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The First Imam of Shiites, and
Father's Day. The Next Issue Will
Hit the News-Stands on Wednesday

IRAN NEWS



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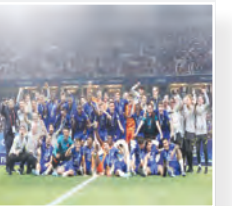


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Iran to Build Research Satellite Launch Site in Chabahar

CHABAHAR (IRNA) - Chabahar Free Zone Organization chief said that the body was ready to build a launch site for research satellites, considering the strategic location of Chabahar.

Nasrollah Ebrahimi said in a meeting with Iranian Space Agency (ISA) chief Hasan Salarieh on Saturday night that construction of a satellite launch site in Chabahar would strengthen Iran's ties with India and China on space sciences.

Chabahar is Iran's southernmost city situated along the coast of the Sea of Oman. The port city is considered to be the only ocean port in Iran.

The official also said that Chabahar would be a hub of steel and petrochemicals in near future and it has the capacity to host launching of research satellites. Chabahar should be a hub of science and technology and this has been stipulated in superior documents of the region's development, he added.

Salarieh said that the agency has evaluated Chabahar as an appropriate place for launching research satellites and various types of space probes and plans to pursue the case.

The ISA is a governmental entity tasked with planning to use the space and develop space technologies using domestic knowledge and international cooperation.

Tehran Putting Many Offers on Table in Vienna

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A source close to the Iranian delegation in the Vienna talks says Tehran has put many offers on the table and encouraged the other side to come up with new proposals to resolve the outstanding issues.

"Putting proposals on the table is quite a normal practice in any negotiation, and negotiation in its essence is a business of exchanging proposals, counter-proposals, and offers," the source told Press TV on Saturday.

The source added that the Iranian delegation, which has been engaged in very intensive talks in recent days, carefully considers any new proposal, if there is any.

"Also, it should be noted that the Iranian delegation has a clear mandate and negotiating instruction, and developments outside the scope of the talks in Vienna, have no effect on the negotiating stances of Iran," the source pointed out.

According to the source, Iran is not the party that is "slow walking in the talks."

Iran's chief negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani told Press TV back in December that the Iranian side had not received any constructive initiative or proposal from the opposite side during the talks in the Austrian capital.

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10 New Military Products Unveiled



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian Defense Ministry unveiled ten homegrown military products on Sunday, including missiles and artillery ammunition.

In an event on Sunday, Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani unveiled the new defense systems, manufactured by the Defense Ministry experts.

The upgraded missiles and ammunition unveiled today are utilized for ground battle.

The defense minister said the new products are the result of a new approach, called "one shot, one target" that entails engagement with the enemy at greater distances.

Prior to his remarks, he endeared the name and memory of martyrs of the defense industry especially Iran's top nuclear scientist Martyr Mohsen Fakhrizadeh who took giant stride in this respect.

Four decades have passed since the formation of this indigenous industry in aviation industry of the Ministry of Defense, he said, adding, "Today, we are witnessing the flourishing of this industry and emergence of new operational achievements in this industry."

Referring to the global trends and regional conflicts and also different generations of weapons and combat equipment, Brigadier General Ashtiani added, "Today, the role of drones is undeniable in battlefield, war, various intelligence and operational missions including surveillance, optical and signal reconnaissance, combat, etc. and this strategic product is one of the main systems in all scenes of land, air, sea combat."

The new products include various stationary missiles, cargoes carried by helicopters and drones, and smart ammunition for artilleries and mortars used for precision strikes. The range and accuracy of the products have been upgraded.

Moreover, the Defense Ministry started the mass-production of a new type of advanced armored and tactical vehicle, dubbed Aras-3.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great headways in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient in the arms sphere.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Meanwhile on Saturday evening a new sophisticated drone was unveiled in the exhibition of Iranian-made drones attended by its defense chief.

During the ceremony Ashtiani said the production of highly advanced drones in the Islamic Republic shows its determination to realize the slogan "We can".

Ashtiani said undoubtedly, the UAV industry is one of the strengths of Iran when it comes to increasing the nation's clout and its capability to defend itself against adversaries.

He said about 4 decades have passed since the formation of this industry in Iran, adding that in the forty-third anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, Iranians are witnessing the flourishing of the drone industry and the emergence of new operational achievements in this field. Referring to global trends and regional conflicts as well as different generations of weapons and combat hardware, Ashtiani said the role of drones in war theaters and various intelligence and operational missions is undeniable.

Ashtiani maintained that Iran intends to develop this highly strategic product as one of the important pillars of superior defense intelligence and reliability in various battlefields.

He however noted that Iran has a long way to go to reach the pinnacle in the sphere.

Baku Invites Iranian Firms to Take Part in Karabakh Reconstruction

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Azerbaijan Republic says Baku is ready for the participation of Iranian companies in the reconstruction of liberated areas of Nagorno-Karabakh.

"On the participation of Iranian companies in the restoration and reconstruction of Karabakh and Azerbaijan's liberated areas, the necessary budget for the projects, whose documentation is ready, will be completed and handed to the Iranian representatives by the end of February," Azerbaijan Republic's First Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev said.

He made the comment during a phone call with Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Ghassemi. Mustafayev also called for cooperation with Iran in production of tractors, automobile parts and pharmaceuticals in the Azerbaijan Republic.

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ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian U.S. Pressures Against Iran "Futile"

As the Western countries have started countdown for ending talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran in Vienna in order to increase pressure on Tehran and force it to make a hasty decision, Iran has shown the world that it is in no hurry and it is not ready to sacrifice its demands because of the U.S. and Western countries' pressure.

According to reports the Iranian delegation in the Vienna talks have announced that Tehran has put many offers on the table and encouraged the other side to come up with new proposals to resolve the outstanding issues. So Iran has done its job and now the ball is on the West's court to show their sincerity towards its claims.

Actually the Islamic Republic of Iran has proved the U.S. that all the Washington pressures on Tehran have been repelled by the genuine resistance of the Iranian nation and the country will not give in the U.S. maximum unilateral pressures and many American politicians have admitted that the pressures have been futile and Iran has continued advancing its nuclear progress.

As diplomats from Iran and the 4+1 countries press on to undo former U.S. president Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" policy against Tehran, an American senator says the only upside of the policy was that it proved unilateral sanctions make things worse.

In a tweet, Senator Chris Murphy last week strongly criticized Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 Iran deal, which he followed by imposing illegal sanctions against the Islamic Republic with the objective of crippling the Iranian economy.

The deal is formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Negotiations were launched in April 2021 under the Joe Biden administration to have the US return to the JCPOA and lift U.S. sanctions in exchange for Iran returning to its nuclear obligations.

"The only upside of Trump's disastrous 'maximum pressure' Iran policy was that it definitively proved that unilateral sanctions make things worse, not better," Murphy said.

However, the Democratic lawmaker resorted to fear-mongering about Iran's nuclear activities and its regional influence so as to attack the Republican president.

"Iran got stronger and their behavior got more dangerous after we left the deal," he asserted.

"There is nothing about the last four years that tells us America or the world is safer with no nuclear deal between the U.S. and Iran," Murphy said in another tweet.

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SAARC Chamber Appreciates Pakistan, Iran Generosity Towards Afghans

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sunday said Pakistan and Iran have shown unforgettable generosity in hosting millions of Afghans reminding the rest of the world to come forward and help Afghanistan.

This was stated by the President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ifikhar Ali Malik on Sunday while talking to a traders delegation led by Chaudhry Kaleem Ullah Anjum Arain.

He said the 57 nation OIC which met in Islamabad recently resolved to work with the UN to get the entire frozen assets unlocked. He said this money is critically needed to sustain, stabilise and revive the Afghan economy and to save millions of lives of poor and hungry Afghan children, women and men.

He said this would be the most effective and generous display of solidarity with the people of Afghanistan.

He underlined the need to jump-start Afghanistan's economy through increased liquidity and called upon the world especially Europe and US must pull the economy back from the brink by freeing up entire frozen currency reserves and re-engage Afghanistan Central Bank.

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Iran Interior Minister to Visit Pakistan

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi will travel to the Pakistani capital of Islamabad today for bilateral talks.

Heading a delegation, Vahidi is set to travel to Islamabad at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior announced in a statement on Sunday.

According to the statement, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad will welcome the Iranian minister and his delegation at PAF Base Nur Khan.

