

IRAN NEWS Felicitates Its Muslim Readers the Auspicious Mabaath, The Day Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Was Selected by Almighty God for Guidance of People. The Next Issue Will Hit the News Stands on Wednesday

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Iran's Nuclear Structure Should Remain Intact



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U.S. Had No Choice But Embarrassing Pullout From Afghanistan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has dismissed U.S. claims that the withdrawal from Afghanistan had all been planned beforehand, saying they would not have opted for such an "embarrassing" pullout if they had other choices.

"You saw how the United States withdrew from Afghanistan after 20 years in such a manner. If the US could have withdrawn with any dignity and avoided the embarrassing pullout, it would certainly not choose this option," Amir-Abdollahian said told Press TV in an exclusive interview broadcast.

Even though Americans claimed backed in September last year that all developments in Afghanistan, from the US military's withdrawal from the country to the return of the Taliban to power, had been pre-planned, they requested Iran's cooperation in the end to get through that stage, he noted.

Amir-Abdollahian said he has told the caretaker Taliban foreign minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, during the latter's visit to Tehran last month that Tehran would formally recognize the group after the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

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Iran Posts \$3b Trade Deficit in 11 Months



TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian customs office (IRICA) has reported a trade deficit of just over \$3 billion for the country in the 11 months to February 19.

IRICA figures published on Saturday showed that Iran's total trade with other countries had topped \$90.094 billion in March-February, up 38% from the similar previous period.

The figures showed that Iranian trade had risen by 12% in volume terms over the same period to a total of 149.4 million metric tons (mt).

The figures exclude Iran's direct oil exports although crude products account for a large part of overseas shipments.

IRICA's deputy for technical affairs Forud Asgari said that Iranian exports over the March-February period had reached \$43.517 billion, an increase of 40% year on year.

Asgari said that export shipments had increased by 10% in volume terms in the 11 months to late February to 112.658 million mt.

The official did not elaborate on a breakdown of export figures but the huge volume could point to major increase in the Iranian overseas shipment of metals and mining products.

Asgari said imports into Iran had increased by 36% in value terms year on year in Marc-February to \$46.577 billion.

He said shipments were up by 19% in volume terms over the same period at a total of 36.777 million mt.

The official said farming inputs, manufacturing machinery, medicine and medical equipment and basic goods had accounted for a bulk of Iranian imports in the 11 months to late February.

Meanwhile spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that country's exports value registered a 22 percent hike from August 23, 2021 to Jan. 22, 2022 as compared to the same period of last year.

Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi Spokesman for IRICA said that, despite two percent decline in volume of goods exported by the country, exports value showed a 22 percent hike since the 13th government assumed office in the middle of summer.

According to statistics, 13,819,000 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$16.631 billion were imported into the country in the first five months of the current year in 1400 (from March 21 to August 22), he said, adding 45,474,000 tons of goods, valued at \$17.661 billion were exported from the country as well.

He went on to say that 19,392,000 tons of goods, valued at \$24.842 billion, were imported into the country from August 23, 2021 to Jan. 22, 2022

More than 100 million tons of goods, valued at \$38, were exported from the country in the first 10 months of the current year (from March 21, 2021 to Jan. 22, 2022), IRICA spokesman added.

In addition, 33 million tons of goods, valued at \$41 billion, were imported into the country in 10 months of the current year, Latifi added.

3 DOMESTIC

Current Int'l Developments Help Iran-Central Asia Trade Ties to Expand



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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



Humanity a Missing Link in West's Doctrine

For weeks the world has been busy with news on probable Russia's military operation against Ukraine which finally took place on Thursday and Western world began crying foul against Russian attack while it has been ignoring for years atrocities against Yemen and Yemeni people who are under air strikes of Saudi-led coalition forces and everyday several Yemenis are killed by the strikes and many people are also suffering from hunger and sanctions and nobody except Iran and a few countries gives attention to it.

On Friday, the United Nations once again warned over the critical condition in Yemen where people are starving due to the sanctions or siege of the ports of this country which makes Yemen unable import basic foods.

The UN warned that severe funding shortages pose a threat to the flow of humanitarian assistance to Yemen, saying food rations have already been cut by half for eight million people in the impoverished country.

"Aid agencies are doing everything they can to respond to people's needs, but acute funding shortages are threatening the flow of humanitarian assistance," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told a news briefing.

"Food rations have already been cut by half for eight million people. Those people may soon stop receiving food assistance from the UN altogether," he said.

He noted that at the start of this year, lack of cash had already forced two-thirds of major UN aid programs to reduce or close, adding, "Further cuts are on the horizon if funding is not received."

He reiterated his concern over the "grave situation" in Yemen, including the impact of the ongoing Saudi-led aggression, which is causing civilian casualties on a daily basis.

The UN spokesperson noted that over 23,000 Yemeni civilians have been displaced since the beginning of this year, most of them in Hudaydah, Ma'rib, Shabwah and Ta'iz provinces.

"They join more than four million men, women and children who have been displaced across Yemen since the latest escalation got underway in 2015," he said.

Dujarric called on donors to make generous aid pledges at a high-level during a planned donor conference for Yemen, which is scheduled to be held on March 16, co-hosted by the UN, Sweden and Switzerland.

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Iran Gas Exports to Turkey Up 77% in 2021

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Turkey increased gas imports from Iran by 77 percent in 2021 from a year ago to 9 billion and 248 million cubic meters.

The escalation of Iran's gas exports to turkey comes as Iran faced severe gas shortages since the beginning of this fall, with some power plants and the industrial sector forced to use highly polluting mazut fuel instead of natural gas. Iran had a 16 percent share in turkey's gas consumption last year.

It also increased gas imports from Russia by about 43 percent to nearly 24 billion cubic meters, according to a new report by turkey's statistics center. Azerbaijan has also delivered 8.3 billion cubic meters of gas to turkey.

It has also transited more than 8 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe via turkey. The United States also increased liquefied natural gas exports to Turkey by 56 percent last year to above 4.7 billion cubic meters.

Overall, imports of gas through pipelines and liquefied natural gas grew by 24 percent last year from 2020 to about 60 billion cubic meters, a historic record.

The reason for the rise in Turkish gas imports was the drop in hydroelectric power generation due to droughts and the increase in fuel for thermal power plants.

International Conference on Steelmaking & Continuous Casting

2nd ISCC(2022)

- Steel making metallurgy and processes(EAF)
- Optimization of raw materials and ferroalloys
- Secondary metallurgy and processes
- Refractories and their applications
- New developments and advanced technologies in steel continuous casting machines
- Casting and solidification of continuous casting products
- Fluid flow and solidification
- New developments in simulation and modelling
- Microstructure, and properties of continuous casting products
- Surface defects
- Mold fluxes and lubrication
- Plant enhancement technologies
- Energy management
- Artificial intelligence, big data and industry 4.0 solution
- Sustainability and environmental challenges
- Circular economy solutions

8 & 9. March. 2022
Hormozgan Steel Company
Bandar Abbas, Iran

For more information visit the following site
<https://iscc.hosco.ir>

Email : iscc@hosco.ir
Mailing address:
 6th floor, Hormoz Science and Technology Park, Bandar Abbas, Iran

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Industry Minister to Visit Yerevan in Early March

TEHRAN (MNA) - Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Reza Fatemi-Amin is going to visit Armenia on top of a high-ranking delegation on March 3 to follow up on the implementation of economic agreements previously reached between the two sides.

As reported by the portal of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Fatemi-Amin will be accompanied by TPO Head Alireza Peyman-Pak and a handful of officials from his ministry

during this visit.

According to TPO Deputy Head Mohammadreza Karimzadeh, in this trip, the Iranian officials will hold talks with their Armenian counterparts about various economic subjects, including cooperation in free zones, commodity trade, transportation, customs, and other issues related to trade between the two countries.

