consumer and other goods. There were record imports from 70 countries in 2021, led by Mexico, Canada and Germany.



Robust import growth overshadowed a sharp rebound in exports. Goods exports surged 23.3% to a record \$1.8 trillion. Exports of industrial supplies and materials, foods, consumer goods, other goods and petroleum were the highest on record.

The United States logged record exports to 57 countries last year, led by Mexico, where they increased to \$276.5 billion. Shipments to China rose 21.4% to \$151.1 billion. But with imports from China increasing 16.5% to \$506.4 billion, the politically sensitive trade deficit with Beijing increased to \$355.3 billion last year from \$310.3 billion in 2020.

During the administration of former president Donald Trump, China pledged to buy more goods from the United States. However, it missed its targets under the "Phase 1" trade deal signed in January 2020 to halt escalation of a tariff war on Chinese goods launched by Trump in 2018. The purchases commitments expired at the end of 2021.

ECB in "No Rush" To Hike Interest Rates



PARIS (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank will take its time to assess new data before tightening its monetary policy any faster, its president said Monday, amid fierce speculation that the bank would raise rates sooner than previously expected.

"There is no need to rush to any premature conclusion at this point in time," Christine Lagarde told a European Parliament committee, with the bank under pressure from soaring inflation in the eurozone.

The pace of price rises in the bloc unexpectedly rose to 5.1 per cent in January, the highest since records for the currency club began in 1997, having sat at five per cent in December.

At the end of a meeting of the ECB's governing council on Thursday, Lagarde failed to repeat a previous assessment that a rate hike was "very unlikely" in 2022.

Instead, the ECB's decision would be "data-dependant" and would follow the bank's plan to end asset purchases before hiking rates, Lagarde said.

The ECB last week also confirmed its decision to follow a "step-by-step" reduction in bond buys over the course of the year.

Her response sent waves through financial markets, pushing up yields on government debt in the eurozone and bringing forward expectations that the ECB would quickly raise interest rates.

At the hearing, Lagarde "tried to put the hawkish genie back into the bottle" after Thursday's ECB meeting by pushing back against early rate hike expectations, said Carsten Brzeski, head of macro at the ING bank.

Members of the ECB's governing council would "look very carefully" in March at the bank's new inflation and growth forecasts, before plotting its next move, Lagarde said at the committee.

Early survey and market-based data suggested that "chances have increased that inflation will stabilize at our target" of two-per cent, she said.

COVID-19 Kills 116 More Iranians

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The number of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in Iran increased to 133,164 with 116 more Iranians killed by the deadly disease over the past 24 hours, Iran's Health Ministry announced on Wednesday.

Some 116 more Iranians have died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total deaths to

133,164, Iran's Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

39,085 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, 2,902 of whom were hospitalized, it said.

The Iranian Health Ministry noted that 6,215,909 patients out of a total of 6,696,927 infected people have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.



Netflix Film Power of the Dog Leads Oscar Nominations

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Jane Campion's gothic Western "The Power of the Dog" led the Oscars nominations Tuesday, fending off a crowded field of movies from a year in which Covid-weary audiences slowly headed back into movie theaters.

The movie about a repressed 1920s cattle rancher in Montana released by Netflix earned 12 nods ahead of next month's Oscars gala, including best director -- making Campion the first female auteur nominated twice in Academy Award history.

"The Power of the Dog" was also nominated for best picture, and landed acting nods for Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons and Kodi Smit-McPhee.

Campion was last nominated 28 years ago for "The Piano."

Sprawling sci-fi epic "Dune" landed in second place overall, landing 10 nods including best picture, although its director Denis Villeneuve was overlooked by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

As expected, the adaptation of Frank Herbert's sprawling novel set on a desert planet plagued by monstrous sandworms scored well across technical categories including cinematography, visual effects and sound.

Other coveted directing slots went to Kenneth Branagh for black-and-white childhood drama "Belfast" and Steven Spielberg for musical "West Side Story," with each film securing seven nominations.

Spielberg's decision to remake the most honored musical in Oscars history had been criticized as unnecessary by some, but it won over voters to earn a best picture nomination, and another for supporting actress for Ariana DeBose as Anita.

