

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 135,499 With 223 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen in His Telephone Talks With Senior Advisor to Iran Foreign Minister Mr. Ali Asghar LKhaji Appreciated Iran for Its Efforts To Establish Peace in Syria

1 DOMESTIC

Dr. Amrayi Says Shiraz Petrochemical Can Be Main Urea Fertilizer Exporter to Brazil
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President Urges GEC to Fight U.S. Hegemony, Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi has called for further cooperation among gas exporting countries to circumvent US sanctions imposed on some members. He made the remarks in an address to the sixth summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in the Qatari capital city of Doha on Tuesday. "The international community must prevent and not recognize any unilateral and coercive measure, such as cruel U.S. sanctions against the oil and gas industries of the forum's member states," Raisi said. "With awakened and free nations in today's world, the use of sanctions to impose the hegemonic will and demands of a country on independent states has no effect and function. Nevertheless, it endangers the economic interests of GECF member states." **See Page 7**

Iran Ready for Gas Swap With GECF Member States



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Oil Minister Javad Owji announced that Tehran is prepared to trade natural gas and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) with members of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) through various ways including swap, transit and other common methods. Owji made the remark on the sidelines of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) held on Monday February 21, 2022 in Doha, Qatar. **See Page 7**

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Iran Desires Bilateral Trade Relations With Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The government of Islamic Republic of Iran fully desired to have bilateral trade relations with brother country Pakistan and in this connection efforts were being made to enhance the quantum of export and import goods between the two countries by organizing industrial exhibition and trade webinars. This was stated by Consul General Islamic Republic of Iran at Karachi Hassan Nourian while addressing the business community of Hyderabad here at the secretariat of Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) on Monday. **See Page 7**

The CEO of Shiraz Petrochemical announced:

Shiraz Petrochemical can be the Main Supplier of urea Fertilizer for Export to Brazil



Dr. Amin Amrayi, CEO of Shiraz Petrochemical, referred to the recent visit of Brazilian Agriculture Minister Teresa Cristina to the company. Regarding the exchange of urea fertilizer with Brazilian products, he said: Shiraz Petrochemical can be the main supplier of urea fertilizer for export to Brazil. According to the public relations of Shiraz Petrochemical, Dr. Amrayi pointed to the capabilities of Shiraz Petrochemical in producing urea fertilizer. He added: "Last year, a significant amount of urea fertilizer produced by this company was exported to Brazil." This amount can also be increased. The CEO of Shiraz Petrochemical also stated: Shiraz Petrochemical, in addition to producing urea fertilizer, has the ability to produce and export UAN liquid fertilizer as a product with better quality and performance than urea fertilizer. Shiraz Petrochemical, as the first petrochemical company in the country in the production of urea, is one of the most successful companies in the production and export of agricultural fertilizers. This

company can play an effective role in developing the export of agricultural fertilizers to various countries, including Brazil. "Currently, 500,000 to 600,000 tons of urea fertilizer are exported from our country to Brazil," Amrayi said. In the form of barter exchanges, this capacity can be increased to 2 million tons per year by doubling the activity of urea fertilizer companies and Shiraz Petrochemical. The CEO of Shiraz Petrochemical referred to the recent agreement between the officials of the Ministry of Jihad for Agriculture and Brazil. He continued: The main export of Iran to Brazil is urea fertilizer. Under a new agreement between Iran and Brazil, 400,000 tons of urea fertilizer will be exchanged with the country's livestock inputs. Shiraz Petrochemical plays a key role in supplying the urea fertilizer needed for export to Brazil. He expressed hope and said: "The visit of the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture to Iran and the visit of Teresa Cristina to Shiraz Petrochemical will facilitate trade relations and

reduce bureaucracy between the two countries." Both countries have the ability to trade with each other. We hope to increase production this year. It should be noted that recently in a meeting attended by the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture and the accompanying delegation at the Shiraz Petrochemical Plant, the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture Theresa Cristina and the Brazilian Ambassador and a delegation of Brazilian businessmen visited the urea fertilizer production department at Shiraz Petrochemical. The Brazilian Minister of Agriculture expressed satisfaction with the interactions between the two countries. He thanked the Iranian officials. Because they have a constructive view on improving trade relations between Iran and Brazil. He considered the special potentials in Iran, including the supply of agricultural urea fertilizer needed by Brazil, as an important issue. This issue will certainly be effective in increasing trade relations and increasing the level of cooperation between the two countries.

NATO Blamed for Situation in Ukraine

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman said that U.S.-backed NATO interventions and provocative measures have made the situation with Ukraine more complicated.

Saeed Khatibzade said in a statement on Monday night that Iran is watching closely the issues concerning Ukraine.

The Islamic Republic of Iran calls on all parties to exercise restraint and believes that any escalating measure should be avoided, he added.

He also urged all parties to make efforts to solve disputes through dialogue and in a peaceful framework.

Tehran, Nur-Sultan Agree to Expand Cooperation

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



The Kazakh deputy prime minister who is also minister of trade and integration also criticized anti-Iran sanctions.

Sultanov added that holding joint commissions between the two countries as well as holding joint specialized exhibitions is strong tool for developing relation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Kazakhstan, adding that with forming trade center and private sectors of the two countries one can expect bright future on way of expansion of bilateral cooperation.

He then pointed to the nuclear talks in Vienna with world powers and emphasized removal of sanctions against Iran.

Sultanov then pointed to the massive capacities in the regional organizations for cooperation, noting that Iran's presence in these organizations and expansion of opportunities for cooperation is a suitable opportunity for the growth and development of regions in the region and also the Islamic Republic.

Iran's Agriculture Minister Seyed Javad Sadatinejad as the head of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Commission briefed Mr. Mokhber of details of the 17th session of the commission and talked on the fields for expanding cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan.

TEHRAN - First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber in a meeting with Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Bakhyt Sultanov on Tuesday said that Iran was ready to expand ties with Kazakhstan by preparing an operational plan.

Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister Sultanov met with Mokhber on Tuesday in Tehran. Mokhber highlighted the necessity of elevating cooperation and transactions between Iran and Kazakhstan in the fields of trade, economy, industry, agriculture and mining, calling for increased activity by joint commissions.

He also said that holding joint exhibitions would help the private sector in both countries to identify opportunities and capacities.

The first vice president also mentioned SCO, ECO and EAEU organizations and urged support for private sectors of member-states to increase trade transactions between their businesspeople and entrepreneurs.

The senior Kazakh official welcomed President Ebrahim Raisi's foreign policy to expand ties with neighboring countries and emphasized holding joint commission meetings and specialized exhibitions.

Expansion of Neighborly Ties Top Priority In Iranian Foreign Policy

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the Islamic Republic attaches great significance to the promotion of all-out relations with neighboring countries, especially Arab states, and offers a hand of friendship to them.

In a tweet on Tuesday, Amir-Abdollahian said President Ebrahim Raisi was "warmly welcomed" by the emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani upon arriving in Doha on Monday.

He added that relations between Tehran and Doha have deep-rooted historical and cultural commonalities, and are based on common interests.

"Strengthening of relations with neighbors, especially Arab countries, is a top priority in Iran's foreign policy. Our hand is extended toward our neighbors," the Iranian foreign minister noted.

Iran, Germany, India Agree to Prepare Ground for New Economic Deals

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy Mehdi Safari held talks with German and Indian permanent representatives in Vienna on the necessity for preparing the ground for signing new economic agreements.

The talks were held on the sidelines of the Vienna negotiations about removal of the unjust sanctions on Monday afternoon.

In the meeting, ways to expansion of economic relations in banking, oil, and ports were discussed.

The sides also agreed to continue consultations.

The eighth round of talk between Iran and the 4+1 - UK, France, Russia, and China plus Germany - started on December, 2021, in Vienna, Austria. This round of talks is the longest.

Most of the delegations in Vienna believe that the talks are moving forward despite complication in some issues.

Iran, Venezuela Ink MoU to Expand Bilateral Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Islamic Republic of Iran and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday with the aim of expanding cooperation in various oil sectors.

The MoU was inked by Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Felix Plasencia on the sidelines of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Summit which is underway in the Qatari capital Doha.

Earlier on Monday, Owji met and held talks with Plasencia and stressed for the continuation of bilateral cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to continue to strengthen cooperation in all areas that contribute to the creation of new economic areas for the development and progress of the people.

The cooperation agreement was signed and sealed in the presence of Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi in the field of exporting technical and engineering services, transferring technical know-how and knowledge, presenting quality training services, training manpower and cooperating in the sector of developing oil refining industry.

Iran Hosts Technology Investment Meeting, TIM 2022

TEHRAN (PressTV) - 100 domestic and foreign investors from Iran and 19 countries are in Tehran to take part in a technology investment meeting, the TIM-2022, a major tech investment event that aims to finance viable startups in the Muslim developing countries.