Saddam's Crimes Must Be Displayed Beyond Borders

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi said that the crimes of Saddam and his supporters against Ilam's defenseless athletes and youth, as well as the innocence of the martyrs of the football match incident, should be displayed beyond Iran's borders.

President Raisi made the remarks during the meeting with some families of martyrs and veterans of Ilam Province, Iran.

Referring to the bombing of the Chavar football field that was carried out by Iraqi Air Force fighters on February 12, 1986, in a football field in the Chavar section of Ilam province during a football match, resulting in the killing of civilians, President Raisi named Ilam as one of the provinces that have a great share in defending the country, and the Islamic Revolution.

Pointing to the heinous attacks by Saddam Hussein's regime in 1986, the president added that the Ilam heinous incident should be "explained" to young people and athletes to be registered in the history of Iran and the world.

Regarding the necessity of introducing the martyrs of Ilam athletes in the national and international arenas, President Raisi stressed the crime of Saddam and his supporters against the defenseless athletes and youth of Ilam should be displayed beyond the borders of Iran.



The bombing of the Chavar football field was a bombardment carried out by Iraqi Air Force fighters on February 14, 1986, in a football field in the Chavar section of Ilam province during a football match, resulting in the killing of civilians. The bombing took place in the 55th minute of the game and left horrifying moments and heartbreaking scenes, bloody bodies, and torn pieces of young football players on the football field. Such a war crime is unprecedented in the history of world sports.

Tehran Using All Capacities to Establish Regional Stability

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian consular general in Erbil said Iran will take advantage of all capacities to establish stability in the region, adding that the country will stand by the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

Addressing a ceremony to mark the 43rd anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Nasrollah Rashnoudi said the Iranian transformational and popular government has put on its agenda maintaining constructive interaction with neighboring states.

The Iranian government emphasizes on a balanced foreign policy, dynamic diplomacy and intelligent interaction and will use all capacities to establish security and stability in the region, he noted.

Iran will stand by Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan region and believe that neighbors can bring about stability and security in the region, he stated.

He described Iran as the most independent country in world, saying anti-Iran sanctions were defeated.

Meanwhile, Head of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Department of Foreign Relations (DFR) Safen Dizayee hailed strong and historical relations between Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan region, saying KRG attaches importance to Persian language and literature.

He noted that the two sides enjoy high-level political, economic, cultural and social relations.

He lauded Iran's role in regional policy and hoped for solving regional countries' issues through negotiations and understanding.

Iran Good Example of Advancement, Fighting Global Arrogance

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Mali's Foreign Minister said on Sunday that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a good role model for those countries that want to fight against the global arrogance and their cruel sanctions.

Abdoulaye Diop said the remarks in a meeting with Iran's Minister of Science, Research and Technology Mohammad-Ali Zolfi-Gol on Sunday in Tehran, congratulating on the 43rd anniversary of victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Diop said that Mali has been sanctioned by some American, European and African countries and it recognizes the Islamic Republic of Iran a good role model that has managed to reach a high status despite sanctions and the fight against the global arrogance.

He expressed hope that Iran and Mali could strengthen scientific ties with ministers of both countries paying visit to the other country.

The Malian official and the Iranian minister emphasized



forming working groups for joint scientific and technological cooperation, establishing vocational universities in Mali and granting 20 scholarships to Malian students.

The Iranian science minister said that Iran welcomes expansion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other countries in the field of science and technology.

Zolfi-Gol also said that the Islamic Republic of Iran was ready to help Mali in mining and agricultural and animal husbandry technologies.

He offered establishing Iranian vocational universities in Mali, stating that Iran's Technical and Vocational University has over 150,000 students.

The minister also underlined that Iran has 49 science and technology parks, 220 centers for technological growth, and 7,000 knowledge-based companies and can help Mali to improve in such fields as new energies, biotechnology and nanotechnology.

Hirmand Water Not Entering Iran From Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Department of Environment of the Southeastern Iranian Province of Sistan and Balouchestan says the water from Hirmand River in Afghanistan has not reached the Iranian territory despite the Taliban pledging to release the water toward Iran.

"Afghans released part of Hirmand's water, but unfortunately, it was again diverted through a stream called Lashkari and is heading back to Afghanistan," the department's Director General Davood Mirshekar said.

The official said Iran should engage in diplomatic consultations to ensure Hirmand water reaches Iran's Hamoun Lake in the province.

Mirshekar stressed that the foreign and energy ministries

are in charge of the diplomacy concerning Hirmand water and they should pursue the matter.

He further explained that only the northern parts of Hamoun, known as Hamoun Sabouri, now have access to water from the Afghan side of the lake, and that is based on a different agreement, which was signed with the Afghan government in 2013.

He said the water in Hamoun Sabouri has nothing to do with Hirmand.

Iranian Trade Council Inaugurated In Russia's Astrakhan

TEHRAN (IP) - Coinciding with the 43rd anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution victory, the office of the Iranian trade council was inaugurated at the Iranian Chamber of Commerce in Astrakhan, Russia, in the presence of officials from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation.

At a ceremony for reopening of the office, Hadi Tizhoosh Taban, Head of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, said the Astrakhan-based Iranian Business Association, which is being re-launched after many years, has delighted traders and merchants.

Mehdi Akuchekian, Iran's Consul-General in Astrakhan, also said that Iranian businessmen living in Astrakhan should unite by forming a trade council and pursue their problems through the council.

India Supplies Medical Assistance to Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India supplied medical assistance consisting of anti-Tuberculosis medicines, as part of its ongoing humanitarian assistance to Iran on February 12.

According to an MEA statement, last year in the joint fight against the COVID pandemic, India had supplied humanitarian assistance to Iran consisting of one million doses of COVAXIN vaccine.

Furthermore, to ensure food security, India also supplied 40,000 liters of Malathion pesticide to Iran under the Government-to-Government initiative for Locust Control Programme.

Result-Oriented Foreign Policy Annuls Sanctions

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Spokesman for the Iranian government said that the result-oriented foreign policy adopted by Iran has neutralized sanctions.

The Western media's acknowledgment of record-breaking oil exports by Iran in the last three years is another indication that the maximum pressure against the Iranian nation has failed, Ali Bahadori Jahromi said in a tweet on Sunday.

Adopting the result-oriented foreign policy without counting on Vienna and New York has neutralized sanction, Bahadori Jahromi added.

He also said that the Iranian nation is the winner in this fight.

The spokesman published the tweet, sharing a Reuters' story admitting that Iran's oil exports had increased with the resumption of the nuclear talks.

5 Iranian Cultural, Historical Sites Registered as Islamic World Heritage

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of the National ISESCO Commission in a letter addressed to Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ezzatollah Zargami said that five Iranian cultural and historical sites have been registered as Islamic World Heritage.

The sites include the Alamut Castle, Sheikh Ahmad Jaam's Mausoleum, the Bastam Historical Complex, Masuleh Historical Village, and Hamedan's Alavian Dome.

The request for registration of these sites has been forwarded to the ISESCO Secretariat Office last spring.

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO, formerly ISESCO) is a specialized organization that operates under the aegis of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and is concerned with fields of education, science, culture and communication in Islamic countries in order to support and strengthen relations among Member States.

The Organization's headquarters is located in Rabat, Morocco, and its Director General is Dr. Salim M. Almalik.

ICESCO was founded by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in May 1979. With 54 member states, the working languages of ICESCO are Arabic, English and French.

Iranian Expats in Ukraine Warned of Emergency Situation

Iranian Expats in Ukraine Warned of Emergency Situation

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's embassy in Kiev called on the nationals residing in Ukraine to get prepared for possible emergency situations amid warnings of military tensions along the country's eastern border.

In a statement released on its Twitter account on Saturday, the Iranian Embassy in Ukraine called on the nationals to be prepared for possible emergency situations amid the possibility of military clashes in Ukraine's eastern parts.

The embassy also called on the Iranian citizens to remain calm and maintain contact with the embassy to get informed about the necessary recommendations.

"The Islamic Republic's embassy (in Ukraine) attaches importance to the health and safety of the Iranian nationals and has made this issue a top priority on the list of its duties," it added.

Fears of war remain heightened as diplomatic efforts to ease tensions falter while Russia keeps more than 100,000 troops stationed near Ukraine and carries out military exercises in Belarus.