The directing category was rounded out by Paul Thomas Anderson for "Licorice Pizza," and Japanese filmmaker Ryusuke Hamaguchi -- whose subtitled, three-hour drama "Drive My Car" also earned a rare best picture nomination.

Hopes that larger-than-life, unapologetically commercial box office hits like "Spider-Man: No Way Home" and 007 outing "No Time To Die" could break into the best picture race were thwarted.

The \$1.8 billion-grossing "Spider-Man" film landed only a visual effects nomination, while Daniel Craig's final James Bond film earned three nods.

As widely predicted, frontrunner Will Smith earned recognition for his portrayal of the father of tennis greats Serena and Venus Williams in "King Richard," which took six nods overall.



He is up against Cumberbatch, Denzel Washington ("The Tragedy of Macbeth"), Andrew Garfield ("tick, tick...BOOM!") and Javier Bardem ("Being the Ricardos.") Lady Gaga was the surprise omission in the best actress category, with "House of Gucci" earning just one nomination -- for best hair and make-up.

Instead best actress will be contested by Jessica Chastain ("The Eyes of Tammy Faye"), Olivia Colman ("The Lost Daughter"), Penelope Cruz ("Parallel Mothers"), Nicole Kidman ("Being the Ricardos") and Kristen Stewart ("Spencer").

The plethora of A-listers will be welcomed by the Academy, after last year's sparsely-watched Oscars gala, which featured smaller movies barely known to the wider public.

Giant cinematic spectacles -- many of which were pushed back into 2021 during the first year of the coronavirus pandemic -- are competing with auteur films that gained tractions on streaming sites in this year's diverse race for Hollywood's biggest awards.

"Last year we had a much more indie Oscars... This year was the return of big cinema, big movies and studio films," said one Academy voter, who asked not to be named.

"The race is wide open this year," said Deadline award columnist Pete Hammond. The 94th Academy Awards gala is scheduled for March 27.

India Struggles to Contain Vegoil Prices as Indonesia Restricts Exports



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India's attempts to lower edible oil prices ahead of important state elections have been ruined by a spike in global palm oil prices to record highs after Indonesia, the world's biggest supplier, moved restrict exports.

Mindful of an electorate that is highly sensitive to food price inflation, India's government tried to rein in domestic prices by reducing import taxes, imposing stockpile limits and suspending futures trading in edible oils and oilseeds.

But as India imports two-thirds of its edible oils, the benefits of the duty cut and other measures have been virtually erased by the surge in global prices after Indonesia ordered producers to sell 20% of their sales to the domestic market to cool local cooking oil prices.

Nearly half of the exports from the world's biggest palm oil exporter Indonesia land in only four Asian countries -- India, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

"Indonesia's move has complicated India's efforts to bring down prices," said B.V. Mehta, executive director of Mumbai-based Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA).

Spot prices of palm oil, the most consumed edible oil in the country, have risen more than 12% so far in 2022 to 1,228 rupees per 10 kg after hitting a record high of 1,280.75 rupees in May 2021.

The price of rival oils such as soyoil and sunflower oil jumped as buyers scrambled to replace lost palm oil volumes, increasing import bills for the world's biggest edible oil importer and making it difficult for New Delhi to rein in costs for consumers.

Previously, palm oil was by far the most imported oil in India, but "at the current price level there is no advantage to buy palm oil," an Indian refiner, who declined to be named, said.

Crude palm oil (CPO) is being offered at around \$1,450 a ton, including cost, insurance and freight (CIF), in India for March shipments, compared with \$1,490 for crude soybean oil and \$1,455 for crude sunflower oil, traders said.

A year ago, palm oil was trading at a discount of around \$100 and \$250 per ton to soyoil and sunflower oil respectively, both regarded as better quality than palm oil.

India's retail food price inflation rose to 4.05% in December, and analysts expect it to stay on an upward trend in coming months.

African Migrants Face Racism, Violence in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (Dispatches) - The brutal murder of a Congolese man at a Rio de Janeiro beach has cast a harsh spotlight on the ordeals African migrants face in Brazil, the country with the biggest black population outside Africa. Moise Kabagambe, a 24-year-old migrant who fled to Brazil with his family in 2011 to escape violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was beaten to death with clubs and a baseball bat at the beach-front bar where he worked in Rio's upscale Barra da Tijuca neighborhood.