Ahead of the physical meeting of the TIM, 120 virtual B2B meetings were held between Venture Capital funds, accelerators and startups.

During the TIM, newbie but promising businesses active in aviation, steel, health and oil and gas signed MoUs with investors totaling some 10 million dollars.

One of the major goals of the TIM is to boost commercial ties between the member states of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation.

D-8 stands for Eight Developing countries, comprising Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

However, investors from other parts of the world are also present at the two-day event.

The TIM offers an all-win deal for all of the participating countries, including Iran, as it can open up a new multinational market that allows Tehran to trade with other countries, without the need to wait for the removal of US sanctions.

Pakistan Welcomes Boosting Trade With Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The trade delegation of Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), led by its President Mian Nauman Kabir has high-profile meetings in Iran and with Tehran Chamber of Commerce officials.

The delegation members have meeting with President Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Mines Masoud Khansari, attended Iran-Pakistan Business Forum, B2B meetings with Iranian counterparts and also attended a dinner hosted by Ambassador of Pakistan in Iran Rahim Hayat Qureshi.

According to the spokesperson of the LCCI, the discussion on the occasions remained fruitful and would definitely pave way for trade, investment and joint ventures between the private sectors of the two countries.

LCCI President said that we, from the platform of Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, always strive for developing and strengthening close working relations with foreign business communities. He said that Lahore Chamber is firm believer of trade diplomacy and for that matter we also regularly interact with foreign counterparts. It is needless to mention that Iran is closest to our hearts.

Mian Nauman Kabir said that Iran and Pakistan have always enjoyed smooth development of friendly and neighbourly relations as well as mutually beneficial cooperation. "We take Iran as an important neighbouring country and a potential trading partner. We have been maintaining strong cultural and diplomatic relations with Iran," he added.

LCCI President said that both the countries have large domestic markets and unique geo-strategic competitive advantages but we have yet to enhance our trade volume by making good use of these opportunities.

He informed the Iranian counterparts that Lahore Chamber has been voicing in favor of exploring new avenues other than bilateral trade for the sake of enhancing cooperation between two countries.

He said that the key purpose of our visit to Iran is to explore the Iranian markets for further developing the trade and investment opportunities between the two countries.

Mian Nauman Kabir said that the importance of such interaction is hard to be measured as these kinds of meetings cause to arrange more and more follow up meetings which ultimately lead to establish long lasting trade and economic relations. The constant exchanges of business delegations between Pakistan and Iran is one of the key indicators that both the nations seriously want to seize the increasing trend occurring in balance of trade for the last five years or so.

The LCCI President said that Pakistan is inviting foreign investors in many of its sectors where Iran, being the next door neighbor, can take full benefit of the available opportunities. These sectors are renewable energy, construction & housing, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Railways. Moreover, in the manufacturing sector automotive, retail market, electronics & other electric equipment, pharmaceutical, industrial and commercial machinery etc., are picking up.

He said that the potential sectors where Pakistan and Iran can enhance trade are value-added textiles, pharmaceuticals and rice. Iran is one of the biggest consumers of Denim in the region while Pakistani rice has a strong market in Iran. There is also a great potential for both countries to initiate joint ventures in the field of energy.

While talking to Ambassador of Pakistan in Iran Rahim Hayat Qureshi, LCCI President Mian Nauman Kabir said that Pakistan and Iran have been steady trading partners but with every passing year the bilateral trade is declining. We are concerned about constant fall in our exports to Iran which used to be around \$426 million in 2008. In 2021, its level went down to almost nothing which calls for taking immediate measures.

He hoped business meetings with Iranian counterparts will play key role in reviving the national exports to Iran.

Mian Nauman Kabir said that it goes without saying that our Embassies along with their subsidiary consulate offices have certain role to play to facilitate the business community of Pakistan who are very eager to develop trade relations with their counterparts in major economies.

Ambassador of Pakistan in Iran Rahim Hayat Qureshi said that the business community of Pakistan would be facilitated to enhance trade between Pakistan and Iran.

Japan to Resume Maritime Cooperation in Shahid Rajaei Port

TEHRAN (IRNA) -

Following the visit of the ambassador of Japan in Tehran Aikawa Kazutoshi to Shahid Rajaei Port and meeting with general-director of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) in Hormozgan Province Alireza Mohammadi Karaji-Ran, the maritime transactions and joint cooperation of Japanese private companies in Shahid Rajaei Port are expected to resume.

The Japanese ambassador pointed to the long-lasting and friendly relations between Iran and Japan and added that expansion of commercial transactions with Iran is very important for Japan, in which Shahid Rajaei Port can play an important role in improvement of trade in the region.

In the last few years, Japan has reviewed its policies regarding port equipment since it has prioritized water-based development as the key goal of Japan, so alongside using smart technologies in port equipment, Japan is considering to expand its cooperation with the littoral countries, Ikawa Kazutoshi mentioned.

Eighty percent of Iran's transit is done through Shahid Rajaei Port. The Port has many advantages and capacities including modern container equipment for 14000 TEU containership, as well as access to the railway network, to the Bandar Abbas International Airport, and to the high seas. Moreover, it has lands for supporting industrial, petrochemical, and service activities.

Shahid Rajaei Port is also important along North-South Transport Corridor which maintains fast speed and great security for freight transit.

Iran has always supported the interests of its economic partners and worked in close cooperation with other countries within the policy framework of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), Mohammadi Karaji-Ran added.

Shahid Rajaei Port is one of the ports of Bandar Abbas in southern Hormozgan Province and lies on the north shores of the Strait of Hormuz.

KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA TEHRAN (Embassy of India School)

Admission Notice

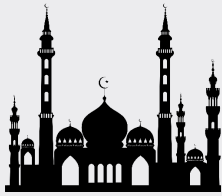
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PRINCIPAL



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:17
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:11
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:17
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:40

15. The (people) said: "Ye are only men like ourselves;
and ((Allah)) Most Gracious sends no sort of revelation: ye do nothing but lie."
16. They said: "Our Lord doth know that we have been sent on a mission to you:
Surah 36. Ya-sin (15 - 16)

Kazakhstan Welcomes Boosting Trade With Iran

BY: F. TAHERPOUR

TEHRAN – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Integration of Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Bakhyt Sultanov says the trade volume between Iran and Kazakhstan increased by 84.8% in 2021 comparing to 2020 and reached \$440.1m which is not satisfactory due to the existing potentials of both states and it can rise significantly.

Speaking in the 17th Session of the Joint Commission on Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technological, and Cultural Cooperation Between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Kazakhstan which was held on Monday at Espinas Hotel of Tehran, Sultanov expressed his gratitude to Iran's Minister of Agriculture Mr. Seyed Javad Sadatinejad for hosting the session and said this is a great opportunity for both countries to exchange views for finding proper mechanisms to strengthen interactions between Iran and Kazakhstan.

He said that Iran is one of the major trade partners of Kazakhstan and their trade has progressed in recent years. He added that the bilateral trade slumped by 36.9% in 2020 but it bounced back in 2021 with 84.8% growth and reached \$440.1m. He reiterated that the figure shows approximately 56.2% growth comparing to the pre-pandemic era (2019).

Sultanov went on to say that the main task in the short term is to keep the positive trade dynamism which needs diversity and expansion of items of goods. He added that Kazakh companies are ready to offer 60% of the processed goods from different industries worth \$162.3m in Iran's market that on the whole they will be products of metallurgy industries (\$76.7m), foodstuff (\$38.3m) and construction products (\$3.6m). He then called for the exchange of the list of potential exporting goods which can be offered in Iran and Kazakhstan markets.

He then noted that both countries should strengthen cooperation in field of access to their countries either in the form of bilateral or in the form of interaction in the framework of the EAEU and broaden it.

He went on to say that today 257 companies with Iranian capitals and 80 joint companies are active in different economic sections of Kazakhstan. He noted that the gross foreign direct investment of Iranians in Kazakhstan from 2015 till the third quarter of 2021 has been just \$129.4m, adding that although the figure is positive but it does not match with the investment potentials of the two states.

Sultanov then called for the launch of a Kazakh-Iranian commercial council, adding that this platform can create the ground for dialogue among the businesses with skirting the intergovernmental process. He then pointed to the importance of the transportation industry and logistics in developing bilateral cooperation, adding that Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway. He went on to say that with the launch of this railway the export volume has become fivefold and it can provide possibility for transportation of 10m tons of cargos.

He then pointed to the advantages of free zones in Kazakhstan, reiterating that expansion of free zones in the south of the Caspian Sea will help the expansion of trade between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) states. He then said that the delegation will transfer to the Kazakh investors the proposal of Iranians for investment in the Anzali Free Zone.