First Announcement
 شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۷۵۵۶۵

TENDER NO.:

31-32-98101-53-001

N. I. S. O. C.
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH
OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	2-7/8", 6.39 LB/FT TITANIUM DRILL PIPE, TG105, CO2 AND H2S SERVICES THREAD CONNECTION: 2-7/8" HT-PAC IDT OOL JOINT : 1 1/2", ID BODY: 2.151	9600 FT
02	3 1/2", 9.5 LB/FT TITANIUM DRILL PIPE, TG105,, 3 1/2 IF THRE, ID : 2.9222", TJOINT OD: 4-3/7" CO2 AND H2S SERVICES	16000 FT

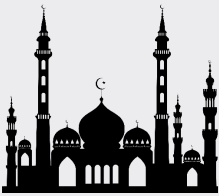
Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tender are requested to send their " Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no.2, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 44,084 EURO or 11,842,117,200 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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

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NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 34 457437

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PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)

■ Evening (Maghreb)

■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)

■ Tomorrow's Sunrise

12:18

18:03

05:26

06:51

111. "I know not but that it may be a trial for you, and a grant of (worldly) livelihood (to you) for a time."

112. Say: "O my Lord! judge Thou in truth!" "Our Lord Most Gracious is the One Whose assistance should be sought against the blasphemies ye utter!"

Surah 21. The Prophets (111 - 112)

Investment Capitals Flying From FZs to Turkey, UAE

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones criticized recent moves in Majlis for levying tax in free zones and said the amount of investment flight from free zones to Turkey has been considerable in recent years and today the country sees the capital flight for investment to the UAE.

Speaking to ILNA, Saeed Mohammad said that the amount of investment flight to Turkey in recent years has been considerable and today we see the capital is flying towards the UAE while the country should try to attract the domestic capital by giving incentives and attract foreign investment in the free zones.

Reacting to the decision of the economic commission of Majlis for getting value added tax in the free zones, Mohammad criticized this move and other moves in the commission for levying different taxes in the free zones. He said this decision has actually destroyed the motivation for investment in the free zones, adding that some lawmakers in Majlis have even accepted that elimination of tax exemption in the free zones will lead to the capital flight from these areas and the country to the neighboring countries.

He went on to say that tax exemption in the free zones of the neighboring countries is for a very long time and even in some countries it is over 30 years and even in the UAE it is for 50 years.

Mohammad noted that the period of tax exemption in the free zones is 20 years which is even not observed, and suddenly this incentive is eliminated by a new law. He expressed his opposition to this decision of Majlis which disrupts economic activities in these areas.

He said the country should take advantage of successful experiences of free zones in the

neighboring countries like the UAE, Turkey and even China because free zones are considered as the driving force of economy in those countries but in Iran by creating more restrictions and laws, the economic activists have lost their interest in investing in the zones.

Mohammad admitted that currently the investment in the free zones is facing the downward trend and every year the figure shrinks more and it is because of approval of the overnight laws.

He then said 40-45 percent of Iran's export is from the country's free trade zones (FTZs) and special economic zones.

Mohammad also mentioned investment making in these zones and said that about 110 trillion rials (about \$423 million) plus \$300 million of investment has been made in the free trade zones, and 700 trillion rials (about \$2.692 billion) plus \$530 million in the special economic zones during the past five years.

The mentioned investment resulted in the establishment of 2,500 industrial units in these zones, leading to the export of \$1 billion of products from the free zones and \$15 billion from the special zones per annum, which equals 40-45 percent of Iran's export.

The establishment of free trade zones in Iran dates back to the Iranian calendar year 1368 (March 1989- March 1990) following the fall in the country's oil income in the preceding year which prompted the government to promote the non-oil exports.

Indigenizing Forouzan Oil Field Platforms Saves the Country 110m Euros

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Industry Minister and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Mr. Mohsen Salehinia announced saving 110m euros with indigenization of two platforms of the Forouzan Oil Field.

According to Mr. Salehinia, IDRO has started cooperation for developing the Forouzan Oil Field as one of the sensitive Iran-Saudi Arabia joint fields via cooperation with Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) and accumulated knowledge of this complex which had earlier experienced localizing the manufacture of the gas platforms and offshore structures.

Salehinia added that the contract worth 110m euros and is aimed at manufacturing two oil platforms as well as its jackets which will be completed in two months. He then pointed to the major actions taken regarding this project.

He said Iranian Offshore Oil Company as the entrepreneur of the project has handed over the project of developing Forouzan Oil Field and based on the EPC-EPD contract format to Petro Pars and Mobin Saze Gostar Persian Gulf companies to implement the project as the contractors.

Tehran-Muscat Trade Exchanges Up 40%

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to Muscat Ali Najafi said that Iran's trade exchange with the Sultanate of Oman has shown a considerable growth in the past ten months of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2021-January 22, 2022), with trade exchanges during the period having increased by 40 percent.

Najafi said in an interview with IRNA on Sunday that the value of trade exchanges with Oman in 10 months of the current year stood at \$1 billion, expandable to \$1.2 billion before termination of the current year (to end on March 20, 2022).

Referring to trade potentials between the two countries, the ambassador added that the two countries enjoyed high capacities to increase volume of bilateral trade up to \$5 billion."

Highlighting the importance of expanding trade ties between Iran and Oman, Najafi said that both countries have to focus on the utilization of the existing capacities in Iran-Oman trade ties by pursuing the preferential tariff agreements and organizing and strengthening maritime transport between the two countries.

Najafi also noted that collaborations in health tourism is of the most important issues that should be considered between the two sides.

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade Reza Fatemi Amin, recently visited Muscat to take part in a joint Iran-Oman commission and discuss cooperation in different economic fields, including investment in trade, industry, mine, air and sea transportation, energy, technical and engineering services, tourism and cultural affairs.

Two Top Football Clubs Valued At \$224m Combined

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The government has announced valuations for two top football clubs that are planned to go public this year.

Head of Iran's privatization authority said on Saturday that Persepolis and Esteghlal football clubs had been designated by government experts to have a combined value of 60 trillion rials (nearly \$224 million).

Hossein Ghorbanzadeh said that the two Tehran-based clubs will start going public soon with sales of shares in a local stock market known as Farabourse.

Esteghlal and Persepolis have been under government control both before and after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Matches involving the teams are held in packed stadiums across the country as estimates suggest they each enjoy a fan base of tens of millions of people.

The divestments are in line with a general privatization program in Iran. They are also meant to satisfy criteria and conditions set by the Asian Football Confederation.

Experts believe that rivalry between the two clubs and their fans will help the divestments to succeed. Others have shed doubt on the accuracy of the valuations, saying the listings will not necessarily be an easy sell.

Ghorbanzadeh's statement on Twitter said that a government body that decides on divestment of state firms had endorsed the valuations which estimated that the listing of Persepolis will generate 32 trillion rials.

He later told the Tasnim news agency that the valuations had considered all the assets held by the two clubs, including their brands.

However, the official suggested that the government's controlling shares in the two clubs will be listed in the local stock market next summer, meaning that the government will still have a final say on who runs the clubs at least for the next nine months.

MSC Supporting Strongly Capable Innovative Persons for Resolving Industry Challenges

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – Manager of support and developing technology and innovation of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) Mr. Yahya Palizdar says the company wants to help capable innovative people for resolving problems of the industry in order that they can operationalize their solutions and the most important part of this process is financing these solutions.

The Reverse Pitch event was hosted by MSC in presence of the experts during the 3rd National Steel Exhibition.

Addressing the event, Mr. Palizdar said that industries have both main providers and customers which are the two wings of the industry. The more industry is complicated, the more we do not need providing equipment or raw materials but we need people to undo our complicated problems, he added.

He said these complicated issues are not necessarily apparent for those who are out of the industry community and one of the tools, which can introduce these complicated issues to the target audience, namely innovative people, is the Reverse Pitch Event.

Holding of this event has started in the country for years and Mobarakeh Steel Country held the first of the series in 2019. The difference between this year event with the previous ones is that MSC does not want only to solve the problem of its audience but it wants to help them to operationalize the solutions, and financing is the most important part of this prices that several new emerged companies are struggling with it.

Reverse Pitch is a new event that turns the table on entrepreneurs by asking organizations to pitch the problems they want startup teams to solve and offer a pathway to funding.

First Announcement

شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۷۵۵۶۸

TENDER NO.:

08-21-9640014

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	TUBING , API GRADE L-80 , SEAMLESS "VAM" , "N.VAM" "SEC" OR APPROVED THREAD RANGE 3 (MAX LEN :40.5 FT) AS PER API 5CT/ISO11960, PSL :2 MARKING : COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5CT SIZE (OD) , WEIGHT (PPF), AS SPECIFIED NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I: 1) "QCP/MPs DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM " "ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION " 4-1/2 IN., 13.5 PPF DRIFT: 3.795 IN.	10000 LE

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Public Relations
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Average Daily Gasoline Consumption Stands at 86m Liters

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) said the country's average daily gasoline consumption has stood at 86 million liters in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20).