His family says a group of assailants attacked him after he demanded payment of two days' overdue wages. The January 24 killing has unleashed a flood of outrage, grief and soul-searching in Brazil, where many African migrants say they face poverty, violence and double discrimination as both foreigners and blacks.

"I'm thinking of leaving Brazil after what happened with Moise. I'm afraid for my children," said Sagrace Lembe Menga, who also fled the conflict-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, arriving in 2015.

The 33-year-old refugee and mother of two says she has regularly faced racism in her adoptive country, especially at the salon where she works as a hair stylist.

"Some people treat you like you're insignificant, like an animal," she told AFP.

"I've had people ask me if I live with giraffes."

Brazil has 1,050 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and around 35,000 African immigrants in all -- though experts say the official figure is likely an underestimate.

They often live in poor slums dominated by drug gangs, and are paid far less than other immigrants in Brazil -- an average of 2,698 reals (\$510) a month, compared with 4,878 reals a month for all immigrants combined.

"If I had to tell the story of every incident of racism I've faced, I could write a book," said Elisee Mpebele, 23, a Congolese singer who arrived in Brazil in 2013.

"Wary looks, stares, security guards following me around the supermarket. The other day, I asked some police officers for directions, and they ended up searching me."

He said finding work as a musician was tough, so he often had to resort to odd jobs to make ends meet.

Racism and discrimination are nothing new in Brazil, home to the second-biggest black population in the world, after Nigeria. The country was the last in the Americas to abolish slavery, in 1888, and blacks still face deep-rooted poverty, exclusion and systemic racism.

As foreigners, African migrants are even worse off.

The racism they face in Brazil "is all the more perverse given that 55 percent of Brazilians are black," said Bas'lele Malomalo, an expert on African-Brazilian migration at Unilab university.

"The integration problems faced by African migrants have the same roots as those encountered by former slaves, who were still seen as objects, as animals, at abolition," he said.

All too often, racism also translates into violence.

Seventy-seven percent of homicide victims in Brazil in 2019 were black.

The danger for black foreigners is even greater, said Malomalo.

"In the minds of the racists, since it's a foreigner, no one's going to defend him," he said.

"Whenever someone hassles me, I just keep my head down to avoid any problems," said Modou Fall, a 34-year-old Senegalese migrant who sells sunglasses on Rio's famed Copacabana beach.

"It's hard working here. I struggle to send money to my family."

Many Africans arrive in Brazil full of "entrepreneurial spirit," said Rui Mucaje, head of the Afro-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (AfroChamber).

But most end up doing menial jobs in the informal sector, he said.

"It's not uncommon to see people with university degrees end up working jobs they're way overqualified for," he said.

As examples, he cited an engineer who is working at a supermarket and a surveyor working as a hotel cleaner. Kabagambe's killing, he said, is "the tragic result of the problems created by racism in Brazil."

U.S., Japan Reach Deal to Cut Tariffs on Japanese Steel, Fight Excess Output

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States and Japan announced a deal to remove Trump-era tariffs from about 1.25 million metric tons of Japanese steel imports annually after Washington granted similar access for European Union steelmakers last year.

The new deal, which excludes aluminum at Japan's request, will take effect on April 1 and requires Japan to take "concrete steps" to fight global excess steel manufacturing capacity, largely centered in China, U.S. officials said.

A joint U.S.-Japan statement said Japan would start to implement within six months "appropriate domestic measures, such as antidumping, countervailing duty, and safeguard measures or other measures of at least equivalent effect," to establish more market-oriented conditions for steel.

The agreement, like the EU steel and aluminum deal reached in October, calls for steel imported from Japan to be completely produced in the country for duty-free access, a standard known as "melted and poured," to reduce the risk of Chinese steel skirting US tariffs.

Much of the Biden administration's trade efforts have centered around patching up strained relations with U.S. allies that are market-driven democracies.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said the deal "will strengthen America's steel industry and ensure its workforce stays competitive, while also providing more access to cheaper steel and addressing a major irritant between the United States and Japan, one of our most important allies."

Islamic Revolution...

FROM PAGE 1

With its legacy still rippling across the globe, supporters of the Islamic Revolution internationally know they owe Iran and Iranians a great debt.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has progressed very fast and considerably since its foundation under the wise leadership of Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and the country has now turned into being one of the strongest countries in the military sector as well as other fields like knowledge-based sciences and Nano-technologies.