Iran's Nuclear Structure Should Remain Intact

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has said in a closed session that it's not accessible for Tehran to give up its nuclear structure to be able to sell oil.

Parliament representative Ahmad Alirezabeigi quoted Qalibaf as making the remarks in a close parliament session.

According to Alirezabeigi, Qalibaf has said that many issues and challenges had been solved in the talks in Vienna to remove sanctions against Iran, but some have remained, including economic guarantees.

He said that the Speaker believed that Iran should economically benefit the negotiations in Vienna and be able to sell oil unlimitedly and that the Central Bank of Iran should be able to move the funds.

Moreover, according to the MP, Qalibaf has stressed that foreign investment in Iran should be allowed.

The Speaker has also criticized International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for raising new questions after Iran had solved its issues with the nuclear watchdog on safeguards agreements.



Qalibaf has said these cases should be closed and there should be essential guarantees for that, Alirezabeigi said.

He has said that commitments should be implemented step-by-step and the Islamic Republic of Iran insists on maintaining its nuclear structure.

That Iran becomes able to sell oil but loses its nuclear structure is unacceptable, the MP cited Qalibaf as saying during the close session.

Iran and the West's commitments should be balanced, in a rational path and confirmed by the concerned bodies, Qalibaf has said.

He has also affirmed that nothing had been finalized in Vienna.

Iran Planning to Export Its PastoCovac Vaccine

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President of Pasteur Institute of Iran Alireza Biglari said that Iran has received requests to export its PastoCovac vaccine to various countries including neighbors.

Biglari said that PastoCovac is used both for adults and children.

He added that PastoCovac is the only vaccine the Iranian children are currently receiving.

Earlier, Biglari described PastoCovac as the safest vaccine against coronavirus, saying it had been tested against Beta Variant in Cuba and against Delta Variant in Iran and had been proved to be 96% effective.

He went on to say that five million doses of PastoCovac vaccine is produced monthly in Iran, stressing that two doses of it will be sufficient for children.

PastoCovac, known as Soberana 2 in Cuba, has jointly been developed by Iran and Cuba and successfully passed the third phase for clinical test.

Iran Seeks Good Agreement But Not to Cross Its Red Lines

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has told the European Union's foreign policy chief that the Islamic Republic seeks a good agreement through the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital on the revival of the 2015 deal, but is determined not to cross its headlines.

Amir-Abdollahian's remarks came in a phone call with Josep Borrell on Saturday evening, during which the two sides discussed the latest situation of the talks that are aimed at reviving the landmark deal, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The United States left the deal unilaterally in 2018 and returned the sanctions that had been lifted under the accord. Washington's allies in the deal—France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—have been toeing the sanctions line closely by ending their trade activities with Iran.

Since last year, Vienna has been hosting eight rounds of talks aimed at exploring the potential of the deal's revival and fresh removal of the inhumane and illegal sanctions.

During his Saturday conversation with Borrell, Iran's foreign minister expressed gratitude for the efforts made by the EU's foreign policy chief and his deputy, Enrique Mora, who is also the coordinator of the JCPOA revival talks.

"It is the Islamic Republic's final decision not to cross its red lines" during the Vienna talks, Iran's foreign minister emphasized. On Sunday, an overwhelming majority of Iranian legislators issued a statement, calling on the administration of President Ebrahim Raisi to adhere to Iran's red lines as the talks inched forward in Vienna.

They said the U.S. government and its European allies had shown that they were not bound by any agreement over the past few years, so Iran was obliged to learn from the experience and set clear red lines.

FDI in Industrial Sector Hits About 136% Growth in 10 Months

TEHRAN (MNA) - Total volume of foreign investment made in the mining and industrial sector registered a 135.9 percent growth in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year in 1400 (from March 21, 2021, to Jan. 22, 2022).

According to statistics of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, total foreign investment within the framework of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 10 months of the current year showed a 135.9 percent growth as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Figures of the Industry Ministry indicated that 129 projects under foreign investment, valued at \$3.485 billion, were approved in the mining and industrial sector of the country, showing a 24 percent growth in terms of quantity.

This is while 104 projects under FDI, valued at \$1.477 billion, had been approved in the first 10 months of the previous year.

NATO Expansionism Among Root Causes of Russia-Ukraine Conflict

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian lawmaker has once again underlined the necessity of solving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, saying Belarus can play a role in this regard given its strategic position in Eastern Europe.



The Iranian head of Iran-Belarus parliamentary friendship group, Abolfazl Amouei, made the remarks in a Saturday meeting with Belarusian Ambassador to Tehran Dmitry Koltsov as Russian and Ukrainian forces are clashing in the Ukrainian capital on the third day of the crisis.

"Given its strategic position in Eastern Europe, Belarus can play a role in resolving issues in Ukraine through diplomacy. Under current circumstances, all countries must make efforts to end this conflict, which is killing innocent people, as soon as possible," Amouei said.

He added that the expansionist approach and provocations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the East are among the root causes of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

"Perhaps if it were not for NATO provocations, we would not be

witnessing such problems in Ukraine now. In the Islamic Republic's view, political dialogue is the main solution to the problems," the Iranian lawmaker said.

The Belarusian ambassador, for his part, blamed irresponsible policies of some Western countries for the ongoing developments in Eastern Europe and said

his country has always called for the settlement of issues in Ukraine through dialogue.

Negotiations and dialogue are the only ways to achieve lasting peace and security, Koltsov added.

Amouei also expressed the Iranian Parliament's readiness to promote cordial relations with Belarus in various political, economic and parliamentary sectors. The Iranian lawmaker said that the two countries' parliaments play a leading role in strengthening bilateral cooperation and called for more bilateral consultations.

The Belarusian diplomat also welcomed constant talks between the two countries' lawmakers and urged the expansion of parliamentary cooperation as a means to improve relations in various fields.

Country Fallen Behind In Mineral Exploration



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company believes the country has fallen behind in the field of mineral exploration and blamed bureaucracy, lack of upgrading knowhow and lack of required hardware for this lag.

Speaking at the first specialized SteelPrice Conference on the Advanced Technologies of Processing Iron Ore, Eng. Naser Taghizadeh said that the company's suggestion is that all big industrial and mining companies should form a big consortium in order that they can do great jobs in the field of mine exploration.

He went on to say that state-of-the-art knowhow in the field of mineral and geological exploration and using new hardware and equipment can strengthen developing mines in the country more than ever. He added that the country has not done any essential thing in the exploration yet while there are huge works in this field and even studies have shown that Iran has over 2b cubic meters of iron ore reserves in one of its mines.

Taghizadeh went on to say that using 2005 machineries has no proper place in the mines, adding that since the fuel price is low, these old machineries are utilized in Iran's mines while with using new methods, the old machineries will be gradually eliminated from the national mines.

He reiterated that country should reduce its costs in mining sector by 60 to 70 percent with using new techniques in order to comply with the global standards and to compete in this field.

Taghizadeh added that steel production in the country requires many infrastructures although the water problem has been solved to some extent and the problem of electricity supply for mining sector is getting resolved but the government should do its best for required gas supply to the steel industries of the country because Iran is the world's second country in terms of gas resources.

Smuggling Forces Iran To Import Fuel

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has started importing diesel fuel again because the amount of its consumption has surpassed the production capacity of the country's refineries.

An unnamed informed source told Mehr news agency on Saturday that the resumption of imports was not unexpected due to the imbalance between demand and supply.

The source added that Iran is importing diesel from countries to the north along the Caspian Sea, without elaborating on the exact supplier. Russia could be one possible source.

According to the source, gasoline imports will also start soon because consumption will exceed production at refineries.

Mehr says according to data by the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIOPDC), the amount of gasoline production and demand will be equal in a couple of weeks.

NIOPDC head Keramat Veis-Karami recently said that the average daily gasoline consumption increased by about 15 percent this year compared with the figure in the previous year when there were frequent pandemic restrictions.