Jalil Salari put the country's current gasoline production at about 104 million liters per day, IRNA reported on Sunday.

He noted that his company has stored the necessary gasoline to meet the peak demand during the Nowruz holiday (Iranian new year) season and there would be no problem in this regard.

Having the production capacity of nearly 120 million liters per day of gasoline, Iran currently has also the capacity to store three billion liters of the strategic fuel.

Although the Islamic Republic is currently self-sufficient in gasoline production, fluctuations in consumption at different periods through the year have led to the creation of storage facilities across the country to manage the sustainable supply and distribution of gasoline.

These tanks will help the country's refineries continue operating at full capacity if on certain days of the year (such as the Nowruz holidays) gasoline consumption reduces significantly, and also prevent any interruption in the supply of the fuel if consumption increases drastically.

Sri Lanka Bans Strikes By Healthcare Workers

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's president has banned strikes in the health and electricity sectors as trade union action that has crippled state-run hospitals entered its sixth day.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Saturday invoked a 1979 law prohibiting stoppages in the two sectors, declaring all related work "essential public services", his office said.

The tough regulations allow courts to hand down five-year jail terms and confiscate the assets of those refusing work.

The move followed health unions ignoring a court order on Thursday instructing them to suspend their strike pending a hearing of a petition against their action.



Myanmar Military Marks 75th Union Day

YANGON (Dispatches) - Myanmar's military government has announced an amnesty for more than 800 prisoners to mark the country's Union Day, as it held a parade in a show of force in the capital.

Hundreds of troops paraded on Saturday alongside civil servants waving national flags in unison with troupes performing choreographed dances.

The celebration comes as the country has been gripped by turmoil since last year when the military seized power, deposing democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.



Biden, Putin Speak; U.S. Pulls Embassy Staff



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Joe Biden and Russia's Vladimir Putin spoke by phone for an hour on Saturday after Washington and its allies warned that Russian forces could invade Ukraine at any moment.

The U.S. State Department ordered most of its embassy staff to leave Ukraine, adding to its call on Friday for private citizens to get out of the country within 48 hours. The Pentagon said it was withdrawing about 150 military trainers.

In the latest effort to avert hostilities, the Biden-Putin call began at 11:04 a.m. Eastern time (1604 GMT) and ended at 12:06 p.m., a White House official said.

Russia's military buildup near Ukraine and a surge of military activity has fueled fears that Russia could invade. Russia denies having any such plans.

Earlier on Saturday, French President Emmanuel Macron told Putin that sincere negotiations were incompatible with an escalation in tensions over Ukraine, France said.

Biden and Macron are due to speak after their separate calls with Putin, according to a French presidency official.

The official said there were no indications from what Putin told Macron that Russia is preparing an offensive against Ukraine.

"We are nevertheless extremely vigilant and alert to the Russian (military) posture in order to avoid the worst," the official said.

Washington said on Friday that a Russian invasion of Ukraine, likely beginning with an air assault, could occur at any time.

Bulgaria, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and other countries have also urged their citizens to leave Ukraine.

Moscow has repeatedly disputed Washington's version of events, saying it has massed more than 100,000 troops near the Ukrainian border to maintain its own security against aggression by NATO allies.

Russia, which has accused Western nations of spreading lies to distract from their own acts, meanwhile said on Saturday that it had decided to "optimize" its diplomatic staff numbers in Ukraine, fearing "provocations" by Kyiv or others.

It said its embassy and consulates in Ukraine continued to perform their key functions. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington would impose swift economic sanctions if Putin decides to invade.

"I continue to hope that he will not choose the path of renewed aggression and he'll choose the path of diplomacy and dialogue," Blinken told reporters after a meeting with Pacific leaders in Fiji. "But if he doesn't, we're prepared."

In a phone call later with Blinken, Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov accused the United States and its allies of waging a "propaganda campaign" about Russian aggression towards Ukraine, the Russian foreign ministry said.

Canada Police Begin Clearing Protesters Blocking Key U.S.-Canada Bridge

WINDSOR (Dispatches) - Canadian police began clearing protesters blocking a key bridge linking Canada and the United States, more than 12 hours after a court order came into effect that ended a blockade that had snarled international trade.

The Ambassador Bridge, North America's busiest land border crossing, had no traffic flowing for the fifth straight day on Saturday morning. About 15 trucks, cars and pick-up vans blocked traffic in both directions, choking the supply chain for Detroit's carmakers.

"We urge all demonstrators to act lawfully & peacefully," Windsor Police said in a Twitter post, asking commuters to avoid the areas affected by the demonstrations. Police in black uniforms with yellow vests moved behind the protesters' vehicles and, accompanied by police cruisers, slowly advanced on protesters, pushing them back from the bridge entrance.



The number of demonstrators had thinned to roughly two dozen early on Saturday from about 200 on Friday night.

"We are opening up this intersection to traffic. If you fail to comply with our instructions you will be arrested," police told the crowd via a loudspeaker.

Protesters were seen moving back in a noisy but peaceful retreat, dismantling tents and barbecues.

The "Freedom Convoy" protests, started in the capital Ottawa by Canadian truckers opposing a vaccine-or-quarantine mandate for cross-border drivers, entered its 16th day on Saturday. Canadian police have said the protests have been partly funded by U.S. supporters and Ontario froze funds donated via one U.S. platform, GiveSendGo, on Thursday.

Toronto-Dominion Bank has frozen two personal bank accounts into which C\$1.4 million (\$1.1 million) had been deposited in support of the protesters, a spokesperson said.

Turkmenistan to Hold Snap Election

ASHGABAT (Dispatches) - Turkmenistan set a snap presidential election for March 12 after autocrat leader Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov said he was ready to allow "young leaders" to govern, with his son expected to succeed him.

A former dentist and health minister, the 64-year-old succeeded the country's founding president Saparmurat Niyazov in December 2006 after his death and has ruled since.

A spokesman for the election commission, Bezergen Garraev, told AFP that Berdimukhamedov gave the commission "an instruction to prepare for early presidential elections on March 12".

Later in the day state media said the tightly-controlled country's rubberstamp parliament "adopted a resolution" to hold the vote on March 12.

The move comes after unprecedented violence roiled next-door Kazakhstan, leaving 200 dead. The crisis effectively ended the political career of Nursultan Nazarbayev, an 81-year-old strongman who had remained powerful even after allowing a hand-picked successor to replace him as president in 2019.

Gas-rich Turkmenistan, a former Soviet republic, is one of the world's most repressive, secretive states and little is known about how the regime makes day-to-day decisions.

Berdimukhamedov, who is the country's president, chair of the cabinet and senate speaker, is its main face.

His pastimes — including horse riding, mass cycling, composing songs and authoring books — have made him a curiosity across the world on social media, which is blocked in Turkmenistan.

His son Serdar Berdimukhamedov is now the second most powerful government official with a broad influence over the economy as vice-premier, and having turned 40 last year can now run for president.

In the capital Ashgabat, some people told AFP they had not heard the news, while others expressed surprise at the timing.

Police Fire Tear Gas to Stop Advance of "Freedom Convoy"

PARIS (Dispatches) - French police fired tear gas at demonstrators on the Champs Elysees avenue in Paris on Saturday shortly after a "Freedom Convoy" protesting against COVID-19 restrictions made it into the capital.

Cars carrying protesters managed to get through police checkpoints in central Paris to snarl traffic around the Arc de Triomphe monument.

Inspired by horn-blaring "Freedom Convoy" demonstrations in Canada, the motorists waved French flags and honked in defiance of a police order not to enter the city.

Police told protesters to move on as some climbed on their cars in the middle of the roundabout at the top of the Champs Elysees.

Earlier police said they had stopped 500 vehicles that were trying to get into Paris and nearly 300 tickets were handed out to their occupants by mid-morning, police said.

Less than two months from a presidential election, President Emmanuel Macron's government is eager to keep protests from spiraling into large-scale demonstrations like the anti-government "Yellow Vest" protests of 2018.

Separately police also said they had arrested five protesters in southern Paris in possession of slingshots, hammers, knives and gas masks.