Of course the country has seen amazing progress in the industrial and medical fields and now the country has become a hub for medical tourism and its industrial exports are on the rise.

The Islamic Revolution has proved the world that if there is a will, there is a way and Iran has proved it that if a country and its nation is determined for its independence, it can definitely have it provided that it believes in itself and stands firmly against the aliens.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is now a true friend of any freedom-seeking nation in the world no matter it is a neighboring country like Iraq or a country thousands of miles away like Venezuela in South America. Tehran has proved its commitment to its friendship to the nations although it may have cost dear for the country.

Now the country is getting one year older with more experience and it needs constructive plans to consolidate the Islamic Republic in the country and among other nations. Although Iranians are struggling with economic issues, they never turn back to the Islamic Revolution because they are fully aware that this has been the Islamic Revolution which has saved the country from being a lackey of the West and to be a real power in the region based on its merit rather than being a power because of being a yes-man of the big powers.

The Islamic Revolution has started its second phase after strengthening its defensive power and the country is serious to pursue the ideals of the revolution. The country due to the wise leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei will overcome all problems created by the inside and outside enemies and will become stronger economically, structurally, socially and militarily in the upcoming years.

Now The Islamic Revolution has turned into an aspiration for freedom and independence among the nations and soon many nations will follow the footsteps of it for dictating their powers over the world arrogance and the lackey governments.

Growing Appetite for...

FROM PAGE 1

The minister elaborated India remained as the top destination for Malaysian palm oil, importing more than 3.5 million tons.

Other prominent destinations for Malaysian palm oil include China, the Netherlands, Turkey, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

Overall, the country's palm oil accounted for 24% of global palm oil production and 31% of world exports in 2021.

Despite the impressive performance, she pointed out the industry is not without challenges.

"Limitations among others in the form of non-tariff barriers including market access, discriminatory trade practices and negative perception have recently escalated against the Malaysian palm oil industry that offers a better competitive advantage over other edible oils," said Zuraida. "We will continue with our effort to disseminate accurate facts and information to counter the anti-palm oil campaigners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to disprove the allegations of deforestation associated with the Malaysian palm oil industry."

Japan's Idemitsu Kosan...

FROM PAGE 1

Talks to revive the JCPOA stalled mid-2021 but restarted in December.

Japan suspended its Iranian oil imports in May 2019, after briefly resuming inflows in February for the first time in four months, after the US declined to extend its 180-day sanctions waiver beyond early May on Iranian oil imports.

Japan's 2019 Iranian oil imports totaled 17.10 million barrels, down 63.2% from 46.51 million barrels in 2018, according to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry data.

EU Optimistic About...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran has also increased the level of uranium enrichment beyond the level allowed under the JCPOA in accordance with the accord itself.

Officials in the current U.S. administration, while acknowledging that the policy of maximum pressure has failed, intend to bring their country back to the JCPOA.

Envoys from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries -- Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany -- have been holding negotiations in the Austrian capital for 10 months in a bid to resurrect the JCPOA.

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Chiellini Ruled out With Calf Injury

ROME (Dispatches) - Juventus captain Giorgio Chiellini is set to miss the Turin derby and the Champions League last-16 first leg clash with Villarreal due to a calf injury, the Italian club said. The 37-year-old was replaced in the 75th minute of a 2-0 Serie A win over Hellas Verona on Sunday. Italian media reported that the Italy international will be sidelined for around three weeks. That would rule him out of Thursday's Italian Cup quarter-final against Sassuolo, league games against Atalanta, Torino and Empoli, and the European clash in Villarreal.

Geisenberger Wins Sixth Olympic Medal

YANQING (Dispatches) - Germany's Natalie Geisenberger won her third straight Winter Games gold in the women's singles to claim a record-equalling sixth Olympic medal in the sport. The 34-year-old successfully defended her Olympic title with a combined winning time of 3min 54.507sec at the Yanqing National Sliding Centre. Having now won a career total of five golds and a bronze, Geisenberger has matched the record of six Olympic medals won by Italian luge legend Armin Zoegeler.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2022

Mitchell Sparks Big Comeback as Jazz Top Knicks

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points and the Utah Jazz erased a double-digit, second-half deficit to defeat the New York Knicks 113-104 in Salt Lake City. Mitchell spearheaded a late game-clinching, 11-1 run and finished with seven rebounds, six assists and four steals to help the Jazz win their third game in a row. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 20 points, Mike Conley Jr. added 18 points and seven assists and Jordan Clarkson returned from missing two games due to a knee injury to score 16 points for Utah. Julius Randle scored 30 points, Mitchell Robinson contributed 19 points and 21 rebounds and RJ Barrett fired in 23 points, but New York lost a third straight and fell for the ninth time in 11 outings.