The report added that slowdown in the process of building refineries and the rise in consumption are the reasons for Iran to become a gasoline importer. The severe shortage of natural gas that has led to an increase in diesel consumption in power plants and industries can be another factor. American sanctions also play a role in slowing down refinery upkeep.

PERMIT NO : 55/00/28634

DATE : 2022 /02/28

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT



INVITATION TO ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER



AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, affiliated to Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad of I.R of Iran, is considering the purchase of the below item of technical, through one step international tender.

ITEM	Name	PACKING	Quantity KG
1	Fipronil Tech 95 pct.	25 kg drum	1050

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Monday dated 28/2/2022 until Wednesday dated 9/3/2022 (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of 1.Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30 character identification code of 358039782263500650000000000000.

The bidders are requested to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Saturday dated 9/4/2022 (during official working hours) to our security office located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be held on Sunday dated 10/4/2022 at 2:00 PM with the presence of bidders' representatives at our purchasing committee hall (9th floor, no. 1, Fourth Alley, Gandhi st., Tehran, Iran).

We would like to emphasize that the bid bond amount should be in bank guarantee as follow:

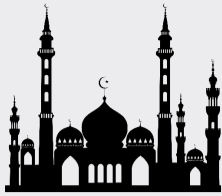
1-€ 4725 for Fipronil Tech 95 pct. equivalent to Iranian Rials 1292373000

- The bid bond value should be in Euro or in equal value of any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir. It should be noted that this site lists the currency transactions, executed in Integrated Currency Transactions System [Nima website] on 13/ 02/2022.

2 - After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website www.assc.ir, and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

PR & intl Affairs Dept of Agricultural Support Services Company(ASSC)



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:16
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:16
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:10
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:34

23. "Shall I take (other) gods besides Him?
If ((Allah)) Most Gracious should intend some adversity for me, of no use whatever
will be their intercession for me, nor can they deliver me.
24. "I would indeed, if I were to do so, be in manifest Error.

Surah 36, Ya-sin (23 - 24)

Current Int'l Developments Help Iran-Central Asia Trade Ties to Expand

BANDAR ABBAS (IRNA) - An advisor to Kyrgyzstan's president said that current international developments would cause Iran-Central Asia ties to expand and Kyrgyzstan wants to be pioneer.

Tengiz Bolturuk who is heading an economic delegation to Iran said during a meeting with Hormozgan Province Governor-General Mehdi Dousti on Saturday night that current developments would most likely decrease use of Russian transportation capacity and Iran would be an alternative in this regard.

Activating the potentials of Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port is an important political and economic project for Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz official noted.

Bolturuk said that Kyrgyzstan has invested in two mining projects in Iran and is seeking to invest in Hormozgan Province after those projects are completed.

He also touched upon cultural ties between Iran and Kyrgyzstan and said that the governmental Kyrgyz company he is heading has a cultural subsidiary that attempts to study Iran-Kyrgyzstan ties through Iranian sources and give a correct narrative of Kyrgyzstan's history to the Kyrgyz youth.

Bolturuk announced Kyrgyzstan's readiness to provide Iran with electricity, cheap work force, meat, mineral water, and tourism facilities.



Earlier the Kyrgyz official in a meeting with the Director-General of Ports and Maritime Administration of Hormozgan Province Alireza Mohammadi, Bolturuk said that Kyrgyzstan was completely determined to invest in Iran's southern Shahid Rajaei Port, as the Kyrgyz president has directed the delegation to operationalize cooperation agreements with Iran as soon as possible.

He said that working with Shahid Rajaei Port is a serious plan from among the 32 investment projects Kyrgyzstan's president has agreed.

The Kyrgyz official said that he would visit the hinterlands of Shahid Rajaei Port and buy Iranian machinery for Kyrgyzstan mining industry.

Kyrgyzstan is negotiating with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to provide a route for business transaction with Iran's Bandar Abbas, Bolturuk added.

Mohammadi said that Shahid Rajaei Port has 60 kilometers of railway, capacity to load and offload over 140 million tons of goods on a yearly basis and over 50 container services sites.

Goharzamin Successful Example In Social Responsibilities

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - During the workgroup on occupation and investment of the town of Bardsir which was held at the governorate office of the town, Goharzamin Iron Ore Company was hailed as the ray of hope.



According to the reports, during the workgroup which was held in the presence of Friday Prayer Leader of Bardsir Hojjatolislam Kermani, Bardsir Governor Seyed Hassan Mirsadeqi and the CEO of Goharzamin Iron Ore Company Mohammad Fallah, the governor of the town pointed to the significance of the issue of occupation and the concern of the Supreme Leader in this field and hailed the efforts of Goharzamin Company and especially its CEO in the issue of job creation and termed the actions of the company valuable.

He also pointed to the activities of the company in the field of social responsibility and called Goharzamin a successful example in the field of observing social responsibilities.

Then Friday Prayer Leader of Bardsir thanked the CEO of the company and said actions of the company in creating job is an apparent example of economic jihad and the issue of job creation makes the public encouraging to the Islamic establishment.

Then the CEO of Goharzamin Company pointed to the several meetings of the board of directors of the company regarding investment in the towns of the province and noted that Bardsir enjoys having suitable capacities and it has made this town the center for investment and so far several licenses have been issued for investment in this town. He then emphasized training and educating technical human forces and native experts for industries in the town.

ESCO Getting More Ready for Electricity Supply in Hot Seasons

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN - The caretaker of Esfahan Steel Company during his visit to the power stations and water supply section of the company met with staff of those units and talked to them.

During his visit and addressing the staff of the units, Mr. Iraj Rokhsati hailed efforts of steel men of ESCO and pointed to the activities related to providing required water for the production especially in hot seasons ahead and probable problems in providing water and electricity due to the water shortage like in the past years.

He added that to this end, the company has started premature repairs of the power stations of the company, and the field visits and meetings are held regularly in order to provide condition for maximum activities and therefore the company would not face problems because of power severance which has been faced this year.

It is worth noting that ESCO has four thermal power stations with capacity over 220 megawatts which are predominantly fed by process gas of the production line and in order to attain higher output and ultimately less dependence to the national electricity grid, process gases are mixed with natural gasses.



Ms. iBolak Paghe, owner of the largest online store in the north of the country:

iBolak started in bad economic conditions



If you are an online shopper, you may have seen or heard of Bullock's letter. An online store that, if we want to describe it in one word, we can say that everything is simple. Simple clothes with simple photography, without the use of stylists taken from the methods of Parisian fashion shows, presents the clothes to its audience on Instagram, as we can probably see in the counter of a simple store. It is this simplicity that has made this online store the place of presence of one and a half million viewers and has become the largest online store in the north of the country. iBullock means a piece of the moon! But what is behind the story of this piece of the moon? A girl who, with her limited resources and limitations, was determined to get the Bull Bull here. iBullock is the founder of this store. A store that is not just an online shop. But like other stores in the world, it has both a large presence store and online sales. We had a heart-to-heart conversation, and he talked about the roadmap to what we now see as a store with 80 employees and more than hundreds of customers daily.



Why did you enter the field of clothing sales?

My field of study was at the University of Agricultural Engineering. But when I was a student, I also went to a sewing class and I was very interested in it. I also sewed clothes for a limited number of customers and acquaintances, and this sparked this in my mind to enter the clothing sales department.

How old is this?

Almost 7 years ago. I started a home clothes show early. Friends and family came, saw, and sometimes bought. A few months later, I decided to rent a shop and take my business out of the home. Frightened, I rented a small shop on the second floor of the mall, but after six months I was able to turn it into a large shop on the ground floor. This process continued until today, when I opened the largest women's clothing store in Gorgan.

You said you started the first store with stress. But what was the fear?