About 7,000 officers have been mobilized for the weekend protests. Police have created checkpoints, deployed armored personnel carriers and set up water cannon to brace the city for the protests. So far, the police blockade action has seemed effective.

Canadian truckers protesting a vaccine mandate for trans-border traffic have paralyzed parts of the capital Ottawa since late January and blocked US-Canada crossing points.

The French protests are against rules requiring a vaccine pass to enter many public places and come after months of regular demonstrations against the pass in Paris and other cities.

"People need to see us, and to listen to the people who just want to live a normal and free life," said Lisa, a 62-year-old retired health worker travelling in the Chateaubourg convoy, who did not want to give her surname.

Phil, a 58-year-old on his way by truck from Brittany, said his refusal to get vaccinated had created "upheaval" in his family and work relations.

Peter Humi, a Paris-based journalist, said the protests spoke to wider grievances that would re-emerge in the run-up to the presidential election.

"There are those complaining about the state of the economy, rising energy costs, which has hit countries across the world and the cost of living more generally,"



Ukrainians March in Face of Russia Threat

KIEV (Dispatches) - Waving flags and singing the national anthem, thousands of Ukrainians braved the winter cold to march across Kyiv on Saturday to show unity in the face of a feared Russian invasion.

"Panic is useless. We must unite and fight for independence," said student Maria Shcherbenko, expressing a sentiment similar to that voiced by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky earlier in the day.

"I remain calm. I love Ukraine," she said as the sun briefly peeked through the clouds on a cold blistery day.

Some carried signs reading "war is not the answer", while others carried banners calling on the nation to "resist".

Riven by an eight-year conflict that has claimed more than 14,000 across its Moscow-backed separatist east, Ukraine is now facing the threat of an all-out invasion by Russia. The Kremlin has massed more than 100,000 troops around its western neighbor, staging war games across Belarus to its north and navy drills to in the Black Sea its south.

Washington has warned that war could break out "any day". Western countries are pulling their diplomats out of Kyiv and ordering citizens to immediately get out of Ukraine.

And even Kiev, despite calls for calm from the Zelensky and a range of other leaders, has prepared a plan to evacuate the capital's three million residents, just in case.

But the people marching across Kyiv's central avenues said they had no fear. "We are here to show that we are not afraid," said Nazar Novoselsky, who came to the march with his two little children.

"We will lay our soul and body for the cherished freedom," the crowd sang, voicing the words of the national anthem, just as they had done en masse in the months leading to Ukraine's 2014 pro-EU revolution.

The 2014 revolt provoked the Kremlin into annexing Ukraine's Crimea peninsula and then backing an insurgency across parts of the former Soviet republic's mostly Russian-speaking industrial east.

Relations between Moscow and Kyiv have been severely strained ever since, with that tension showing in the crowd. "Why should Putin be telling us what to do," Natalia Savostikova, a 67-year-old doctor demanded.





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Tajrish Villa (\$4000)
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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Elahieh Apt (\$1800)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg
(\$1800)

Farnmanieh (\$2200)
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Sa'adat abad (\$1500)
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Velenjak bldg (\$10000)
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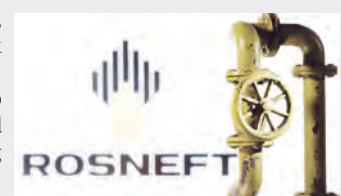
Rosneft's Record Annual Earnings Fall Short of Expectations

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian energy giant Rosneft's net income jumped to a record 883 billion roubles (\$11.7 billion) last year as demand recovered from pandemic-hit 2020, but the rebound was smaller than expected and sent its share price lower on Friday.

The sixfold earnings increase was below forecasts of more than 1 trillion roubles from some analysts, sending Rosneft shares

down 1.3% to 562.50 roubles in early Moscow trade. However, the shares were still outperforming the broader Russian stock market, which is beset by wider geopolitical concerns.

Global energy companies' profits have rebounded from a sharp decline in 2020, when planes were grounded and cars remained off the roads to observe global lockdowns aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic.



Turkey Aims to Decrease Inflation By Increasing Production, Export

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Minister of Treasury and Finance Nureddin Nebati revealed Turkey's new economic package on Saturday, saying the country aims to decrease inflation by increasing production and export.

Nebati said Turkey will face the steps that will trigger inflation and take measures regarding inflation "together."

Speaking at the Turkish Economy Model New Steps and Inflation Measures Promotion meeting, Nebati announced new measures aimed at countering price increases and getting households to bring gold holdings into the financial system.

The new package includes incentives for exports and production, with a selective financing package via the Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF), which is designed to stimulate the economy by guaranteeing loans to small- and medium-sized (SME) companies. The new package will come into effect starting from March 1.

"Day by day, the rate and weight of the deposit has turned in favor of the exchanged currency. The amount in the deposit protection account has exceeded \$10 billion," Nebati said.

Explaining the measures regarding gold, Nebati said: "This model will bring savings from under pillows into the financial system. It will ensure that domestic savings are centered instead of foreign savings in financing growth. It will increase the attractiveness of Turkish lira savings."

"Incorporating these savings into the financial system will both open a new door of income for our citizens and support the growth of our country. We are starting the work that will involve more than 1,500 jewelers in 2022, at least one in each province, as of March 1," said Nebati, adding that citizens can safely deliver their physical savings to jewelers and banks and get them back if they demand.

Addressing the publicity meeting of the new scheme in Istanbul, Treasury and Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati said that 10,000 jewelers will have joined the gold delivery points by the end of this year.

With the gold conversion deposit account, citizens will make a risk-free income, he added.

"Citizens can easily and safely deliver their gold holdings to the financial system through jewelers and banks," Nebati said.

The gold brought to the financial system as part of the new plan can be physically taken back if requested, he also said.

"We will create a guaranteed volume of 60 billion Turkish liras. We will pave the way for all sectors ... We are setting out with a high-tech, export-oriented understanding in every sense," said Nebati, giving the signal of an economy that is proactive rather than reactive, focused on production rather than consumption.

"While Turkey was growing, the current account deficit decreased. From now on we are entering a period where Turkey's growth will be talked about," he added.

Nebati said that they distributed the investment support package to SMEs and non-SME areas, with a maximum of a 24-month grace period and a maximum maturity of 96 months for 25 billion lira support and investment loans. He also underlined that necessary steps will be taken to combat inflation.

China Could Become a Major LNG Trader

BEIJING (Dispatches) - After becoming the world's largest importer of liquefied natural gas, China is now looking to become a factor in global LNG trade, analysts tell Reuters.

China was the single biggest contributor to the rise in global LNG demand in 2021, after a lackluster 2020, due to the pandemic slump in global energy demand.

"With its LNG demand bolstered by clear policy support and strong gas market fundamentals, China's top spot looks assured for years to come," Gavin Thompson, Vice Chairman, Energy – Asia Pacific at Wood Mackenzie, said last year, commenting on China's status of no.1 LNG importer.

Now Chinese firms that are major LNG importers are building trading teams in London, Singapore, and other markets, according to Reuters. The Chinese traders will have to compete with supermajors Shell and TotalEnergies, as well as the world's largest independent oil trader, Vitol.

China has recently signed major long-term supply deals with U.S. LNG exporters, which will boost LNG imports into China further.

Chinese firms have signed long-term supply deals for U.S. LNG, including a Cheniere agreement with Sinochem Group, and one between Venture Global LNG and Sinopec, which, Venture Global says, will be "the largest single LNG supply deal ever signed by a US company and will double imports of US LNG to China."

Chinese LNG importers are back on the market for long-term deals with American exporters after the year-long hiatus of zero Chinese imports of American gas at the height of the trade war in 2019 and early 2020.

Sri Lanka Not to Rush to IMF Despite Rising Economic Risks

COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves are plummeting, essential imports are stalling and opposition leaders and some experts warn that time is running out to avoid a sovereign default that would further upend the economy.

71% of retail investor accounts lose money when trading CFDs with this provider

But Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa is focused on helping the domestic economy shake off the impact of the COVID-19

pandemic before he seeks assistance from the likes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a close aide said.

We should not be in a hurry to run here and there without sorting out local issues," said Milinda Rajapaksha, who works closely with the finance minister and is an additional director general in the media ministry.

It could take up to four to five months to fix issues like local supply chains and restart businesses, which alongside a pickup in tourism and remittances – both major foreign exchange earners – would help stabilise the economy, Rajapaksha said.

You have to look at the external debt crisis separately," he told Reuters. That's what we are going to do. Are we going to look at a package like the IMF? Are we going to work with our neighbours and supporters for more swaps and loans?"

Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves are down to \$2.36 billion, according to data from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) released earlier this week.

In a note on Monday, Citi Research said that confidence in the Sri Lankan government's external repayment position remains weak and foreign exchange reserves were declining faster than expected.

Sri Lanka has outstanding sovereign bonds amounting to \$12.55 billion, with \$1 billion of the bonds maturing in July, according to the CBSL. This year, the island's government has to repay debt of around \$4 billion.

We stick to our base-case scenario that international bonds will need to be restructured by July," Citi Research said.

On Wednesday, the CBSL said there was currently no need for discussions on debt restructuring as the government would be able to ensure the settlement of its sovereign debt without any interruption or default.

The government and the CBSL are committed to honor all forthcoming debt obligations," the central bank said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia, UAE Could Ease Oil Market Volatility

LONDON (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) could help to calm oil markets if they pumped more crude, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said, but prices rose after the watchdog highlighted deepening risks of volatility.

Brent crude oil futures bounced back to near seven-year highs and hit a session peak of \$92.75 a barrel after the Paris-based agency reported tight global supply and spare production capacity.

"These risks, which have broad economic implications, could be reduced if producers in the Middle East with spare capacity were to compensate for those running out," the Paris-based agency said in its monthly oil report.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia are the two oil producers with the most spare production capacity. "Oil prices are rallying once more as the IEA raised forecasts for demand this year and confirmed that OPEC+ missed its output targets again in January and by an even wider margin," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA.

The IEA said if OPEC+ - the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries members and allies like Russia - unwind their current output cuts completely, they could add 4.3 million barrels per day (bpd) back into the market.

However, the IEA said that would slash effective spare capacity to 2.5 million bpd by the end of the year, held up almost entirely by Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, the UAE.

For now, while OPEC+ is raising output each month, it is not hitting its monthly target of 400,000 extra barrels per day. The IEA said in January the gap between output and the target widened to 900,000 bpd.

"The bloc's prolonged underperformance has effectively taken 300 million barrels, or 800,000 bpd, off the market since the start of 2021," the IEA said.

A successful outcome to international talks with Iran could lift U.S. sanctions on the country's exports and relieve supply tightness, the IEA added, gradually bringing 1.3 million bpd of Iranian oil back into the market.

Supply and demand look set to be balanced in the first quarter but are expected to flip into a surplus in the second quarter or second half of the year, the IEA added.

The need to refill depleted oil stocks, which in OECD countries fell by 60 million barrels in December down to seven-year lows, means immediate oversupply is unlikely.

IMF Says More Work Needed For Lebanon Aid Deal



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - After two weeks of talks, the IMF said it has advanced efforts to secure an aid program to help Lebanon overcome its "unprecedented and complex" economic crisis, but more work is needed.

The country will need fiscal reforms that ensure it can manage its debt load as well as measures to establish a "credible" currency system, the International Monetary Fund said in a statement at the conclusion of its virtual negotiation mission.

"During the mission, progress was made in agreeing on these necessary reform areas, although more work is needed to translate them into concrete policies," IMF team leader Ernesto Ramirez Rigo said.

The Washington-based lender launched talks last month to pull the Middle Eastern country out of its deepening economic crisis.

In 2020, Lebanon defaulted on its sovereign debt for the first time in its history.

Its currency has lost about 90 percent of its value on the black market and four out of five Lebanese now live below the poverty line, according to the United Nations, a situation made worse by triple-digit inflation.

Ramirez Rigo said "strong upfront actions will be necessary to start turning the economy around and rebuilding confidence."

He also urged that "decisive action by the authorities is needed to tackle the deep-seated problem of corruption."

But any program must include a fiscal plan that "allows the government to invest in critically-needed social spending to support the people," he added.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva last week described the country's situation as "very, very dire" and said that a comprehensive program was required.

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Iran Army Ground Forces Form Missile Unit

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Army Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Kiumars Heidari announced on Sunday that the missile unit of the ground forces has been formed.

Referring to the formation of the missile unit in Iran Army Ground Forces, Brigadier General Kiumars Heidari said that Ground Forces has been provided with necessary sources to be

able to upgrade its equipment.

The new equipment is proper for rapid reaction forces and will replace the old ones, he added.

Heidari also pointed to the equipment and weapons of the Army Ground Forces, saying that today, Army is investing in automated and smart long-range weapons with pinpoint accuracy.



Spain, Portugal Hit by Winter Drought

LISBON (Dispatches) - In central Portugal, a sustained drought has revealed the ruins of a village that was totally submerged underwater when a large reservoir was created nearly 70 years ago.

“I have never seen that!” says Carlos Perdigao, 76, as he gazes at the ruined stone houses of Vilar which were swallowed up by the Zezere river when a dam was opened in 1954.

Vilar stands on the banks of the river, surrounded by cracked yellow earth, another sign of the ongoing dry spell during what is normally a rainy winter season, with the drought also hitting neighbouring Spain.

Weather services in both countries say it was the second driest January on record since the year 2000.

The current drought is extraordinary because of “its intensity, scale and length”, says climate scientist Ricardo Deus of Portugal’s meteorology agency IPMA.

Of Portugal’s 55 dams, 24 are only holding half of their water capacity, and five are below 20 per cent, according to the European Union’s Copernicus Earth observation service.

The Algarve, Portugal’s southernmost province, and one of Europe’s top tourism destinations, is one of those most affected by the drought.

Meanwhile Spain only got a quarter of the precipitation it normally gets in January, said the AEMET weather service.

The dry spell, which began at the end of 2021, is ruining crops, leaving farmers struggling to feed livestock and hampering hydroelectricity production.

Earlier this month, Portugal ordered five of its hydropower dams to suspend water use for electricity production in order to prioritize human consumption.

Nearly 30 percent of Portugal’s electricity comes from hydropower dams.

And in Spain, Agriculture Minister Luis Planas on Tuesday said the government was “concerned” about the drought and would adopt the “necessary measures” depending on how the situation evolves.

Spain’s water reserves are currently at less than 45 percent of their capacity, officials say, with the southern Andalusia region and Catalonia in the northeast worst hit.

Farmers in both countries are worried.

“Look! The grass isn’t growing to feed the animals,” says Antonio Estevao, a cheese producer who owns a herd of around 30 goats in Portela de Fojo Machio, a village in central Portugal near the town of Pampilhosa da Serra.



“If it doesn’t rain in the coming days, it’s going to be very complicated,” he sighs, gazing at his drought-stressed pastures.

The lack of rain is also jeopardising the town’s efforts to draw tourists inland with a floating pool structure set up for bathers in the Zezere river.

But the pool’s plastic lining lies slumped on the ground, with the drought forcing the river to recede.

“For us, it’s a disaster,” says the town’s mayor, Henrique Fernandes Marques.

The same area was badly hit by a wave of wildfires that raged through parched farmlands and forests in 2017, claiming over 100 lives.

More frequent and intense droughts are expected to put enormous strain on climate-vulnerable regions as temperatures rise, and will likely heighten the risk of related natural disasters such as wildfires, scientists say.

While the alternation between dry and wet years is normal in southern Europe, “we have observed a decline in the percentage of rainy years lately,” said Filipe Duarte Santos, an environment specialist at Lisbon University.

These droughts are “one of the most serious consequences of climate change,” he added.

“Until greenhouse gas emissions are drastically reduced, the problem will continue.”

The situation is not likely to improve in the coming weeks as forecasters expect rainfall in both countries to be below the seasonal average. Faced with this reality, the Portuguese government on Thursday said it would boost its cooperation with Spain to fight the drought.

Deforestation in Brazil’s Amazon Hits New Record in January

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Brazil recorded the most deforestation ever in the Amazon rainforest for the month of January, according to new government data, as the destruction continues to worsen despite the government’s recent pledges to bring it under control.

Deforestation in Brazil’s Amazon totaled 430sq kilometers (166sq miles) last month, five times higher than January 2021, according to preliminary satellite data from government space research agency Inpe released on Friday.

That was the highest for January since the current data series began in 2015.

The new data came as environmental researchers have been saying that the destruction still rising is largely due to President Jair Bolsonaro, a right-wing leader who, since taking office in 2019, has weakened environmental protections in the country.

With little fear of punishment, forests are being cleared for ranches in illegal land grabs, said Britaldo Soares Filho, an environmental modelling researcher at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. High prices for beef, soy and other commodities are also boosting the demand for cheap land.