He also pointed to some other fields for cooperation and called on Iranians to cooperate. Then Iran's Agriculture Minister Sadatinejad, for his part, called for boosting the trade exchanges between Iran and Kazakhstan and said that the two countries can increase bilateral trade to \$3b.

He said that in comparison to the political relation of the two countries, the economic relation is in lower level as the bilateral trade stood at \$200m last year and it has increased to \$400m this year and this means the trade relation does not accord with political ties. He went on to say that while in the past Iran-Kazakhstan trade volume was around \$2.5b, this amount has slumped significantly.

He expressed hope this session would be a launching pad for boosting economic relations of the two states. He then referred to some points which can ease and broaden trade ties of the two countries. He said that setting up a joint committee on banking cooperation and agreement in using national currencies in bilateral trade is one of the important steps in easing trade between the two countries.

Sadatinejad then hailed signing of MoU between the customs administrations of the two countries which help the trade to be eased. He also said that resumption of the direct flights between the two countries is another step for expansion of trade and also called for regular restoration marine transportation of ro-ro between the two states.

He then pointed to some fields for cooperation between Iran and Kazakhstan like energy, tourism, industry, mine and judiciary.

Sadatinejad also called for easing visa process for Iranian economic traders or revoking it as an important step for boosting business between the two countries.

At the end of the session, the two countries signed five MoUs on cooperation in presence of Sultanov and Sadatinejad.



Meanwhile on Monday and to the two countries' 17th Joint Economic Committee meeting, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) hosted an Iran-Kazakhstan business forum

The forum was attended by senior officials from the two countries, including Iranian Agriculture Minister Javad Sadati-Nejad, Kazakhstan's Minister of Trade and Integration Bakhyt Sultanov, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Tehran Askhat Orazbay, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafei, and ICCIMA Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karbasi as well as Iranian ambassador to Astana Majiad Samadzadeh Saber.

Speaking in this gathering, ICCIMA Head Shafeie underlined Iran and Kazakhstan's deep cultural and historical roots and noted that despite the great political relations between the two countries the level of trade is unsatisfactory.

He noted that having economic relations with the neighboring countries is a priority of the government and private sector in Iran and Kazakhstan as one of the biggest countries in central Asia has a significant place among Iran's trade partners.

Shafei further mentioned the fact that despite all the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, Iran and Kazakhstan's borders were never closed on each other, and trade relations between the two countries were ongoing at all times.

Pointing to the great potentials and capacities of the two countries for mutual cooperation, Shafei said petrochemicals, oil, gas, mining, industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, as well as technical and engineering services all have the potential for mutual cooperation and investment between the two sides.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official mentioned Kazakhstan's membership to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Shanghai Agreement, saying: "Kazakhstan's position in such international treaties can be a good platform for Iran to expand its trade with the world."

He further put the two countries' trade level in 2020 at \$235 million, saying that the Islamic Republic's share of Kazakhstan's total foreign trade in the mentioned year (which was \$85 billion) is really insignificant.

Shafei also mentioned the capabilities of Iranian contractors in the field of technical and engineering services and said Iranian companies have previously worked on several projects in various areas including roads, highways, construction, etc. in Kazakhstan.

Elsewhere in the forum, Sadatinejad also expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of economic relations between the two countries and noted that the level of trade between Iran and Kazakhstan can reach \$3 billion in the next three years.

Finally, Kazakhstan's Minister of Trade and Integration Sultanov, for his part, underlined the positive relations between the two sides and said Iranian and Kazakh companies signed deals worth over \$5 billion in 2021.

He stressed the need for complete use of the logistic capacities of the two countries for increasing the level of economic exchanges between the two sides.

He considered the role of the logistics sector in the expansion of trade between the two countries very important and noted that the Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan corridor has a significant role in reducing trade costs.

"We are already negotiating with Turkmenistan to reduce transit tariffs and facilitate trilateral trade; They have agreed to implement the reduced tariffs scheme for three months and I hope it will continue," Sultanov stated.

Official Elaborates on Details of Iran-Qatar Economic Agreements

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization elaborated on details of Iran-Qatar economic agreements, saying Qatar has welcomed Iranian industrial and knowledge-based projects.

Alireza Peymanpak said that the Qatari investment delegations will soon visit Iran.

Referring to bilateral meetings in Qatar, he said in a meeting with Qatari commerce and industry minister, both sides discussed establishing Iran's trade center in Qatar and addressing businessmen issues.

He added that Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Rostam Qasemi in a meeting with his Qatari counterpart agreed to facilitate the issue of Iranian ships docking in Qatar.

Referring to Iran's special role in transit, he said Qatari welcomed Iran's capacity as a bridge between the Caspian states with Qatar, India, and Africa for export and transshipment.

Peymanpak went on to say that banking, financial, and monetary issues were also discussed by Iran and Qatar.

He noted that Qatar expressed interest in collaborating with Iran in exporting technical and engineering services to Iraq, South East Asia, and Africa.

FIFA World Cup and tourism were other important issues discussed in Qatar, he noted.

Peymanpak stated that Qatari investors especially those active in food security field will supply the necessary items for extraterritorial cultivation.

400m Euros Saved Due to Indigenizing Manufacture of Seamless Oil Pipe



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) announced 270% growth in contracts of Lule Gostar Esfarayen, adding that by indigenizing manufacture of seamless oil pipe, some 400m euros will be saved.

Mohsen Salehnia said that with implementing the project of oil saving by the Oil Ministry, it needed 216,000 tons of different types of seamless steel pipes that with the agreement of IDRO and Iranian National Oil Company it was decided indigenization of this huge bulk of pipeline with using capacities of Lule Gostar Esfarayen Company is carried out based on a certain schedule and on the priorities being announced by the oil industry.

Salehnia went on to say that it is estimated with production of 27,000 tons of pipelines in this year beyond the required amount in the agreement, the country would save 400m euros and this has happened due to full time activities of workers and experts of Lule Gostar Esfarayen.

Then Deputy Head of IDRO on renovation and exploitation Mr. Mohammad Nouri Amir said that besides this volume of production in the current year, some 30,000 tons of different types of pipelines are under production in this industrial unit which are needed for projects of Ramshir, Mansouri, Nargesi, Maroun, Bi Bi Hakimi, Resalat, Danan, Saadat Abad, Kabood, Forouzan, Siahmakan 1 and 2, Ahvaz 2 and 5 and Mansourabad.

He also referred to the focus of IDRO in implementing developmental policies of Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade for increasing the capacity of production of the subordinate units of IDRO. He added that this developmental organization has some plan on agenda for completing increase of volume, renovating the production lines of Lule Gostar Esfarayen with using the most equipped and state-of-the-art machineries in order to create better condition for steel and production and even exports.

Iran, Algeria Stress Expansion of Cooperation in Energy Sector

TEHRAN (IP) – In a meeting in Doha, Iran Oil Minister Javad Owji and the Minister of Energy of Algeria stressed cooperation in the energy sector.

During the meeting, which took place on Monday on the sidelines of the meeting of the Assembly of Gas Exporting Countries in Doha, the two sides welcomed the development of cooperation between the two countries, investment opportunities and prospects for bilateral cooperation in energy and mining.

The two sides also stressed the joint efforts within the framework of the General Assembly of Gas Exporting Countries (GECF) as well as within the framework of the Declaration of Cooperation between OPEC and beyond.

In these bilateral or multilateral talks, cooperation in areas such as gas swaps, technology transfer, technical knowledge, investment in oil and gas fields were discussed.

Iran is one of the largest gas producers in the world and one of the founders of GECF, also it has been the Secretary General of the Assembly for two terms.

Golgozar Co. Victorious in National Festival of Organizational Excellence

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The 19th national conference on the organizational excellence was held yesterday at the Industrial Management Institute and winners of excellence brands were honored with awards and Golgozar Mining and Industrial Company was one of the winners of the awards in this event.

According to reports, Golgozar Mining and Industrial Company won the four star letter of commendation and was honored for organizational excellence.

National Organizational Excellence Award is awarded based on evaluation of approaches and management system of organizations, companies and implementation of actions and improvement projects in the framework of the national organizational excellence award and the approval of the scientific committees. Golgozar Company owes this success to the efforts of all of its staff and perseverance of its excellence teams and full supporters of managers and experts and it is hoped in the future editions of the festival it would get higher level awards.



Pakistani PM to Fly to Moscow to Meet Putin

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan will fly to Moscow this week to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, Islamabad confirmed on Monday - the first such trip by a Pakistani leader in two decades.



The two-day visit, starting on Wednesday, was planned before the current crisis over Ukraine.

"During the Summit meeting, the two leaders will review the entire array of bilateral relations including energy cooperation," Pakistan's foreign office said in a statement, adding that Khan and Putin will also discuss issues including the situation in Afghanistan.