By the time I started my career in earnest, the economic situation was in disarray. Everyone



around me advised me not to take risks, because the market situation is bad. On the other hand, I had a small child that I had to leave alone so that I could stay in the store. I was alone, I was accounting myself. Every week I would come to Tehran alone and buy the goods I needed from the market. Because I had little money, I did not have many models. However, I started in the same unfavorable economic conditions. But I improved my sales capability, taking photos of all the models, and even though I did not yet have an Instagram page for a store like today, I posted photos of the models on Instagram to let my customers know about the new models. Sometimes I would order the tailors I knew to embroider popular works, so that the cost would be lower for me.

Did sales talent actually make you successful?

Basically, I have a good ability to communicate with others. Even now that there are 15 people in my in-store, I still sometimes stand as a salesperson and guide customers. In fact, it's the most enjoyable part of my job. Mentioning the

details, accompanying the customer's taste, explaining the fabric fibers, identifying the size required by each customer and every subtlety that a seller should know and present to the customer, is something that excites me.

How did iBolak get here?

When I came to the ground floor of the shopping center and the perseverance I had to present products on my Instagram page, the number of my customers gradually increased, both in person and online. I started to recruit first in the face-to-face sales department and then in the online department. I now have 15 people in the store and 70 people are directly and indirectly working in the online store.

What is your dream for the development of the bull in the next 10 years?

I would like our store to become the largest online store in Iran. Of course, I do not dream, but I set a goal for myself. If there are 80 employees in this family today, I would like to reach 150 next year.

13 Dead After Tourist Boat Sinks in Vietnam

HANOI (Dispatches) - At least 13 people were killed and four others missing after a tourist boat capsized Saturday in bad weather off the coast of Hoi An, a world heritage-listed Vietnamese city, an official said.

The accident occurred as the vessel carrying 39 local tourists and crew members was returning to Hoi An from Cu Lao Cham island -- a popular spot for diving, snorkelling and water sports.

Local Communist Party chief Nguyen Sinh confirmed 13 people drowned and four were missing.

Rescue efforts were suspended in the evening because of fading light, he said.



Deadly Floods Hit Eastern Australia

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Torrential downpours lashed eastern Australia on Saturday, raising deadly floodwaters to decades-long highs, swamping homes and sweeping away cars, including one carrying a team of rescuers.

Authorities in the eastern state of Queensland said two people were killed overnight, bringing the flooding death toll to four since early this week. Another two people are still missing.

Images broadcast on Australian media showed homes and roads swamped, areas of land transformed into lakes and a large chunk of a concrete pier floating down a fast-running river.



U.S. to Send \$350m in Lethal Weapons to Ukraine



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States is providing Ukraine with \$350 million in additional military assistance as fighting rages between Ukrainian forces and Russian troops.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the State Department is releasing "lethal defensive assistance" from U.S. stocks to Ukraine, saying the package is aimed at helping "Ukraine address the armored, airborne, and other threats it is now facing."

"It is another clear signal that the United States stands with the people of Ukraine as they defend their sovereign, courageous, and proud nation."

The United States and certain other Western states imposed sanctions against Russia after President Vladimir Putin ordered "a special military operation" in Ukraine's breakaway Donbass region on February 24.

The fighting has intensified over the weekend with the two sides now clashing on the streets in several Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kiev.

Speaking in a new video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the country's army is in control of the capital and main surrounding cities.

"We've derailed their [Russian's] plan," he said, adding that Ukrainian forces had been fighting Russian troops in a number of cities including the southern city of Odessa, the northeastern city of Kharkiv and Kiev. He claimed Russia has deployed "missiles, fighters, drones, artillery, armored vehicles, saboteurs, and airborne forces" against Ukraine and have hit "residential areas."

Russia, however, said Ukrainian forces used multiple rocket launchers to shell residential blocks in the town of Starobelsk, north of Lugansk, on Saturday morning.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, buildings were damaged in the area with reports of civilian casualties. On Saturday, the Russian Defense Ministry said Moscow had to continue the operations after Kiev declined to engage in negotiations.

"In connection with the expected negotiations, the Russian president yesterday afternoon ordered the suspension of the advance of the main forces of the Russian Federation," Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said Saturday. "Since the Ukrainian side refused to negotiate, the advance of the Russian forces resumed this afternoon."

Russian army spokesman Igor Konashenkov also said, "After the Ukrainian side rejected the negotiation process, today all units were given orders to develop the advance from all directions in accordance with the operation's plans."

An adviser at Zelensky's office, Alexey Arestovich, admitted that Kiev has rejected the talks with Russia, citing the "terms" put forward by the Kremlin. "It was an attempt to force us into capitulation," he said.

On Saturday, Zelensky renewed his appeal for European states to exclude Russia from the global SWIFT banking system.

"There is already almost full support from the EU countries to disconnect Russia from SWIFT," he said, calling for Germany "to support this decision." France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Hungary expressed support for the measure against Russia.

Germany also said it is working to exclude Russia from the SWIFT interbank system in a targeted and functional way to prevent any collateral damage.

A French presidential official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, said the bloc's energy ministers will hold an extraordinary meeting in Brussels on Monday to discuss the SWIFT issue. France's ecological transition minister, Barbara Pompili, will chair the talks.

The EU has toughened its sanctions against Russia, but has not extended them to energy or excluded it from SWIFT.

Finland, Sweden Brush off Moscow's Warning on Joining NATO

HELSINKI (Dispatches) - Finland and Sweden have brushed off warnings from neighboring Russia that their possible joining of NATO would trigger "serious military-political consequences" from Moscow for the two countries.

A statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry Friday voiced concern about what it described as efforts by the United States and some of its allies to "drag" Finland and Sweden into NATO and warned that Moscow would be forced to take retaliatory measures if they join the alliance.

Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said Saturday that "we've heard this before."

"We don't think that it calls for a military threat," Haavisto said in an interview with the Finnish public broadcaster YLE. "Should Finland be NATO's external border, it rather means that Russia would certainly take that into account in its own defense planning. I don't see anything new as such" in the statement delivered by Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, Haavisto said.



China Vows Cooperation With North Korea

SEOUL (Dispatches) - China's President Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of cooperation between Beijing and Pyongyang in an unspecified "new situation", North Korea's state media reported Saturday.

North Korea, officially known as the DPRK, carried out an unprecedented seven weapon tests in January -- including its most powerful missile since 2017 -- with negotiations with the United States at a standstill. It paused testing during the Beijing Winter Olympics, with analysts saying the decision could have been made out of deference to China.

Beijing is Pyongyang's most important ally and economic benefactor, their relationship forged in the bloodshed of the Korean War in the 1950s.

In his message to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Xi said Beijing was ready to "develop the China-DPRK relations of friendship and cooperation" under a "new situation", the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

KCNA did not further elaborate on what the "new situation" entailed. North Korea is reeling economically from a self-imposed coronavirus blockade, and restarted cross-border trade with Beijing last month.

China accounts for more than 90 percent of the isolated country's bilateral trade. Pyongyang is under multiple sets of international sanctions over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

But regardless, it has warned it could abandon its self-imposed moratorium and resume testing intercontinental ballistic missiles or nuclear weapons.

Some experts have warned that with the eyes of the world focused on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, North Korea might take the opportunity to test-fire long-range missiles.



Greeks Protest at Soaring Cost of Living

ATHENS (AFP) - Thousands of Greeks on Saturday joined union protests in several cities against a steep rise in the cost of living as the government vowed to boost emergency support for households.

In Athens, police said some 10,000 demonstrators led by Communist-affiliated union PAME gathered outside parliament to protest spiking inflation and a new labour law increasing working hour flexibility.

"We are a river of anger and outrage," said steel unionist Panagiotis Doukas. "We claim our right to a respectable life... we say a thunderous 'no' to the anti-popular policies that have torn apart our lives," he said.

Greek inflation in January surged to 6.2 percent in an annual comparison amid fears Russia's invasion of Ukraine will further push up energy and food prices.