“People might be surprised that it didn’t increase even more,” Soares Filho said.

“There is a race to deforest the Amazon.”

The Ministry of the Environment said that making comparisons using single months does not provide the best picture, stating that in August to January deforestation fell slightly compared with the same period a year ago.

The federal government is acting more forcefully in 2022 to fight against environmental crimes, the ministry said in a statement to Reuters.

There is also concern that Colombia’s Amazon region is facing similar threats. On Tuesday, environmental groups expressed alarm about a sharp increase in forest fires that they blamed on logging to make way for cattle ranches, coca fields and illegal roads.

More than 150 academics and activists from Colombia, Brazil, France and Spain sent a letter to Colombia’s President Ivan Duque urging the government to take a more aggressive stance against deforestation, using the military to put out the fires, creating economic alternatives for people in the Amazon region and arresting those who finance efforts to clear the forest.

The preservation of the Amazon, the world’s largest rainforest, is vital to curbing climate change because of the vast amount of greenhouse gas absorbed in its trees.

Bolsonaro has long argued for more commercial farming and mining in the Amazon to help lift the region out of poverty.

Facing international pressure from the United States and Europe, Brazil last year pledged to end illegal deforestation by 2028.

At the UN climate summit in 2021, 141 countries – including Brazil – signed a pledge to end deforestation by 2030.

Bangladesh Facing Epidemic of Child Drownings

DHAKA (Dispatches) - It was a late December morning when Fahima Akhter saw her youngest son for the last time. Two-year-old Omar Faruque was in front of the family home, playing with his cousins. His mother had been watching him but became distracted by household chores. Minutes later, the youngster had disappeared.

“I live in a joint family with my in-laws. It’s a 10-member family. There were some other family members in the yard also,” Akhter told Arab News. “No one noticed when little Faruque suddenly disappeared and walked to a nearby pond. It’s a five-minute walking distance for a toddler. While cooking in the kitchen, I heard a loud noise as if something fell into the water.”

She rushed to the pond only to find her son’s body floating in the water.

“We could have prevented the drowning of Faruque if we had built a fence on the way to the pond. It was a very costly lesson and irreparable loss,” she said.

Akhter is one of thousands of Bangladeshi parents to have lost children to unintentional drowning last year. Crisscrossed with rivers and canals, Bangladesh has one of the world’s highest drowning rates for under-fives.

Dr. Aminur Rahman, deputy executive director at the Center for Injury Prevention and Research Bangladesh, estimated that the number of incidents could have more than doubled during the coronavirus pandemic, as lockdowns had forced many daycare centers to close.

“Earlier also the drowning of children was like an epidemic,” he said. “But it was increased during COVID days since schools were closed and children remained unguarded in many cases.”

The latest government data, compiled in 2016, showed that more than 30 toddlers had drowned in Bangladesh every day. While no nationwide survey has been conducted for the past six years, the injury prevention center last year recorded 19 child drowning deaths only among the kids attending its nurseries in two districts of the southern Barisal region. “Before COVID-19, the number was seven,” Rahman added.

A recent study by Somashte, a Bangladeshi media monitoring NGO, also showed a sharp increase in drowning incidents involving children aged below five. Based on newspaper reports, it estimated the number had more than doubled since 2020.

Little has been done to address the situation since the 2016 national survey revealed the scale of the problem.

“Since 2016, we didn’t do much to prevent the drowning of the children,” Rahman said, adding that efforts should be made to start building fences around bodies of water.

“It will help a lot in reducing the drowning incidents among children.”

He said programs to teach lifesaving techniques should also be introduced throughout the country.

“I have noticed most of the drowning victims are brought dead to healthcare centers in remote areas of the country as it takes several hours to transport the patients,” Rahman added. “If cardiopulmonary resuscitation could be given to the victims immediately after the rescue, many lives could have been saved.”

Authorities say they are planning to launch a pilot scheme for drowning prevention this year.

Baku Invites...

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He invited Iranian industrial operators in the relevant fields to visit Baku for discussions ahead of the joint economic commission of Iran and the Azerbaijan Republic.

Ghassemi, for his part, called for speeding up the implementation process of the agreements he signed with Baku during his recent visit there.

“Seeing the will of the officials of Iran and the Azerbaijan Republic, special new relations in the fields of economy, energy, industry and other areas, which were discussed during the visit to Azerbaijan should take shape and be finalized in the joint commission,” he said.

Ghassemi added that Tehran is ready for cooperation with Baku to take part in the development of the Azerbaijan Republic’s industrial parks.

Meanwhile he president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has unveiled a project to build an energy supply line from the country to Iran and Turkey through Armenia.

Aliiev said the pipeline will use the Zangzur corridor. “We have energy ties with all four neighboring countries and are working on a new project,” Aliyev said.

He added that the Zangzur corridor is not just for railroad, land and air transportation.

According to the Azeri president, the Zangzur corridor will play a role in the export of energy resources and there will be a new line to supply electricity to the Azerbaijan’s Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and from there to Europe.

Aliyev said, “A line also passes through Georgia and Turkey and this will increase exports and bring us more currency”. Aliyev’s comments come as Armenia has opposed the development of the Zangzur route and its passage through its territory. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan accused Aliyev of obstructing the opening of transport lines between the two countries.

During a recent press conference, he strongly condemned Azerbaijan’s territorial claims to the Zangzur corridor and said Baku has pursued a policy of continuous violation of Armenia’s territorial integrity. Zangzur links Nakhchivan to Azerbaijan through Armenian territory.

U.S. Pressures...

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He claimed that once Trump exited the deal, “Iran began shooting at our troops, sped up nuclear research, and increased support for dangerous regional proxies.”

Murphy has been a vocal critic of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and his maximum pressure sanctions on Iran. He has also slammed the move as “one of the dumbest, most dangerous foreign policy decisions of the last fifty years.”

Murphy has not the first and the last American politicians who has admitted Iran’s resistance and success in thwarting the U.S. pressures and sanctions.

Iranian officials have also dismissed the so-called maximum pressure campaign as a humiliating failure, stressing that the Iranian nation’s “maximum resistance” defeated the aggressive policy.

“When the Americans officially acknowledge that they have failed in their maximum pressure [policy], an ignominious failure, this is a victory for the Iranian nation,” President Ebrahim Raisi has said.

“Today, the nation’s maximum resistance to [acts of] sedition and sanctions has borne fruit and the maximum pressure has failed,” he added.

President Raisi on the eve of the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution once against reiterated that Iran welcomes interaction with the world but it will not bow down to any pressure and the country has not pinned its hopes at Vienna talks or at New York because the country is independent and relies on its own capabilities.

So any pressures on Iran’s negotiating team in Vienna from the Western party is in vain because this team is totally different from the previous team who started the talks on Iran’s nuclear programs in 2015 and signing the JCPOA and the current team which is formed by revolutionary experts will not retreat any inch from getting the country’s rights.

The U.S. as well as its allies in Vienna are better to come to their senses and stop pressuring Iran if they want to reach a deal and they should take this point into consideration that this time Tehran is after a real win-win deal rather than getting a fist of void promises and obligations which have nothing for Tehran but waste of time and energy and killing its nuclear energy industry.

Tehran Putting Many...

FROM PAGE 1

The Iranian diplomat added that Iran’s delegation had informed the opposite side of its views on differential points through modifications and proposals that it had put on the table.

“When it comes to these points of difference, we have so far received no proposal and initiative from the opposite side,” Bagheri Kani said.

Envoys from Iran and the five remaining signatories to the deal -- Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany -- have been negotiating in the Austrian capital for 10 months with the aim of reviving the agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), through bringing the US back to the deal.

The two sides have bridged some gaps since the talks began last year, but differences remain, especially on the issue of US sanctions. Tehran wants all sanctions imposed by the administration of former US President Donald Trump removed and says the issue is its red line.

SAARC Chamber...

FROM PAGE 1

Iftikhar Ali Malik said international funding must be allowed to pay the salaries of public sector employees he said adding that the Afghan economy was enduring a bitter winter of its own. He warned that the Afghan currency could go into free fall and country could lose 30 percent of its GDP within the year.

He said Pakistan, on the request of SAARC Chamber, has abolished majority of taxes on Afghan transit trade while remaining customs duties were highly slashed to maximum extent to provide solace to traders war torn country.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan also allowed certain items for Pak Afghan trade in Pak currency with a sole objective of facilitating them besides fully ensuring smooth flow of clearance of imported and exported items at land border points.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said free supply of food and medicines consignments are being supplied to Afghanistan by Pakistan and pharmaceutical companies of Karachi and Lahore.