Johnson Scraps COVID Restrictions in England

LONDON (Dispatches) - British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday said he would end all coronavirus restrictions in England including mandatory self-isolation for people with COVID-19 and free testing, drawing skepticism from some scientists and political opponents.

Johnson's "living with COVID" plan has sparked alarm that it is premature and will leave the country vulnerable to new viral variants, but the government says it has provided more testing than most other countries, and must now curb the cost.



Putin Recognizes Independence Of Ukraine Breakaway Regions



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday recognized as independent two breakaway territories in eastern Ukraine, marking a sharp escalation in tensions between Moscow and the West.

In signing the decrees recognizing the Donetsk Peoples Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, Putin rejected diplomatic efforts to cease fighting and pledged more assistance to separatists battling Ukrainian forces.

"I deem it necessary to make a decision that should have been made a long time ago, to immediately recognize the independence and sovereignty of the Donetsk Peoples Republic and Luhansk People's Republic," Putin said in a speech from Moscow, in translated remarks.

"I would request the federal assembly to back this decision and ratify the agreement of friendship and mutual help with both republics."

Putin made the announcement at the end of a winding speech that set out his vision of a Ukraine that has historically been part of Russia and is now under the control of the West. He also used the occasion to fire off a litany of accusations against Ukraine, the U.S. and Western allies, coupled with a sharp demand for Kyiv to "stop hostilities" and a rejection of the authority of the Ukrainian government as having been established in a "coup" following the 2014 revolution in the country.

He was joined in Moscow for a signing ceremony by the self-declared heads of two territories and said the documents were to ratify an agreement of "friendship" and mutual aid.

"Those who seize the power and keep the power in Kyiv, we demand to stop hostilities immediately, otherwise, all the responsibility for the possible continuation of the bloodbath will be on the consciousness of the regime that is ruling in Kyiv. By declaring these decisions, I'm confident that I will have support of all the patriotic forces of Russia," Putin said.

The Russian president's actions on Monday are likely to set up a confrontation with Kyiv and its Western allies that are poised to push back on potential, large-scale Russian military aggression. The Kremlin reportedly said in a statement that Putin received pushback from the leaders of France and Germany in a phone call where he announced his decision to recognize Donetsk and Luhansk.

"The president of France and the Federal Chancellor of Germany expressed their disappointment with this development. At the same time, they indicated their readiness to continue contacts," the Kremlin said in a statement.

The move follows Putin presiding over a public and highly choreographed meeting of the Russian National Security Council where members expressed near unanimity for the Kremlin to recognize the territories as independent.

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Myanmar Hits out at Top UN Court Over Rohingya Genocide Case

YANGON (Dispatches) - Myanmar hit out at a genocide case brought against it by The Gambia for alleged persecution of Rohingya Muslims, urging the UN's highest court to drop the claim on legal grounds.

Banjul dragged Myanmar before the International Court of Justice in 2019, accusing the predominantly Buddhist country of genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority after a bloody 2017 military crackdown.

When the case opened in December 2019 Aung San Suu Kyi personally represented Myanmar at the Hague-based ICJ, but she was ousted as the Asian country's civilian leader in a military coup last year.

The Nobel peace laureate, who faced criticism from rights groups for her involvement in the case, is now under house arrest and on trial by the same generals she defended in The Hague.

"Myanmar is... not seeking to impede the judicial process of the court," its agent Ko Ko Hlaing told the judges in the imposing courtroom at the Peace Palace in The Hague.



Thousands Rally in Sudan Against Military Coup

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Thousands of Sudanese protesters marched against the October military coup which has led to scores of arrests, as authorities released some of those held, witnesses and lawyers said.

Regular protests calling for civilian rule have occurred throughout the impoverished northeast African country despite a deadly crackdown since the power grab led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

The coup, Sudan's latest, sparked wide international condemnation and cuts in aid. At least 82 people have been killed, many of them shot dead, and hundreds wounded by security forces, according to medics. The latest fatality came on Sunday.

"The number of people detained has exceeded 200," according to a statement by a group of anti-coup lawyers, which confirmed that some had been ordered released. Multiple political figures and pro-democracy activists are among those who have been detained.

Pro-democracy lawyer Enaam Attik said authorities have ordered that more than 40 people arrested in the crackdown on anti-coup protests be freed.

During Monday's demonstrations, protesters called on the military "to go back to the barracks" in the city of Wad Madani, south of Khartoum, witnesses said.

In the eastern state of Gedaref they chanted, "Civilian is the people's choice," according to witness Amal Hussein.

Demonstrators also marched to rally outside a government building in the Red Sea city of Port Sudan but security forces blocked their route with tear gas, according to witnesses.

In the eastern border state of Kassala, young protesters chanted, "No, no to military rule" as they headed toward a military base in the city, witness Hussein Idris said.

Security forces in the capital Khartoum fired tear gas at hundreds of protesters who tried to rally outside the presidential palace, where the ruling Sovereign Council is based along the Nile River, an AFP correspondent said.

The latest demonstrations came one day after United Nations human rights expert Adama Dieng arrived on his first official visit to Sudan.

Dieng is scheduled to meet with senior Sudanese government officials, diplomats, rights defenders and others.

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Taliban Aiming to Create Grand Army for Afghanistan

KABUL (Dispatches) - The Taliban are creating a "grand army" for Afghanistan that will include officers and troops who served the old regime, the official tasked with overseeing the military's transformation said Monday.

Latifullah Hakimi, head of the Taliban's Ranks Clearance Commission, also told a news conference they had repaired half the 81 helicopters and planes supposedly rendered unserviceable by US-led forces during last year's chaotic withdrawal.

He said Taliban forces took control of more than 300,000 light arms, 26,000 heavy weapons and around 61,000 military vehicles during their lightning takeover of the country.

Afghanistan's armed forces disintegrated last summer in the face of a Taliban onslaught ahead of the August 31 US-led force withdrawal -- often abandoning their bases and leaving behind all their weapons and vehicles.

The Taliban have promised a general amnesty for everyone linked to the old regime, but almost all senior government and military officials were among the more than 120,000 people who evacuated by air in the final days.

Many of the rank and file remained, however, melting back into civilian life and keeping a low profile for fear of reprisals.

The United Nations said in January more than 100 people linked to the old armed forces have been killed since August.

Hakimi insisted, however, that the Taliban amnesty had worked well. "If it hadn't been issued, we would have witnessed a very bad situation," he said.

"The suicide bombers who were chasing a person to target him, are now the same suicide bombers protecting him," he added.

There has been little evidence the Taliban have absorbed former troops into their ranks, but over the weekend they named two senior ex-Afghan National Army officers to top posts in the defence ministry.

Both are specialist surgeons attached to the country's main military hospital. "Our work on the formation of an army is going on," Hakimi said.

"Professionals including pilots and engineers, service persons, logistical and administrative staff (from the previous regime) are in their places in the security sector."

Hakimi said they would form "a grand army... according to the country's needs and the national interests", although he did not specify a size. He said the army would only be one that the country could afford.

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Lula Holds Healthy Lead In Brazil Presidential Race

SAO PAULO (Dispatches)

- Brazil's former leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva still holds a

healthy lead in this year's presidential race over right-wing incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, according to a new poll released on Monday.

The survey run by MDA Pesquisa and sponsored by the National Transportation Confederation (CNT) showed 42% support for Lula and 28% for Bolsonaro, if the October election were held today.

The results showed a marginal improvement for Bolsonaro compared to MDA's last survey in December, when the incumbent polled at 26% compared to 43% for Lula. Other polls this month have also shown a slightly tighter race.

Although they have not formally declared their candidacies, the rivals made clear their intentions to run. Financial markets have been reacting to signals from Lula about economic proposals if his Workers Party returns to power.

The election is shaping up to be a highly polarized race between the current and former presidents, with little room to date for a third challenger.

Former Ceara Governor Ciro Gomes and former Justice Minister Sergio Moro both polled just shy of 7% in the MDA survey, with the latter slipping from nearly 9% in December. Sao Paulo Governor Joao Doria remained stuck on 2%.

The poll of 2,002 potential voters was conducted Feb. 16-19 via in-person interviews, with a margin of error of 2.2 percentage points.

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Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Farmanieh Apt (\$2200)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, L.balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Elahieh Villa (\$4000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Zaferanieh Apt (\$2000) F.F
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg

(\$3000)
Darrous Apt
300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p
S, J, & F.F

Elahieh bldg (\$5000) renovated
4storey, 12bdrs
enough pkg lots

Sa`adat abad (\$1400)
130sq.m, 2bdrs, & F.F

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Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
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Chevron Seeks to Sell Equatorial Guinea Oil and Gas Assets

LONDON (Dispatches) - Chevron is looking to sell its stakes in three oil and gas fields in Equatorial Guinea, hoping a recent rally in energy prices will help attract buyers, three industry sources told Reuters.