According to official data, electricity prices in January jumped by 56 percent, fuel by 21.6 percent and natural gas by a whopping 156 percent.

The cost of living "could on average increase by over two percent in 2022," Panagiotis Petrakis, a professor of economics at the University of Athens, told AFP.

The government has already spent 44 billion euros (\$50 billion) in supporting businesses and low-income households during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Late Friday, Finance Minister Christos Staikouras said Greece would conclude an early repayment of bailout loans from the International Monetary Fund and use the interest rate savings "to support households and businesses".

The last tranche of IMF loans extended to Greece during the 2010-2018 debt crisis, worth 1.85 billion euros, is to be repaid by April, a source with knowledge of the issue told AFP this week.

Greece is aiming for 4.5-percent economic growth this year and expects additional revenue from the vital tourism industry.

Tourism accounts for around a quarter of the Greek economy. Receipts in 2021 stood at over 10 billion euros.

But Greece is also saddled with an unemployment rate of around 13 percent, one of the highest in the eurozone, a legacy of the near-decade debt crisis.

The pandemic struck just as Greece was beginning to recover from the crisis that saw it lose a quarter of national output.

In 2020, the Greek economy shrank nine percent.

People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Greece are estimated at 28.9 percent, just behind fellow EU laggards Bulgaria and Romania according to the Hellenic Anti-Poverty Network group.



Russian Official Issues Stark Threats to the West

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia may respond to Western sanctions by opting out of the last nuclear arms deal with the U.S., cutting diplomatic ties with Western nations and freezing their assets, a senior Russian official warned Saturday as Russia's ties with the West dived to new lows over its invasion of Ukraine.

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, also warned that Moscow could restore the death penalty after it was removed from Europe's top rights group.

The sanctions placed new tight restrictions on Russian financial operations, imposed a draconian ban on technology exports to Russia and froze the assets of Putin and his foreign minister, a harsh response that dwarfed earlier Western restrictions. Washington and its allies say that even tougher sanctions are possible, including kicking Russia out of SWIFT, the dominant system for global financial transactions.

In sarcastic comments posted on a Russian social platform, Medvedev dismissed the sanctions as a show of Western "political impotence" that will only consolidate the Russian leadership and foment anti-Western feelings.

"We are being driven out of everywhere, punished and threatened, but we don't feel scared," he said, mocking the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and its allies as an attempt to vindicate their past "shameful decisions, like a cowardly retreat from Afghanistan."

Medvedev was placeholder president in 2008-2012 when Putin had to shift into the prime minister's seat because of term limits. He then let Putin reclaim the presidency and served as his prime minister for eight years.

During his tenure as president, Medvedev was widely seen as more liberal compared with Putin, but on Saturday he made a series of threats that even the most hawkish Kremlin figures haven't mentioned to date.

Medvedev noted that the sanctions offer the Kremlin a pretext to completely review its ties with the West, suggesting that Russia could opt out of the New START nuclear arms control treaty that limits the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals.



Shanon
(adviser)

Parsian

Velenjak Apt (\$2500)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Elahieh Villa (\$3000)
1500sq.m
4bdrs, pkg
balcony, & yard
marble floor
Fully Furn

(\$2000) Fereshteh
3bdrs, S/p, F.F

Farmanieh Apts
(\$1800) 200sq.m, 3bdrs
(\$2500) 300sq.m, 4bdrs
Both with S/p, S, J, F.F

(\$5000) Jordan bldg
4storey, 15bdrs, pkgs

(\$2600) Darrous Apt
280sq.m, 4bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony, F.F

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Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
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(\$7000) Sa'adat abad Villa
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S, J, green yard, F.F

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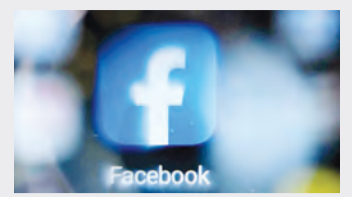
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Facebook Bans Russia State Media

SAN FRANCISCO (Dispatches) - Facebook restricted Russian state media's ability to earn money on the social media platform as Moscow's invasion of neighboring Ukraine reached the streets of Kyiv. "We are now prohibiting Russian state media from running ads or monetizing on our platform anywhere in the world," Nathaniel Gleicher, the social media giant's security policy head, said on Twitter. He added that Facebook would "continue to apply labels to additional Russian state media." Facebook's parent company Meta said earlier Friday that Russia would hit its services with restrictions after it refused authorities' order to stop using fact-checkers and content warning labels on its platforms.



S&P Cuts Russia's Rating to Junk, Moody's Issues Junk Warning

KIEV (Dispatches) - Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered a flurry of credit rating moves yesterday, with S&P lowering Russia's rating to 'junk' status, Moody's putting it on review for a downgrade to junk, and S&P and Fitch swiftly cutting Ukraine on default worries. Both countries' financial markets have unsurprisingly been thrown into turmoil by this week's events, which rank as the biggest military attack in Europe since World War Two, bringing stiff Western sanctions on Moscow.

S&P lowered Russia's long-term foreign currency credit rating to 'BB+' from 'BBB-', and warned it could lower ratings further, after getting more clarity on the macroeconomic repercussions of the sanctions.

"In our view, the sanctions announced to date could carry significant negative implications for the Russian banking sector's ability to act as a financial intermediary for international trade, S&P said.

It also cut Ukraine's rating to 'B-' from 'B'.

Russia now has an "investment grade" rating of Baa3 from Moody's and an equivalent BBB — from Fitch, due to one of the lowest debt levels in the world at just 20 per cent of GDP, and nearly US\$650 billion of currency reserves.

A downgrade, however, would lower that rating to the riskier "junk" or sub-investment grade category.

"The decision to place the ratings on review for downgrade reflects the negative credit implications for Russia's credit profile from the additional and more severe sanctions being imposed," Moody's said in a statement.

Sovereign rating reviews can take months but this time are likely to be quicker.

Moody's said its decision would factor in the scale of the conflict and the severity of additional Western sanctions, which have already hit some of Russia's top banks, military exports and members of President Vladimir Putin's inner circle.

It added it would also weigh the degree to which Russia's substantial currency reserves are able to mitigate the disruption stemming from the new sanctions and lengthy conflict.

"Moody's will look to conclude the review when these credit implications become more clear, particularly when the impact of further sanctions takes shape in the coming days or weeks," it said.

Moody's also put Ukraine's already-junk "B3" rating on review for a downgrade.

Fitch did not wait, however, and moved immediately to slash its Ukraine rating by a whole three notches to "CCC" from "B".

It explained, "There is a high likelihood of an extended period of political instability, with regime change a likely objective of President Putin, creating heightened policy uncertainty and potentially also undermining the willingness of Ukraine to repay debt."

Moody's had also warned a heavy conflict could leave Kyiv struggling to make debt payments.

Scope, a smaller European rating agency, has estimated Ukrainian government debt could jump above 90 per cent of GDP by 2024 from about 50 per cent now while S&P Global also warned on Friday of a spate of downgrades as a result of the war.

Key U.S. Inflation Gauge Hit 6.1% In January, Highest Since 1982

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - An inflation gauge that is closely monitored by the Federal Reserve jumped 6.1% in January compared with a year ago, the latest evidence that Americans are enduring sharp price increases that will likely worsen after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The figure reported Friday by the Commerce Department was the largest year-over-year rise since 1982. Excluding volatile food and energy prices, core inflation increased 5.2% in January from a year earlier.

Robust consumer spending has combined with widespread product and worker shortages to create the highest inflation in four decades — a heavy burden for U.S. households, especially lower-income families faced with elevated costs for food, fuel and rent.

At the same time, consumers as a whole largely shrugged off the higher prices last month and boosted their spending 2.1% from December to January, Friday's report said, an encouraging sign for the economy and the job market. That was a sharp improvement from December, when spending fell. Americans across the income scale have been receiving pay raises and have amassed more savings than they had before the pandemic struck two years ago. That expanded pool of savings provides fuel for future spending.