Suns 127, Bulls 124

Devin Booker scored 38 points, Chris Paul and Jae Crowder each had double-doubles, and visiting Phoenix topped Chicago for its 13th win in 14 games. Booker, who shot 14-for-23 from the field, has scored at least 30 points in five of his past eight games for the Suns, who led by as many as 27 points. Chicago lost for the second time in as many days and allowed at least 115 points for the seventh straight game. DeMar DeRozan led the Bulls with 38 points and Zach LaVine had 32.

Warriors 110, Thunder 98

Klay Thompson scored 21 points to lead Golden State to a victory at Oklahoma City. The Warriors stretched their winning streak to nine, their longest in a single



season since an 11-game run in January 2019. Stephen Curry finished just shy of a triple-double with 18 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds.

The Thunder have dropped back-to-back games after winning three straight. Luguentz Dort, playing with a mask for the first time after breaking his nose two games prior, led the Thunder with 26 points. Darius Bazley tied a season high with 20 points.

Heat 121, Wizards 100

Bam Adebayo scored 21 points, Jimmy Butler added 19 points and Miami never trailed in defeating host Washington. The Heat, who have the best record in the Eastern Conference at 35-20, improved to 22-12 against the East. They won despite playing without Tyler Herro, who is averaging 20.1 points per game, due to a sore right knee. Washington lost its sixth straight home game and its eighth of nine overall. Without Bradley Beal (wrist), who leads the team in scoring and assists, the Wizards were led by Corey Kispert's 20 points in 26 minutes off the bench.

Injured Ibrahimovic Like a Caged Lion



ROME (Dispatches) - Zlatan Ibrahimovic is like a caged lion as he fights to regain fitness, but the Swede will be unavailable for AC Milan's Italian Cup quarter-final against Lazio, coach Stefano Pioli said. The 40-year-old striker, Milan's joint-top scorer this season with eight goals, has a damaged Achilles tendon and missed Saturday's 2-1 Milan derby victory over league leaders Inter. "Zlatan is a caged lion. He is motivated to help the team on the pitch. He is doing everything to recover, he won't be ready for tomorrow but we will see about the next games," Pioli told Sport Mediaset. Olivier Giroud started in Ibrahimovic's place against Inter and was the hero, scoring twice in three second-half minutes to complete a surprise comeback and silence his detractors. "The critics are always there, what counts is the faith that we have in him," Pioli said. "He is showing that he is the player who we bought, a valuable player and person who is giving a great contribution to the team." Milan haven't won the Italian Cup since 2003 and are involved in a fierce Serie A title race, sitting one point behind leaders Inter.

FIFA Inundated With 17m Requests For World Cup Tickets

DOHA (Dispatches) - Fans have sought 17 million tickets for this year's World Cup finals in Qatar, FIFA said Tuesday, making it more than five times over-subscribed. Higher prices being demanded for the best tickets -- which cost up to \$1,600 for the final -- and controversy over Qatar's bid did not deter followers of the world's most popular sport. "Fans across the globe have proven their enthusiasm," FIFA said. Demand was highest from the host country of the November-December event. But FIFA said it had been "inundated" with requests from Argentina, Brazil, England, France, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the United States. Some 1.8 million tickets were sought just for the final which will be held in the 80,000 seat Lusail stadium on December 18, the world body said. Tickets for the game will cost between 605 riyals (\$165) -- for some Qatari residents -- and 5,850 riyals (\$1,600). The top price is more than 45 percent higher than best places for the 2018 final in Russia, which was won by France. The cheapest final tickets for international fans are 2,200 riyals (\$600), about a third more expensive than last time and some fan groups have complained about the prices. Organizers said about 3.3 million tickets for all games will be available. Qatari residents, including its army of migrant workers, will pay as little as \$11 for a ticket to less popular games. FIFA, which hopes to make more than \$500 million from tickets, broadcasting rights and other World Cup commercial revenues, said fans who were successful in a computer lottery would be told by March 8. After the 20 days of applications closed Tuesday, FIFA said it will check applications before tickets are allocated in a computer draw. Qatar has been preparing for 11 years for the first World Cup in the Arab world and the first held in the traditional winter months of the top football nations. The date was moved because of the scorching summer temperatures in the Persian Gulf.