The U.S. company acquired the assets in the west African country as part of the \$13 billion acquisition of Noble Energy in 2020.

Chevron has hired investment bank Jefferies to run the sale process which could raise as much as \$1 billion, the sources said.

Chevron declined to comment. Jefferies declined to comment. The decision to sell the Equatorial Guinea assets comes as Chevron focuses on its most profitable production hubs including the U.S. Permian shale basin and Kazakhstan, the sources said.



Eurozone Recovery Regained Pace in February

LONDON (Dispatches) - The eurozone economic recovery regained momentum this month as an easing of coronavirus restrictions gave a boost to the bloc's dominant service industry, a survey showed, but consumers faced prices rising at a record rate.

As the Omicron coronavirus variant swept across Europe some governments reimposed measures to contain its spread, but with large swathes of the population now vaccinated many of those measures have been eased.

IHS Markit's Flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index, seen as guide to overall economic health, jumped to a five-month high of 55.8 in February from 52.3 in January, significantly above the median 52.7 forecast in a Reuters poll.

"The surge in the eurozone flash Composite PMI for February suggests activity is recovering well from the pandemic-related weakness over the winter," said Andrew Kenningham at Capital Economics.

"Having regained its pre-pandemic level in Q4 2021, the eurozone economy is likely to expand at a reasonable pace in the first quarter of this year and should accelerate in the next two quarters as tourism, travel and hospitality get back to normal."

A flash PMI for the service industry soared to 55.8 from 51.1, a five-month high and above all forecasts in a Reuters poll that had predicted only a modest rise to 52.0. Anything above 50 indicates growth.

Improving demand for services pushed business activity across Germany's private sector to a six-month high, while in France growth was stronger than expected, helped by an improvement in the COVID-19 situation.

In Britain, outside the common currency bloc and the European Union, the private sector picked up at the fastest pace since June 2021, as spending on travel, leisure and entertainment rose after an easing of coronavirus cases.

Factories had another solid month and the flash eurozone manufacturing PMI only dipped from January's 58.7 - where the Reuters poll predicted it would hold - coming in at 58.4. An index measuring output, which feeds into the composite PMI nudged up to 55.6 from 55.4.

Activity could have been faster but lingering supply chain bottlenecks and booming demand meant factories were unable to keep up, and the backlogs of work index rose to 58.7 from 56.9.

With the economy reopening, and amid hopes the worst of the pandemic is over, optimism improved across the board. The services business expectations index climbed to 68.7 from 67.2.

"The forward-looking indicators were also encouraging as year-ahead sentiment rose in February to its strongest since June 2021," said Ricardo Amaro at Oxford Economics.

"The weak start to the year means eurozone GDP growth is likely to remain modest in Q1, but today's PMI results chime with our forecast that solid growth will resume in Q2."

The economic rebound came despite overall prices charged by firms rising at the fastest rate since IHS Markit began collecting the data in late 2002. The composite output prices index climbed to 62.7 from 61.9.

Thai Economy Returns to Growth in Q4

BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thailand's economy returned to growth in the fourth quarter, expanding faster than expected, but the 2021 pace was one of the slowest in Southeast Asia and the recovery this year is likely to be modest as tourism remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

The government maintained its gross domestic product (GDP) growth outlook at 3.5%-4.5%, counting on a limited impact from the Omicron-driven coronavirus outbreak, stronger domestic demand and tourism and continued support from exports and public investment.

Southeast Asia's second-largest economy expanded a seasonally adjusted 1.8% in the December quarter from the previous three months, data from the National Economic and Social Development Council showed on Monday, outstripping a forecast 1.4% increase in a Reuters poll, and after a revised seasonally adjusted 0.9% contraction in the third quarter.

The state planning agency expected 5.5 million tourists in 2022, up from a forecast of 5 million in November, after the government resumed a quarantine waiver for overseas visitors this month to help revive the vital sector, which normally accounts for about 12% of Thai GDP.

However, those numbers are still well below 40 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2019.

Analysts at Capital Economics expect the overall economic recovery over 2022 is likely to be weak, and would largely depend on how quickly tourists return.

"While we expect a sustained recovery in the tourism sector to get underway this year, arrivals will still be far fewer than pre-pandemic, meaning the overall economic recovery will remain weak," they wrote in a note to clients. From a year earlier, GDP grew 1.9% in October-December, beating a forecast 0.7% rise, and against a revised 0.2% contraction in the previous three months.

For 2021, however, Thailand's GDP growth of 1.6% was one of the slowest in Southeast Asia, after a revised 6.2% contraction in 2020.

Fourth-quarter growth was helped by robust exports and a recovery in domestic activity following an easing of coronavirus curbs and as borders reopened to foreign visitors.

The economy is likely to perform well in the first quarter of this year, but there is some inflationary pressure, NESDC chief Danucha Pichayanan told a news conference.



Beijing Places Sanctions on U.S. Arms Companies

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China has placed U.S. companies Lockheed Martin Corp LMT.N and Raytheon Technologies Corp RTX.N under sanctions over U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

The sanctions are countermeasures against the two companies over a \$100 million February 7 arms sale that "undermined China's security interests, seriously undermined China-U.S. relations and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait", foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a regular news briefing.

Beijing says that the self-ruled island of Taiwan is a breakaway province that must be reunified with the mainland. "In accordance with the relevant stipulations in China's anti-foreign sanctions law, the Chinese government has decided to take countermeasures on the infringing acts of Raytheon Technologies and Lockheed Martin," Wang said.

"Both are military enterprises that have long participated in US arm sales to China's Taiwan region."

No further details were given on the nature of the sanctions.

This is the first time the companies have faced sanctions under China's new anti-foreign sanctions law drawn up last year in response to US sanctions against Chinese companies.

On at least two previous occasions China has announced sanctions against Lockheed and Raytheon, in 2019 and 2020, though Beijing provided no further details.



German Economy Likely to Shrink in the First Quarter

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The German economy is likely to shrink in the current quarter, the Bundesbank said on Monday, before rebounding in the spring.

Publishing its monthly report, the federal bank said the new wave of Covid-19 infections had stopped people from going to work.

It noted: "German economic output is likely to decline again markedly in the first quarter

of 2022. This is due to the resurgence of the pandemic, caused by the Omicron variant. In contrast to previous waves...the services sector is unlikely to be the only one in which activity is being adversely affected by containment measures and social and physical distancing requirements.

"In fact, working hours lost due to the pandemic could also be having a distinctly dampening effect on economic output, and in other sectors too."

Should the economy slow, it would be the second consecutive quarter of decline and technically put Germany into recession. GDP shrank by 0.7% in the final three months of 2021, after supply chain bottlenecks as well as the reintroduction of Covid-19 restrictions weighed heavily on the manufacturing-dependent economy.

However, the Bundesbank said the bottlenecks were now easing, which coupled with high demand, should lead to a rebound in spring.

"In light of very robust demand, GDP is likely to rebound strongly in the second quarter, provided the pandemic subsides and the supply bottlenecks continue to ease," it forecast.

The report coincided with separate data, also published on Monday, from Destatis, Germany's Federal Statistics Office, showing that producer prices of industrial products had surged 25% in January, the fastest annual rate since modern records began in 1949.

Much of the rise was attributed to soaring energy costs, which were ahead 66.7% compared to January 2021. Natural gas prices surged 119%.

January's increase in producer prices - which was ahead of analyst expectations - follows jumps of 24.2% in December and 19.2% in November.

Businesses are increasingly expected to pass on the higher costs to customers, fuelling consumer inflation.

Russian Banks Imported \$5b In Foreign Cash In December

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian ratings agency ACRA estimates that the country's banks imported \$5 billion worth of banknotes in foreign currencies in December, up from \$2.65 billion a year before, in a pre-emptive step in case of sanctions creating increased demand.

Dollars traditionally dominate such imports which, along with other currencies, many Russians like to hold as a hedge against any drop in the value of the rouble or rise in inflation, both potential outcomes of foreign sanctions.

Valery Piven, senior director at ACRA, told Reuters that calculations based on technical reports which banks submit to Russia's central bank each month showed that they had also imported \$2.1 billion in foreign banknotes in November.

The United States is considering new sanctions against Russia, proposing to cut some of its top banks from dollar transactions and reducing their ability to service dollar-denominated obligations, sources told Reuters. "The ratio of forex assets and liabilities held by banks is regulated by the central bank and (currently) does not cause a concern. The increase in (forex) imports is more related to a possible spike in demand for cash currency," Piven said.