Inflation, though, is expected to remain high and perhaps accelerate in the coming months, especially with Russia's invasion likely disrupting oil and gas exports. The costs of other commodities that are produced in Ukraine, such as wheat and aluminum, have also increased.

President Joe Biden said Thursday that he would do "everything I can" to keep gas prices in check. Biden did not spell out details, though he mentioned the possibility of releasing more oil from the nation's strategic reserves. He also warned that oil and gas companies "should not exploit this moment" by raising prices at the pump.

On Friday, oil prices were steady after they had reached \$100 a barrel in volatile trading on Thursday, before falling back to \$92, about where they had started the day. Still, economists at JPMorgan have forecast that oil could reach \$110 a barrel as Russia's invasion of Ukraine escalates. Economists at BMO Capital Markets have estimated that each \$10-a-barrel increase translates into a 0.4 percentage point rise in inflation.

A separate report Friday showed that orders for long-lasting factory goods rose sharply in January, led by a rise in demand for airplanes. The figures indicate that many companies are willing to invest more in industrial equipment and other goods, a sign of confidence in the economy.

"Overall, the real economy appears to be in stronger health than we feared," said Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics, a forecasting firm.

Incomes were unchanged last month, largely because the monthly child tax credit payments that were included in Biden's \$1.9 trillion financial support package expired. A new study concluded that the end of the payments led to a jump in child poverty.

Chinese Banks Limit Financing for Russian Purchases

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Several Chinese public banks are limiting financing to purchase raw materials from Russia for fear of Western sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine, Bloomberg news agency reported.

China and Russia have strengthened their ties considerably since Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea and subsequent Western sanctions.

To power its growth, the Asian giant has also increased its purchases of Russian commodities, with about 30 percent of Russian oil and gas now sold to China.

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, at least two of China's largest state-owned banks, ICBC and Bank of China, The decision was taken for fear that allowing funding could be perceived as support for Moscow's invasion and risk sanctions from the United States and its allies, the US news agency said, citing unidentified sources.

Bloomberg said the move may only be temporary.

ICBC is the world's largest bank by assets, while Bank of China is the country's largest commercial bank for currency trading.

U.S. sanctions could potentially deprive them of access to the dollar.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine on Thursday sparked a wave of international sanctions against Moscow, mainly from Western countries.

Washington has, among other things, imposed sanctions on energy giant Gazprom and other large Russian companies, which will no longer be able to raise money on Western financial markets.

India Explores Setting Up Rupee Trade Accounts With Russia

MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India is exploring ways to set up a rupee payment mechanism for trade with Russia to soften the blow on New Delhi of Western sanctions imposed on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, government and banking sources said.

Indian officials are concerned that vital supplies of fertilizer from Russia could be disrupted as sanctions intensify, threatening India's vast farm sector.

India has called for an end to violence in

Ukraine but refrained from outright condemnation of Russia, with which it has long-standing political and security ties.

Russia invaded Ukraine by land, air and sea on Thursday in the biggest attack on a European state since World War Two, prompting tens of thousands of people to flee their homes.

Russian forces pressed their advance on Friday and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleaded with the international community to do more, saying sanctions announced so far were not enough.

Officials said the plan was to get Russian banks and companies to open accounts with a few state-run banks in India for trade settlement, a banking source involved in the discussions said.

"This is a proactive move assuming that the conflict escalates and there could be a slew of sanctions in place," the source said.

"In this case we would not be able to settle the transaction in dollars and so an arrangement has been proposed to set up a rupee account, which is being considered."

Funds in such accounts act as a guarantee of payment for trade exchanged between two countries, while the parties barter commodities from each other to offset the sum, the source said.

A similar arrangement, in which part of the settlement with Russia is in foreign currency and rest is through local rupee accounts, was also being explored, said the banking and the government source.

Such mechanisms are often used by countries to shield themselves from the blow of sanctions and India also used it with Iran after it came under Western sanctions for its nuclear weapons program, the source said.

The program was introduced in 2012 and worked well for several years.

The discussions on Russia were still at an early stage and formal talks had not yet begun between the two sides, an Indian government official said.

Fuel Prices Raised in Sri Lanka as Energy Crisis Worsens



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - One of Sri Lanka's biggest fuel suppliers put up its prices by as much as 12 percent on Saturday, as the cash-strapped island's energy crisis worsened.

Lanka IOC, a fuel retailer which accounts for a third of the market, said it was increasing prices for diesel -- commonly used by public transport -- by 12 percent, and petrol up 11 percent.

The increases came after a seven percent price rise three weeks ago and will add to the upward pressure on inflation, already at a record high.

The island is in the grips of an economic crisis after the tourism sector, a key foreign-exchange earner, collapsed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government imposed a broad import ban in March 2020 in an effort to save foreign currency.

The country is now suffering widespread shortages, including fuel, electricity, automotive parts and cement, with supermarkets forced to ration staple foods including rice, sugar and milk powder.

The shortages pushed food inflation to 25 percent last month with overall inflation at 16.8 percent.

There was no immediate energy price revision by the state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC), but most of its pumps have been out of fuel for days.

Energy minister Udaya Gammanpila announced this week that he expected fuel shortages to ease in "days", but warned that a sharp price increase was necessary to retain the viability of the loss-making CPC.

Gammanpila said the CPC continued to hemorrhage cash and was already carrying debts exceeding \$3.5 billion. The CPC loss for last year was \$450 million, he added.

"Earlier, we were short of dollars to import oil. Now we don't have the rupees to buy the dollars," Gammanpila said.

Several thermal power stations, meanwhile, have closed with the electricity utility extending daily power cuts to five-and-a-half-hours a day from Friday.

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COVID-19 Kills 241 More Iranians Over Past 24 Hours

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The number of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in Iran increased to 136,631 with 241 more Iranians killed by the deadly disease over the past 24 hours, Iran's Health Ministry announced on Sunday.

Some 241 more Iranians have died from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) over the past 24 hours bringing the total

deaths to 136,631, Iran's Health Ministry said on Sunday.

9,524 new cases of infection with the COVID-19 were found over the past 24 hours, 1,682 of whom were hospitalized, it said.

The Iranian Health Ministry noted that 6,634,126 patients out of a total of 7,040,467 infected people have recovered or been discharged from hospitals.



UN to Agree on Plan for Historic Plastics Treaty

NAIROBI (AFP) - More than 100 nations convening in Nairobi next week are expected to take the first steps toward establishing a historic global treaty to tackle the plastic crisis afflicting the planet.

Plastic has been found in Arctic sea ice, the bellies of whales and Earth's atmosphere, and governments have been under increasing pressure to unite in action against the global scourge.

Negotiators are hammering out the framework for a legally binding plastic treaty that diplomats say is the most ambitious environmental pact since the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

"This is a big moment. This is one for the history books," Inger Andersen, head of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), told AFP this week.

The exact scope of the treaty remains to be defined. There are competing proposals being drafted ahead of a three-day UN environment summit starting Monday in Nairobi.

World leaders and environment ministers meeting in-person and virtually are expected to kickstart the treaty process by appointing a negotiating committee to finalise the policy details over the next two years.

But more than 50 countries, along with scientists, businesses and environment groups, have publicly called for tough new regulations on industry to curb the torrent of plastic entering the environment.

This could include caps on the production of new plastic -- which is made from oil and gas, and forecast to double by 2040 -- redesigning products to make recycling easier or less harmful, and phasing out single-use items.

Many countries, including major plastic producers like the United States and China, have expressed general support for a treaty, but stopped short of endorsing any specific measures.

But there is broad consensus that countries acting alone cannot fix the problem, and a coordinated global response is needed.

Since the 1950s, the rate of plastic production has grown faster than any other material, vastly outpacing national efforts to keep the environment clean.