Guardiola in No Rush to Sign New City Deal

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Pep Guardiola said there was no other reason why he has stayed on as Manchester City manager for so long other than the fact his team keep winning but he is no rush to sign a new contract. The Spaniard's contract runs out at the end of next season, and should he see that deal through, Guardiola will have been in charge of City for seven seasons, three campaigns more than he oversaw at his native Barcelona. City are on course for their fourth Premier League title under Guardiola, top of the standings and nine points clear of second-placed Liverpool going into their clash with Brentford.

"I am here so long because we won a lot and we're winning a lot," Guardiola told a news conference today. "Otherwise, I will not be here in front of you after six seasons. "We are comfortable -- both the club and myself. And that's why we continue, it is no more than that. "We still have a one year and a half contract, which is a lot of time considering how world football is. We see how many managers were sacked, not just here in England, but everywhere. "So that's why I'm just thinking about the next game as one year and a half is a lot of time in football." Guardiola also made light of videos circulating on social media showing several City players outside a bar in Manchester on Sunday night. "I'm so upset because they didn't invite me," he said. "The video didn't show what did or didn't happen. All of them were perfect, but they will be fined because they didn't invite me."

Gu Wins Thrilling Gold For China

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Californian-born teenage freestyle skier Eileen Gu won gold for China on her Olympic debut at the Beijing Winter Games as Japanese figure skating icon Yuzuru Hanyu made his eagerly awaited appearance. Austria's Matthias Mayer meanwhile went "all in" to successfully defend his super-G title, becoming the first men's alpine skier to win gold medals in three consecutive Games. American Ryan Cochran-Siegle took a surprise silver, just 0.04seconds behind Mayer, with Norway's Aleksander Aamodt Kilde -- the big favorite coming into the race -- claiming bronze. Ten gold medals were up for grabs on the fourth full day of competition in the Chinese capital, in sports including curling, luge, snowboarding and speed skating. But the day belonged to 18-year-old Gu, who justified all the pre-Games hype by nailing her third and final run in the Big Air to snatch gold from Tess Ledeux and force the French competitor into the silver medal position. Gu -- known in China as Gu Ailing -- collapsed to her knees on the snow, put her gloved hands to her face and screamed in delight at the Big Air Shougang, where enormous industrial cooling towers provide a stunning backdrop. "That was the best moment of my life. The happiest moment, day, whatever... of my life. I just cannot believe what just happened." The grade-A student and part-time model, who switched allegiance from the US to China in 2019, had been touted as one of the faces of the Beijing Olympics -- and she did not disappoint despite the huge pressure on her young shoulders.



Marquez Ready For Seventh Moto GP World Title

MADRID (Dispatches) - Six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez insisted on Tuesday his objective "is to fight for the championship" this season after suffering from vision problems last year. "My goal is to fight for the title," Marquez said at the Honda team's presentation. The Spanish rider suffered from double vision in the final stretch of last season after falling while training on a motocross bike. He missed the last two races and then had to sit out pre-season trials in Jerez in November. "The situation was critical with the double vision and nobody knew what could happen, but I followed the advice of the doctors and everything has gone well," said Marquez. After two injury-hit campaigns, Marquez is chasing his ninth world title in all formats, which would see him match legendary Italian Valentino Rossi. The 28-year-old Marquez was able to take part in practice in Sepang last week, which he admitted was a "surprise". "From here on, the goal is to work hard in pre-season and to fight for the championship," said Marquez. "I know that from the outset I am not here to clean up in the first race, not even to win and perhaps not even get on the podium. "But the season is very long and we have to go from less to more to end up with options to fight for the championship. "I still have a long way to go to be at my best level but little by little, I'm happy, I'm happy again professionally and that also helps personally. "I'm going to put the same desire I've put into my recovery into trying to be champion again."