Russia's central bank declined to comment but the country's banks regularly import foreign currencies in cash to meet demand from customers for dollars or euros needed for overseas travel or in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Despite heightened fears of a military conflict in Ukraine, the foreign exchange imports in December are still well short of the \$18 billion brought into Russia at the end of 2014, when the rouble was in free-fall after Moscow's annexation of Crimea.



Russian denies that it plans to attack Ukraine.

Around a half of Russia's total banking foreign assets and liabilities, or some \$100 billion and \$70 billion, respectively, are held in U.S. dollars, central bank data shows. This is down from around 80% in 2002 and 70% in early 2014.

Russia's top banks Sberbank, VTB, VEB and Gazprombank, which were named in the Reuters report on Monday as possible dollar sanctions targets, did not reply to requests for comment.

The Russian finance ministry did not respond to a request for comment. In preparation for possible sanctions on dollar transactions first floated by U.S. officials a few years ago, Russia's top banks opened correspondent accounts between themselves, allowing them to move dollars around domestically, sources have said, provided at least one major lender is untouched by sanctions.

Kuwait Airways Raises Airbus Order to 31 Jets in \$6b Deal



KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) - Kuwait Airways announced an expanded \$6 billion deal with Airbus for 31 planes, restructuring an agreement reached in 2014. The deal comes after what the airline labelled occasionally "heated" negotiations following probes over allegations of kickbacks surrounding the initial order.

"We have managed to agree on a monumental restructuring that will position Kuwait Airways in a much stronger place to succeed for the next 15 years," company chairman Ali Al-Dukhan told a news conference.

The new agreement, which adds three new aircraft to the existing order of 28, includes nine Airbus A320neo, six A321neo, three A321neoLR, four A330-800neo, seven A330-900neo and two A350-900.

Al-Dukhan said the reshaped deal, aimed at giving the airline greater flexibility after the travel industry was rocked by the coronavirus pandemic, now carried a "total value of about \$6 billion".

"Although corrections were made in 2018, the deal needed further corrections to suit Kuwait Airways' future, especially with the need to transition and become more flexible in a post-Covid aviation industry," he said.

Negotiations took place against the backdrop of bribery allegations that cost Airbus billions of dollars in settlement fees in other countries in 2020.

"As we initiated the negotiations, we knew we were already the underdogs going in as 40 percent of the deal's value had already been paid and the delivery had started," Al-Dukhan said.

He added: "We entered four months of serious, professional negotiations, which did get heated at times, but always maintained respect and understanding of each other's wants and needs."

Kuwait Airways had initially ordered 15 Airbus A320neo and 10 A350 in 2014, with delivery beginning in 2019.

Gov't Intensifies Health Care Monitoring for Fighting Coronavirus

TEHRAN (IP) - The latest state of health policy oversight was reviewed at the 37th session of the National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus Operations Headquarters, calling for the continuance of monitoring Health care activities. The meeting, which is underway and being chaired by Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi, also included a report on the latest educational situation and the monitoring of health practices in Iran's educational sector. Presenting a report on the latest status of monitoring the health practices of the guilds and transportation sectors is another item on the agenda of this meeting.



Iran-Italy Digital Forum on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Services

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Italian Embassy in Iran hosted a virtual business forum on February 22 in cooperation with the Italian Trade Agency office in Tehran. The Forum shed light on opportunities in Iran for Italian companies in the field of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, dental equipment and food supplements.

The event was attended by the two countries' main sectoral trade and professional associations, as well as over 100 Italian and Iranian companies and the bilateral Chambers of Commerce of Rome and Tehran.

In his opening remarks the Italian Ambassador in Tehran, Giuseppe Perrone, indicated that the initiative is part of an already fruitful bilateral collaboration in the healthcare sector. The donation by Italy to Iran of 2.25 million of AstraZeneca vaccine doses against COVID19 and the cooperation agreements among hospitals and research institutes of the two countries are among the latest and most significant examples.

Mr. Perrone went on to stress the points of strength of Italy's pharmaceutical and medical devices industry in terms of production value, innovation capacity, integration with academia and eco-sustainable approach.

In thanking Italy for its timely support to the Islamic Republic of Iran and its excellent cooperation in the fight against COVID19, the representatives of the Iranian Ministry of Health stressed the joint accomplishments so far achieved with Italy as well as Iran's readiness to support mutual exchanges and develop joint initiatives in the area of medical devices and pharmaceutical products.

The ensuing discussion highlighted the untapped potential for further growth of bilateral relations in the healthcare sector.

Companies of both countries underlined their wish to intensify bilateral trade and

Webinar on Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Market in Iran February 22, 2022



investment ties and singled out specific opportunities for joint action.

Different avenues for cooperation have been explored, not only in terms of import-export, but also of partnership agreements and joint-ventures.

Best practices experienced in this field by Italian companies with decades of experience in Iran and their Iranian counterparts, have also been shared.

Looking ahead with a view to further expanding trade opportunities, the Italian Trade Agency is coordinating the participation by Italian companies in IranHealth, a fair dedicated to medical devices, dental equipment and the pharmaceutical industry, to be held in Tehran from the 23rd to the 26th of the coming month of May.

Iranian Border Province Welcomes Deepening Cooperation With Baku

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's northwestern West Azerbaijan Province welcomes the development of economic cooperation with neighboring countries, including Azerbaijan, Governor Mohammad Sadegh Motamedian said on Monday.

Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting with Azerbaijani Ambassador to Iran Ali Alizada, Sadegh emphasized that relations with neighboring countries are among the top priorities of the province when it comes to exports.

Motamedian also added that the West Azerbaijan Province is ready to take part in the reconstruction of Azerbaijan's territories liberated from Armenian occupation in the Second Karabakh War.

"There are no obstacles for the development of relations between Iran's West Azerbaijan Province and Azerbaijan, and the province is fully ready to strengthen relations," he added.

According to the governor, currently, the West Azerbaijan Province of Iran and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan boast high-level ties.

Motamedian noted that one of Iran's few border crossings that remained open during the coronavirus pandemic was with Azerbaijan, adding that this issue reflects the significance of political and economic relations between the two countries.

"The West Azerbaijan Province is located within the international corridor. Thus, there are three airports, nine border checkpoints, and five border terminals operating in the province. The region also boasts great potential in the mining, agriculture, and industry sectors," concluded Motamedian.

Qataris Welcome Iranian Goods

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy chief of Iran-Qatar joint commerce of chamber said that Qatar is a good business, transit partner for Iran and Qatari people welcome the Iranian goods.

Khorshid Gazderazi said that Iran and Qatar have a good background of economic and cultural relations and have great potential to expand ties given their geographical proximity and proper maritime distance.

Qatar is a good consumer of Iranian products and Iran has also a high capacity to link Eurasian countries with Qatar through proper transit routes, Gazderazi said, noting that Iran is still absent in the list of up to ten business partners of Qatar due to sanctions.

She recommended establishment of trading houses in Qatar for Iranian businesspeople to pave the way for Iran's broader presence in the Qatari markets.

Iran has experienced 300-billion-dollar yearly exports to Qatar in the culmination of sanctions against Iran, Gazderazi said while expressing regret over sharp decline in the figure this year.

However, she expressed hope that the condition can change by facilitation and acceleration of release of goods in customs to increase exports to Qatar to 500 billion dollars.

The official noted that Qatari consumers favor Iranian goods and Iranian agricultural products and Building material have good market in Qatar.

70 percent of Iran's trade with Qatar is done through Bushehr Port in southern Iran, Gazderazi mentioned, adding that the government can facilitate the trade by improving the port's infrastructure.

Gaza Construction Workers Find 31 Roman-Era Tombs

GAZA CITY (Dispatches) - Construction workers at a building site in northern Gaza have uncovered 31 Roman-era tombs dating from the first century AD, the Palestinian territory's Islamist rulers Hamas said Monday.

The tombs were discovered near the town of Beit Lahia as work began on an Egyptian-funded residential area, part of the \$500 million reconstruction package Cairo pledged after the 11-day war in May between Israel and armed groups in the Gaza Strip.

Naji Sarhan, an official at Gaza's Ministry of Public Works, confirmed the find and said there is "evidence that there are other graves" at the site. Construction work has been halted and technicians from Gaza's Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism have been sent to the site to catalogue gravestones and artefacts, officials said.

One technician, who requested anonymity, said the tombs were believed to be part of a cemetery linked to a nearby Roman site in Balakhiya. The find was the latest in Gaza, where tourism to archaeological sites is limited due to an Israeli blockade imposed since Hamas took over the strip in 2007.

Israel and Egypt, which shares a border with Gaza, tightly restrict the flow of people in and out of the impoverished strip, which is home to about 2.3 million Palestinians. Last month, Hamas reopened the remains of a fifth-century Byzantine church following a years-long restoration effort backed by foreign donors.