Today, approximately 300 million tons of plastic waste -- equivalent to the weight of the human population -- are produced every year.

Less than 10 percent is recycled, with most ending up in landfill or the oceans.

By some estimates, a garbage truck's worth of plastic is dumped in the sea every minute, choking marine life and befouling coastlines around the globe. Microscopic particles of plastic can also enter the food chain, eventually joining the human diet.

"It is not something that stops at the border. As we know from plastics in the ocean... your trash becomes my trash, and my trash becomes your trash," said Andersen.



In October, dozens of major corporations including Coca-Cola and Unilever said a plastics treaty with binding targets was "crucial to set a high common standard of action for all countries to abide by."

Environment groups remain wary and want concrete targets and enforcement mechanisms enshrined in any treaty to ensure accountability.

"We are looking at something that is legally binding and has consequences, and not just a treaty that people can sign onto... but doesn't have the teeth to bite back," said Erastus Ooko from Greenpeace Africa. Some of the world's largest plastics manufacturers have also expressed support for a treaty, but say banning certain materials would create supply chain disruptions and hinder improvements to recycling.

Environment groups have warned that plastic giants would try to steer talks in Nairobi away from firm commitments intended to push companies into making less plastic.

Two of the treaty proposals adopt a "source to sea" approach: targeting not just trash in oceans and landfill, but also pollution caused by manufacturing new plastic from fossil fuels.

These proposals -- one sponsored by Rwanda and Peru, and the other by Japan -- have broad support and are being merged to reach consensus, said sources with close knowledge of the negotiations in Nairobi.

A third proposal from India -- which called for voluntary measures -- does not have wide support. "I think the world is ready for a change in the way we relate to plastic," said Marco Lambertini, director general of WWF.

Humanity a Missing...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile in order to help Yemenis, the United States imposed sanctions on what it called members of an international network funding Ansarullah, citing the popular Yemeni movement's retaliatory attacks on the coalition of countries waging war on the country.



In a statement released on Wednesday, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) claimed that the network, led by financier Sa'id al-Jamal, had "transferred tens of millions of dollars to Yemen via a complex international network of intermediaries in support of the Houthis' attacks."

It also said the action was taken "in close coordination and collaboration" with Washington's regional Persian Gulf partners.

Those targeted include a UAE- and Sweden-based commodities trader and his company as well as money exchange houses in Turkey and Yemen, according to the Treasury statement.

They are accused of shipping fuel, other petroleum products and commodities throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia with the proceeds financing Ansarullah.

The new measure freezes any assets of the designated entities and individuals that are subject to US jurisdiction and generally bars Americans from doing business with them.

The new sanctions come as Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and some American lawmakers are pressing the White House to return Ansarullah to the U.S. list of foreign "terrorist" organizations.

Of course these types of measures by the West are aimed at increasing pressure on Yemenis under different pretext and to help coalition forces who have suffered in war against Yemen.

So the West and actually the world should put aside their double standard approach and observe humanity than politicizing everything that they do not like. While Ukraine has been under attack just for a couple of days, the West has started accusing Russia of inhumane behavior while it has never given a damn to the people of Yemen and Afghanistan who are in the worst living condition.

So the world is recommended not to divide humanity issue by politicizing it or dividing the world people into friends and foes, something which hurts nations and unfortunately the UN and other international bodies are unable to observe their main task of saving humanity which is of the main charters of the UN which is given no damn by the world and especially big powers and Westerners.

Humanity is the missing link in today's world order and as long as it does not its place in world relations, every day we will see war, hunger, starvation and any injustice and nobody will be able to take action against them.

Arabs Fear for Wheat Supplies After Ukraine Crisis

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Russia's invasion of Ukraine could mean less bread on the table in Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere in the Arab world where millions already struggle to survive.

The region is heavily dependent on wheat supplies from the two countries which are now at war, and any shortages of the staple food have potential to bring unrest.

If those supplies are disrupted, "the Ukraine crisis could trigger renewed protests and instability" in several Middle East and North Africa countries, the Washington-based Middle East Institute said. The generals now ruling in Khartoum after an October coup have not forgotten: In 2019 one of their own, Field Marshall Omar al-Bashir, Sudan's longtime autocrat, was toppled by his military under pressure from mass demonstrations triggered by a tripling of the bread price.

Sudan is already facing regular anti-coup protests but seems to have taken the initiative to avoid demonstrations over bread. When Russia's invasion began on Thursday, the second-highest figure in Sudan's ruling Sovereign Council was in Moscow to discuss trade ties. Bread is already a luxury for millions in Yemen, where a seven-year war has pushed the country to the brink of famine.

"Most people can barely afford the basic foods," and the war in Ukraine will only "make things worse", Walid Salah, 35, a civil servant in the rebel-held capital Sanaa, told AFP.

Iran Army Strictly Monitoring Wars Taking Place in World

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Stating that modern technologies and knowhow play a very constructive role in today's battles, the Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Affairs said, "We are seriously monitoring wars happening in the worldwide."

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony of a local exhibition in on Sunday, Admiral Habbobollah Sayyari Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination Affairs pointed to the main mission of Iran's Army Force and emphasized that preserving and maintaining territorial integrity, independence and Islamic Establishment are of the main mission of Army Force.

To carry out its mission, the Army Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran must undoubtedly be prepared in every aspect and also must take the most appropriate decision optimally to thwart the external threats, he said, adding, "Of course, future threats are different from the past ones. It is observed that battles happened in recent years in the world are different from the past in a way that today's battles heavily rely on modern technology."

Benefited from domestic capabilities and potentials, we must improve and become stronger every day and manage to train our forces according to the needs, Sayyari reiterated. Today, Iranian Army Force has attained salient achievements in the international arena, defending the country with all its means and power in line with thwarting any external threats.

Meanwhile commander of Islamic Republic of Iran Navy Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said on Sunday that extraregional forces show regional states weaker and are unable of providing their security.

Speaking in a conference attended by Iran and Pakistan military academics and students, Admiral Irani said that the waters have a 90-percent share in global trade, adding that waters is effective in every aspects of coastal countries' peoples.

He said that Iran and Pakistan need a navy in proportion to their geopolitical weight as the two are considered maritime countries.

Undoubtedly, no country can provide the security of the expanse of all waters alone, he noted, adding that countries in the region should leverage their commonalities to the most.

U.S. Had No Choice...

FROM PAGE 1

"It was the Afghan people's resistance that forced the U.S. out of the country after 20 years. The same occurred in the previous decades, when the Soviet Union was forced to withdraw from Afghanistan. I call Afghanistan our honorable neighbors, who truly stand against [foreign] domination in the mountains and in the terrains," the top Iranian diplomat said.

Almost five months after the U.S.-led international coalition hastily abandoned Afghanistan, millions of people in the South Asian country are on the brink of starvation, with no food and no money.

The Taliban's return to power came as the U.S. was in the middle of a chaotic troop withdrawal from Afghanistan in August last year.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amir-Abdollahian underscored that the incumbent Iranian administration has adopted the motto of a balanced foreign policy, which includes being active within itself in parallel with smart interactions.

"It means that a balanced foreign policy accepts both the West and the East. It means that we won't put all our eggs neither in Beijing's nor in Moscow's basket. A balanced foreign policy pays attention to maintaining ties with all the five continents," he said.

The foreign minister said it will be possible to have ties with Washington as well "if the Americans show a change in their behavior towards Iran, and prove they want to establish ties with Tehran based on mutual respect and observing mutual rights, something they haven't done over the past 43 years and did not do even before the victory of the Islamic Revolution."

"We believe that a balanced foreign policy can best secure the maximum interests of the country and our people," he noted.

He emphasized that Iran follows the "Look to Asia" approach in the field of foreign policy as the Islamic Republic is a major country in the continent and an important and active actor, and has a distinctive geopolitical, geostrategic, and geo-economic position there.