He said President Anjumman Iranian Pakistan Mian Muhammad Saeed Deraaywalay also announced to despatch a consignment of food items, cloths, medicines and essential utensils.

Arsenal Agree Deal For Keeper Turner

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal have agreed terms to sign U.S. international goalkeeper Matt Turner from the New England Revolution, the Major League Soccer (MLS) club said. Turner, 27, will move to the Premier League side for an undisclosed fee in late June, allowing him to remain with the Revolution for the Concacaf Champions League and nearly half of the MLS regular season. Named MLS Goalkeeper of the Year last season, Turner has 16 caps for the U.S. national team, featuring in all six of their games during the title-winning 2021 Concacaf Gold Cup campaign.

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Carapaz Tests Positive for Covid

ARLES (Dispatches) - Olympic road race champion Richard Carapaz did not start the stage two of the Tour of Provence after testing positive for Covid-19, his team Ineos said. Another Ineos rider, Filippo Ganna, retained the overall lead at the end of the stage. Cofidis rider Bryan Coquard led a French 1-2, winning a sprint head of world champion Julian Alaphilippe of Quick-Step. Ecuadorean Carapaz had been lying 19th, 51 seconds adrift of Italian Ganna ahead of the 180.5km run between Arles and Manosque.

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SPORTS

MONDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2022

Chelsea Win Club World Cup Title in Extra Time

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - Kai Havertz scored a penalty deep into extra time as Chelsea defeated Brazil's Palmeiras 2-1 in the Club World Cup final on Saturday to complete their collection of major trophies.

Romelu Lukaku's superb header gave the European champions the lead on 54 minutes but Raphael Veiga levelled from the spot for the Copa Libertadores winners just past the hour in Abu Dhabi.

Havertz, the hero in the Champions League final against Manchester City, was Chelsea's match-winner again as he converted a penalty on 117 minutes awarded following a VAR review.

"It's amazing. After champions of Europe, we are now champions of the world. It sounds better," Havertz told Channel 4.

"I was nervous (taking the penalty), I have to be honest. It's a big penalty. It's just crazy. It was good I kept the nerves. I am very happy."

"I dreamed always as a kid of this. This is an amazing feeling for me," he added.

Chelsea have now claimed every possible trophy since Roman Abramovich bought the club in 2003, and become the third English side to win the global tournament after Manchester United and Liverpool.

The Blues avenged their 1-0 loss to Corinthians in the 2012 final, but will have little time to celebrate with a critical stretch on the horizon once they return to London.

They face Lille in the Champions League last 16 either side of the League Cup final against Liverpool and FA Cup fifth round, playing in four different competitions in 12 days.

Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel was back in the dugout having flown out to Abu Dhabi on Friday after missing the past two games following a positive test for Covid-19.

Edouard Mendy returned in goal in the wake of Senegal's Africa Cup of Nations victory, at the expense of Kepa Arrizabalaga, whose much improved form is likely to attract interest from other clubs in the summer.

Embiid Lifts Sixers Over Thunder

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Joel Embiid poured in 25 points and 19 rebounds to power the Philadelphia 76ers to a 100-87 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Embiid, who also had five blocks and four assists in front of the crowd of 20,600 at Wells Fargo Center, recorded his 22nd straight game with at least 25 points.

Philadelphia played their first game since making a blockbuster trade with the Brooklyn Nets on Thursday that saw former league MVP James Harden join his third team in the last two years.

Philadelphia sent Australia's Ben Simmons, Andre Drummond, Seth Curry and two first-round draft picks to the Nets for Harden and Paul Millsap.

Since the players haven't completed their physicals, the 76ers played without all five, leaving them short-handed. Simmons, of Melbourne, has yet to play in a game this season.

Tyrese Maxey added 24 points and Tobias Harris contributed 17 points and 11 rebounds in the win. Matisse Thybulle added 10 points.

Derrick Favors led the Thunder with 16 points while Luguentz Dort and Aleksey Pokusevski added 15 each.

Darius Bazley had 14 points and 15 rebounds as Oklahoma City lost its fourth straight.

Embiid scored 11 points in the third quarter as the 76ers led 77-61 going into the fourth.

After a 9-2 run, the Thunder got within 87-75 halfway through the fourth.

Theo Maledon hit a three-pointer with 2:41 remaining and the Thunder trailed 88-82. But Harris responded with a three pointer of his own and Maxey made a layup to extend the lead to 11 points.

Head coach Mark Daigneault said he was pleased the Thunder did not make a lot of deals at the trade deadline.

"We love our guys. We really like our team," he said. "We like the direction we're headed. We're obviously early in the process. We have a lot of confidence in not only the guys we have right now, but where we're going."



Djokovic on Entry List for Vaccinated-Only Indian Wells

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Top-ranked 20-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, prevented from playing the Australian Open because he was not vaccinated for Covid-19, is entered in next month's Indian Wells ATP event.

Djokovic is a five-time champion at Indian Wells, where organizers announced entries Wednesday and said proof of full vaccination will be required for spectator entry into the grounds for the tournament.

The Serbian star was set to try and win a fourth consecutive Australian Open title last month -- what would have been his record 21st career major singles crown -- but Australian border officials said he did not meet requirements for unvaccinated travelers to enter the nation.

Djokovic's visa was eventually canceled and after a legal appeal failed he departed without playing. Spain's Rafael Nadal, who is also on the Indian Wells entry list, won the Australian Open to set the record with his 21st career Slam singles crown.

Organizers at Indian Wells noted in a statement that vaccinations will be required for the event, but also said player protocols for Djokovic and other men's players will be decided by the ATP in line with US restrictions.

"With health and safety as the tournament's top priority, the BNP Paribas Open will require valid proof of full vaccination to enter the Indian Wells Tennis Garden for the tournament," it said.

"The guidelines for the players are governed by the protocols established by their respective governing bodies, the WTA and ATP, as well as any restrictions established by the United States of America in regard to the vaccination status of international travelers entering the country."

Djokovic is due to return to the tour at the Dubai ATP event from February 21.

United in Obvious Need of Young Striker

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United coach Ralf Rangnick said the club is in "obvious" need of a young striker with the attacking duo of Cristiano Ronaldo and Edinson Cavani both in the twilight years of their careers.

Ronaldo, 37, and Cavani, who turns 35 on February 14, are currently United's primary attacking options, with Anthony Martial on loan at Sevilla and Mason Greenwood for selection.

United have struggled to make the most of their attacking opportunities in recent weeks, crashing out of the FA Cup on penalties against Middlesbrough following a 1-1 draw in which they had 30 shots at goal.

The Manchester club then amassed 22 further efforts on goal against Burnley in another 1-1 draw on Tuesday.

"This is obvious," Rangnick told reporters yesterday when asked about whether the club will be looking to sign a younger forward for the coming season. "Edinson's contract is running out in the summer and the club needs the best possible center forward."

"This is an obvious one and I think everyone is aware of that."

Rangnick also played down Ronaldo's reaction to United's midweek draw with Burnley, after the Portuguese international walked off at the final whistle without acknowledging the travelling fans.

"This is a question you will have to ask Cristiano, I only realized that after the game, or saw it after the game," Rangnick said. "This is not a question I can answer."



Russia May Need Games Timeout Over Doping

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Russia may need an Olympic "timeout" as doping issues resurface after figure skating prodigy Kamila Valieva tested positive for a banned substance at the Beijing Winter Games, senior International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Dick Pound said.

Russian athletes at the Beijing Games are already not competing under their flag while carrying the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) on their uniforms, and their anthem is not being played at any ceremonies, following sanctions imposed for the widespread doping across many sports exposed after the Sochi Games. The 15-year-old Valieva became an early darling of the Beijing Games when she became the first woman to land a quadruple jump at the Olympics and helped the ROC win a team gold.

However, the International Testing Agency (ITA) said she tested positive for banned heart drug Trimetazidine in a urine sample collected by Russian authorities on December 25.

The Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA imposed a provisional suspension on Valieva on Tuesday then lifted it a day after on appeal.

The IOC, International Skating Union (ISU) and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) have said they will ask the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to reinstate the suspension.

"At a certain point if they are absolutely incorrigible you end up with the position of take a country timeout," said Pound in a phone interview from Florida. "We could say we can help you. You got a problem. We can concentrate on it. Take a time out for one or two, or three Olympic Games until you get this under control."