EU Agrees to Help Cyprus Manage Record Migrant Influx

NICOSIA (Dispatches) - Cyprus struck a deal with the European Union to help it handle a large migrant influx to the divided Mediterranean island, which Nicosia says is the highest per capita in the EU.

The agreement will make it easier for Cyprus to send back failed asylum seekers and help upgrade its overcrowded reception facilities.

The Republic of Cyprus accuses Turkey, whose troops have since 1974 occupied the island's northern third, of encouraging much of the influx of Syrian refugees and arrivals from sub-Saharan Africa across the

UN-patrolled Green Line that divides the island.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by Cypriot Interior Minister Nicos Nouris and EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson, who attended virtually.

"Today is a milestone for the Republic of Cyprus and efforts made by the government to manage a problem that has plagued our country," Nouris said at the ceremony.

Johansson tweeted that the deal would help Cyprus implement "timely asylum procedures" to reduce the backlog, "establish effective integration and improve the efficiency of returns".

President URGES GEC...

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The Iranian chief executive also noted that an interactive environment between the gas exporting countries can ensure the individual interests of each member state in the form of a collective strategy based on joint cooperation.

As one of the countries with the largest natural gas reserves in the world, Iran has a very high capacity for the production, transmission, and export of natural gas and greater participation in ensuring the security of the global energy supply, he added.

"Despite the cruel, unilateral, and illegal US sanctions, the Islamic Republic has been able to increase its natural gas production and implement large and valuable projects in the oil and gas sectors by relying on the capabilities of its dedicated experts and using domestic companies and localized technical knowledge."

President Raisi has hailed the resistance of Iran and Venezuela against the Western domination and imperialism, saying the most valuable asset of the two countries is their people who have decided to withstand the hegemonic powers' excessive demands. Raisi hailed Iran's achievements in different sectors despite illegal sanctions, saying the country's progress has prompted US officials to acknowledge the "disgraceful" failure of their maximum pressure campaign.

"In spite of the enemies' will, the Islamic Republic has made significant progress in various fields, including those under the most severe sanctions and pressure," he said at a meeting with a group of Iranians residing in Qatar.

"Today, that progress has prompted US authorities to officially acknowledge that the policy of maximum pressure has suffered a disgraceful defeat in the face of the maximum resistance of the Iranian nation."

Also in his remarks, Raisi invited the Iranian diaspora active in the economic sector to help boost Iran's exports to the region.

Doha has a serious will to expand its trade and economic relations with Tehran, so the Iranians living in Qatar can play an effective role in this regard, he added.

Raisi further expressed his satisfaction with the measures, which are being taken in Iran to facilitate investment and economic activities. He also stressed that his government has put the available capacities for cooperation

Iran Desires...

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He said the business community of Pakistan could get opportunity of making investment or doing business in Iran and the Iranian consulates are ready to facilitate them. Likewise other parts in Pakistan, the exhibition of Iranian products will also be organized in Hyderabad soon, he informed and invited HCCI to also take part in the international webinars, which planned by the Iran government for promotion of business activities.

HCCI President Muhammad Faizan Elahi, while welcoming the Consul

General Iran, said Hyderabad was the second largest trade and industrial hub of Sindh province and the business community has been engaged in exporting different products including raw cotton, textile yarn, surgical equipment, handicrafts, petroleum products, fruits and vegetables to different countries of the world.

He said that Pakistan had strong brotherly relations with Iran and organizing trade exhibitions and webinars, these relations would further stronger.

Iran Ready for...

FROM PAGE 1

Over the last two years, we have witnessed the outbreak of the COVID-19 and its new variant, Omicron, as well as its adverse impacts on social and economic conditions of major countries across the globe. Although gas industry has been less affected than other sectors, it has had its ups and downs. The current energy crisis, the fluctuations in global gas market in particular, has mainly caused by global gas supply and demand, especially in the European Union where declining storage and restrictions on natural gas supply resulted in rising prices in various regions and markets. On the other hand, the absence of strategic stability has been a major factor in recent developments in high natural gas prices in Europe, he said.

Accounting for 50 percent of the world's natural gas exports, the GECF has been able to maintain its strategic role in the sustainable supply of natural gas to the world despite the outbreak of corona virus pandemic. This owes much to the member states' perseverance and reflects the forum's effective strategy. Considering the energy transition as well as the requirements of the climate change and sustainable development, the GECF has tried to improve the security of natural gas supply in regional and global markets and paved the way for an inclusive development of natural gas and LNG consumption as the available and eco-friendly fuel across the world, especially energy-poor countries, he said.

Iran's core policy, as one of the world's largest holders of proven natural gas reserves and a founder of GECF, is to provide maximum support to the spirit of cooperation and GECF collective decisions in accordance with the GECF Statute and the procedures agreed upon by the forum's member states to fulfill the interests of natural gas exporters and importers, Owji added.

It is noteworthy that Iran, with 338,000 kilometers of gas supply network, is one of the leading countries in this area. Therefore, we strongly believe that the imposition of unilateral and transnational sanctions against any of the Forum's member states can disrupt the steady flow of natural gas worldwide and jeopardize the security of natural gas supply, he said.

In this regard, member states and observers' supports for the concepts of "depoliticization of international and global gas cooperation", and "return to economic logic and multilateralism", also emphasized in the Summit's statement, can play a significant role in maintaining security of gas supply and demand in the world and realization of fair prices for all stakeholders in the global gas industry. The imposition of unilateral and illegal sanctions against Forum's members is not only against international laws, but also a major cause of uncertainty in the global energy market, he mentioned.

In addition to revenue generation, reviving gas swap can help increase Iran's share in world gas trade. Just in four months after the 13th government took office, Iran, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan signed an agreement to swap two billion cubic meters of gas which can not only help maintain stability of gas network in northern provinces of Iran, will also strengthen Iran's share in global gas trade, he stated.

The 13th government and the Ministry of Petroleum are determined to increase Iran's share in natural gas trade and help meet the growing gas demand in the world through developing Iran's regional and international relations in gas trade, the Iranian minister said.

We are ready to cooperate with all member countries of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum in the existing ways of natural gas and LNG trade including swaps, transit and other common methods. It should be noted that our country's geopolitics is in a way that can be used as the most desirable corridor for gas transmission to the East and West, he added.

We not only have the largest gas reserves in the world, but also neighbor the world's largest gas reserves holders, including Russia, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in the north, and Qatar in the south. We also have access to the gas exports corridor to Europe via Turkey. All these indicate the importance of Iran as one of the main pillars of global gas trade, Owji noted.

Meanwhile, the large size of the country enables the storage with the cooperation of Forum's members to control seasonal conditions. It is worth mentioning that as a leading country in construction and expansion of domestic gas supply network, we have the appropriate technical and engineering capacity to partner with the member countries, he added.

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Ireland Edge Into T20 World Cup Qualifier Semis

MUSCAT (Dispatches) - Ireland edged into the semi-finals of qualifying for this year's T20 World Cup on net run-rate with a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Germany in Oman. The Germans could only post 107-7 from their 20 overs, and a third successive fifty partnership from openers Paul Stirling and Andy Balbirnie ensured the Irish reached their target, with 41 balls to spare. That was enough to put them top of Group A at the Global Qualifier A tournament, despite losing their opening game to the United Arab Emirates.

Leverkusen Striker Schick out for Weeks

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayer Leverkusen striker Patrik Schick will be out for "some weeks" after picking up a calf injury in his side's defeat to Mainz, the club said. In-form Czech striker Schick scored his 20th goal of the season in the 3-2 loss to Mainz on Friday, but came off injured early in the second half. Leverkusen confirmed Sunday that he had torn a muscle in his left calf. "Schick will not be available for some weeks," the club said in a statement.

Curry Wins MVP With 16 Threes In All-Star Performance

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Somebody forgot to tell Stephen Curry that the three-point contest was Saturday as the Golden State Warriors superstar put on a shooting clinic to lead Team LeBron to victory in the 2022 NBA All-Star Game.

LeBron James sank the game-winning basket as his side edged Team Durant 163-160, giving James his fifth straight all-star win as team captain.

But Curry was the brightest shooting star, winning the MVP award with a 50-point performance that included a record 16 threes in front of a crowd of 19,400 at Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse in Cleveland, Ohio.

He finished just two shy of Anthony Davis' single-game scoring record of 52 points but shattered Paul George's previous record of nine threes in 2016.

"I tried, I tried," said Curry of flirting with the single-game scoring record, held by Los Angeles Lakers' Davis who scored 52 points in 2017.

"When I get going the energy picks up. It is pretty special being back in Ohio.

"Obviously this trophy has very special meaning. I am very humbled, very blessed and I appreciate it."

The All-Star Game was preceded by the three-point shooting contest on Saturday, a competition Curry won in 2021 in Chicago. Karl-Anthony Towns won this year's contest, which Curry did not enter.

Curry was booed during the introductions because of the three titles he won over the Cleveland Cavaliers with the Warriors.

Ohio-born local hero James nailed the winning shot with a fadeaway jumper to elevate Team LeBron to the target score of 163.

"I could not have dreamed of that moment, any better than the actuality that just happened," James said.

The 37-year-old was playing in his 18th all-star game, which ties him with the late Kobe Bryant and moves him to one shy of the record held by Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

James was one of two captains, the other being Brooklyn Nets star Kevin Durant, who did not attend the game due to the death earlier Sunday of his grandmother.

Memphis Grizzlies rising star Ja Morant



scored six points and was one of seven players making their all-star debut.

The other first-time all-stars were the Charlotte Hornets' LaMelo Ball, Cleveland Cavaliers duo Jarrett Allen and Darius Garland, the Golden State Warriors' Andrew Wiggins, the San Antonio Spurs' Dejounte Murray and the Toronto Raptors' Fred VanVleet.

During Saturday's halftime, the league honored the NBA's 75th Anniversary Team with players from every decade of the league's existence in attendance for the diamond anniversary.

The 76 players who made up the anniversary team — including six 2022 all-stars — have combined for 736 all-star selections.

"I was like a kid in a candy store just watching all the greats, all the legends," said Curry of meeting his boyhood heroes. "That helped me in the third quarter because I just let loose and had fun.

"You walk around talking to the best of the best, it brings out the best in you."

The Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo enjoyed chatting with the hall of famers, including the legendary Michael Jordan for the first time.

"I just went up to introduce myself to him," Antetokounmpo said. "I was kind of surprised he knew who I was... No, I'm joking."

James also embraced shaking hands post-game with Jordan.

"I did not want to lose the opportunity to shake the man's hand that inspired me throughout my childhood," James said. "It's crazy that the game-winning shot tonight was a fadeaway, and it was inspired by MJ."

Rublev Claims Ninth Title

MARSEILLE (Dispatches) - Andrey Rublev won his ninth career title by beating Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) in the Marseille final.

"All the battles I have had with Felix since the first time back in 2018 have had drama," Rublev said in his on-court interview. "All have had at least one set that went 7-6 and now he is one of the greatest players."

The Russian, ranked seventh in the world, took revenge on the Canadian who won their meeting in the Rotterdam semi-final last week on the way to a first career title, after losing all eight previous finals he had played.

"I've had two good weeks," said the Canadian. "I hope to win more titles."

Rublev has now won all the five hard-court finals he has contested but has had a bad run over the last 12 months.

Since winning in Rotterdam last March, Rublev had lost finals in Monte-Carlo, Cincinnati and Halle.

Third-seeded Auger-Aliassime broke second seed Rublev in the second game of the match, but Rublev broke back at once and broke again in the 12th game to take the set.

In the second set, Rublev failed to serve out for the match at 5-4, but saved a set point in his next service game to force a tiebreak which he won to clinch the match in one hour and 57 minutes.

Cavendish Brings the Heat

PARIS (Dispatches) - After a day of slow-motion cycling, Mark Cavendish hit top speed in the final 400 meters on Monday to edge Jasper Philipsen and win the second stage of the UAE Tour.

"I knew we could win here," said Cavendish.

On the second day of the first World Tour race of season, the peloton dawdled through a flat 173km stage that toured Abu Dhabi, with the speed dipping to 20kmh.

At the end, the sprinters' teams upped the pace.

Quick-Step rider Cavendish went early and held off Belgian Philipsen, winner of Sunday's opening stage. "A third of the team are first year professionals so this is the first or second race in their career," said Cavendish. "They were super professional today.

"Their job was to get me to the final with me feeling as fresh as possible and they did it so well that I was able to launch with 300 to 350m to go into a headwind. I'm happy I could hold off Philipsen."

German Pascal Ackermann, who rides for home team UAE, was just behind in third.

Philipsen, who rides for Alpecin-Fenix, preserved his four-second lead in the overall standings, with Russian Dmitry Strakhov of Gazprom second. Cavendish climbed to third.

"I was missing just a few watts today," said Philipsen. "I was a bit far back at the end but I just had to go. I knew it was going to be a tough sprint because of the headwind and Mark was the fastest today."

Strakhov did cut Philipsen's lead in the points classification after spending a warm, windy day focusing on intermediate sprints.

Next stage is a 9km time trial around the village of Ajman which should give Team UAE star Tadej Pogacar a chance to shine.

Ajax Agree 7.85m Euros Compensation for Nouri

THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - Ajax said on Monday they will pay 7.85 million euros (\$8.91 million) to the family of former player Abdelhak Nouri, who suffered brain damage after a cardiac arrest during a friendly match more than four years ago.

Ex-Netherlands youth team midfielder Nouri, now 24, collapsed during a pre-season fixture with Werder Bremen in July 2017.

Man City Condemn Abuse of Foden at Boxing Bout



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City have condemned the abuse that Phil Foden and his family endured while attending Kell Brook's boxing bout against Amir Khan on Saturday.

Video footage of the incident has emerged on social media, with City forward Foden being heckled by unidentified members of the public while backstage at the Manchester Arena.

England midfielder Foden's mother Claire appeared to be stuck in an ugly scene that saw the player's family and entourage come to his defense.

"The club is aware of a video which has circulated on social media showing Phil Foden and his family being harassed and abused," a City statement said on Sunday.

"We are shocked and appalled about the nature of the abuse and ensuing assault on one of Phil's family members.

"We will continue to give Phil and his family all the support and assistance they need."

Foden attended the bout, which Brook won by a sixth-round stoppage, after playing in City's 3-2 Premier League defeat against Tottenham at the Etihad Stadium earlier on Saturday.

India Sweep T20 Series Against W. Indies

KOLKATA (Dispatches) - Batsmen KSuryakumar Yadav and Venkatesh Iyer helped India beat West Indies by 17 runs in the third Twenty20 international to sweep the series 3-0.

Yadav, who smashed 65, and Venkatesh, who made an unbeaten 35, put on 91 runs for the fifth wicket to guide India to 184 for five after being invited to bat first in Kolkata.

Venkatesh also took two wickets with his medium-pace as the bowlers restricted West Indies to 167-9 as the hosts remained unbeaten in the six white-ball matches including a 3-0 ODI triumph.

India, led by Rohit Sharma who was appointed Test captain on Saturday to complete his leadership takeover across formats, will now overtake England as the world's number-ranked T20 team.

"It was a good challenge for us to defend in both games, and we did well," Rohit said after the clean sweep.

"Few guys miss out for the Sri Lanka series (starting Thursday with the first of the three T20s) because we want to keep them fresh. But we have the World Cup in mind and we are trying to give game time to individuals."

Wicketkeeper-batsman Nicholas Pooran, who hit 61, raised hopes of a West Indies chase with two partnerships including a 48-run seventh-wicket stand with Romario Shepherd.

Pace bowler Shardul Thakur broke the stand to send back the left-handed Pooran and Shepherd fell for 29 off Harshal Patel who stood out with figures of 3-22.

Pace spearhead Deepak Chahar removed the openers early before limping off the ground after 1.5 overs.

Pooran, who hit his third successive half-century, and Rovman Powell, who smashed 25, counter-attacked in their partnership of 47 off 25 balls but Patel broke through.



Shiffrin Vows to Rebound After Epic Olympic Under-Performance

YANQING (Dispatches) - Mikaela Shiffrin arrived at the Beijing Games as one of the most recognizable and decorated figures in wintersports, at the peak of a career in which she has dominated the World Cup.

But the American will return home from China with nothing to show from what she dubbed an "epic under-performance". The 26-year-old failed to add to the two Olympic golds she won in the 2014 and 2018 Games in Sochi and Pyeongchang.

Not only did Shiffrin fail to even finish the slalom, giant slalom and alpine combined -- three events in which she had been a keen favourite -- she did not get close to the podium in either the super-G or downhill either.

Her failure to medal in those events, Shiffrin said, had left her feeling "like a joke", especially after what she said had been a good run-in to the Games.

Redemption came in part from a fourth-placed finish with the U.S. quartet in the program-ending mixed team parallel event on Sunday.

Shiffrin insisted that her experience at the Beijing Games had given her a learning curve on how to stay positive, notably in the face of criticism, and bounce back from accumulated setbacks.

"Every single person on earth goes through some kind of hardship and you just need to get up," she said. "It's the most important takeaway from the last couple of weeks for me and it has nothing to do with the Olympics. "I'm just grateful that this last couple of weeks has given me a platform to actually say it and maybe even learn something about it."

Shiffrin acknowledged that some of the criticism -- both online and in the media -- she had received had been overwhelming.