"Logic dictates that we should not ignore the potentials of a continent to which we belong," Amir-Abdollahian said.

He went on to say that multilateralism can stop the United States' unilateralist behavior, and that the diversity of actors is the most important issue.

"We will see new coalitions in the future that won't look like the ones that we are witnessing at the moment. It won't be the case that the NATO will be the only military actor that's present and effective in all parts of the world," Amir-Abdollahian said.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

TENDER NO.:

01-31-9646004

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

شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۸۳۰۴۵

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
12	P/F"COOPER-BESSEMER"CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR	NO:115

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders 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. 1, 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 1,572 EURO or 425,500,250 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

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN

PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

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Czech Teenager Wins Stage Six of UAE Tour

PARIS (Dispatches) - Czech teenager Mathias Vacek, who rides for the Russian team Gazprom, won the sixth and penultimate stage of the UAE Tour in Dubai but Slovenian Tadej Pogacar (UAE) did enough to retain the leader's jersey. Vacek, 19, edged French rider Paul Lapeira, on his 22nd birthday, and a handful of other riders, including two of his Gazprom teammates, who had launched a breakaway shortly after the start in Dubai. It marked a first professional victory for the young Czech who was European junior time trial champion in 2020.

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Pogacar Retains UAE Title by Again

PARIS (Dispatches) - Tadej Pogacar retained the UAE title, demonstrating his domination on Saturday by sprinting away from his main rival Adam Yates at the end of the final climb. The Slovenian entered the final stage with a four second lead over Filippo Ganna. But the Italian's Ineos team mate Yates was the most realistic challenger on a 148km that ended with a tough climb up Jebel Hafeet. Yates attacked but, as the rest of the pack dropped away, Pogacar stuck to his wheel, before stepping on the pedals and surging away round the final pair of hairpins.

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SPORTS

MONDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Harden Leads 76ers Rout in Debut

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Joel Embiid finished with 34 points and 10 rebounds, and James Harden added 27 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds in his debut to lift the Philadelphia 76ers past the host Minnesota Timberwolves 133-102.

It was Harden's first game with the Sixers since being acquired with Paul Millsap from the Brooklyn Nets for Ben Simmons, Seth Curry, Andre Drummond and two first-round draft picks. Harden was sidelined with a strained hamstring for his first four games with the Sixers.

Tyrese Maxey contributed 28 points and four steals, and Matisse Thybulle chipped in with 11 points for the Sixers.

Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 25 points, D'Angelo Russell added 21 and Anthony Edwards had 15. Jaden McDaniels also scored 10 points.

Clippers 105, Lakers 102

Marcus Morris Sr. hit a go-ahead jumper with 39.4 seconds remaining and the Clippers benefitted from a key call reversal 13 seconds later in a battle of Los Angeles teams, with the Lakers playing as the home team.

The wild finish featured two flipped calls, one that followed a Russell Westbrook miss with 26.3 seconds left and gave the Clippers possession. A second replay reversed a foul call on the Lakers, who missed multiple chances to tie in the closing seconds.

Terance Mann led seven players in double figures with 19 points for the Clippers, who beat the Lakers for a third straight time this season. LeBron James was held to a team-high 21 points for the Lakers, ending his run of 23 straight games with 25 or more points.

Liton Ton Gives Bangladesh ODI Series Win Over Afghanistan

CHITTAGONG (Dispatches) - Liton Das struck a hundred and shared a record 202-run stand with Mushfiqur Rahim to set up an 88-run win for Bangladesh in the second one-day international against Afghanistan in Chittagong.

Liton's 136 off 126 balls guided the hosts to 306-4 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, before they bowled out the visitors for 218 to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Mushfiqur hit 86 off 93 balls to play his part before Taskin Ahmed (2-31) and Shakib Al Hasan (2-38) combined with other bowlers to wrap up the Afghanistan innings in 45.1 overs.

Afghanistan lost their first three wickets cheaply and were facing humiliation at 34-3 before Najibullah Zadran (54) and Rahmat Shah (52) lifted them with an 89-run stand for the fourth wicket.

But Taskin bowled Shah to break the partnership and then dismissed Zadran to put Bangladesh firmly in control.

Bangladesh had been in early trouble, when they opted to bat only for left-arm pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi to trap Tamim Iqbal leg-before for 12 and Rashid Khan to get rid of Shakib (20) off his second ball.

But Liton and Mushfiqur steadied the ship. Liton brought up his fifth ODI century with a four off Rashid and hit 16 fours and two sixes in his innings.

IOC Urges All Federations to Cancel Events in Russia and Belarus

PARIS (Dispatches) - The International Olympic Committee, angry at the Russian invasion of Ukraine breaching the 'Olympic Truce', urged all international sports federations to cancel their forthcoming events in Russia.

"The IOC EB (executive board) today urges all international sports federations to relocate or cancel their sports events currently planned in Russia or Belarus," read the IOC statement.

"They should take the breach of the Olympic Truce by the Russian and Belarussian governments into account and give the safety and security of the athletes absolute priority."



Pelicans 117, Suns 102

CJ McCollum scored 32 points and Brandon Ingram added 28 as visiting New Orleans ended Phoenix's eight-game winning streak.

Jonas Valanciunas added 18 points and 17 rebounds and the Pelicans took control by outscoring Phoenix 42-31 in the third quarter. New Orleans finished with a 53-37 rebounding advantage. Devin Booker scored 30 points, Deandre Ayton had 20 and Cam Johnson added 15 to lead the Suns, who lost for just the second time in 21 games. It was Western Conference-leading Phoenix's second game since losing Chris Paul to a fractured thumb.

Heat 115, Knicks 100

Tyler Herro scored a team-high 25 points off the bench for visiting Miami, which overcame a 46-point effort by RJ Barrett to beat New York.

Bam Adebayo finished with 16 points, 16 rebounds and four blocked shots, Jimmy Butler scored 23 points and Kyle Lowry added 19 points and nine rebounds for the Heat, who won for the seventh time in eight games and moved back into a tie with the Chicago Bulls atop the Eastern Conference at 39-21.

Barrett, who missed the final four games before the All-Star break due to a sprained left ankle, showed no signs of rust in his first action since Feb. 8. The 21-year-old scored 30 points in the first half -- just six shy of his career high entering the night -- and ended up with the most points by a Knicks player since Carmelo Anthony scored 46 points against the Utah Jazz on Nov. 14, 2014.



Rublev Wins Title In Dubai After Plea For Peace

DUBAI (Dispatches) - An emotional Andrey Rublev said he will sleep for two days after securing his third trophy in seven days by ending the dream run of Czech qualifier Jiri Vesely with a 6-3, 6-4 victory in the Dubai final on Saturday.

The second-seeded Russian won the singles and doubles titles in Marseille last Sunday before flying to the Emirates and clawing his way to a 10th career singles crown, and a fifth at the ATP 500 level.

"For sure for the next two days I will sleep, I won't leave my bed," said Rublev, whose plea for peace in Ukraine after his win the previous night went viral across news stations worldwide.

"Finally I can rest for maybe one week now. I feel super happy, even though maybe I'm tired."

"I think I was lucky today that Jiri also was super tired. He had really tough matches since quales, three sets, he beat top players starting from the first round, so I was super lucky that he couldn't perform the way he can."

"I was lucky today and that's why I'm happy to be the champion, I didn't expect this. It's an amazing feeling."

Rublev entered the Dubai final having contested 17 matches -- across singles and doubles -- in three weeks, 12 of which were three-setters.



Brazil Coach Tite to Step Down After World Cup

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Brazilian coach Tite said he would step down after the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, for which his five-time world champions are among the favorites.

"I will stay until the end of the World Cup," the 60-year-old told Brazilian channel SporTV.

Tite, whose real name is Adenor Leonardo

Bacchi, has been coaching the team since June 2016 and will hope to end his stint by securing Brazil's sixth World Cup win to add to the titles they won in 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, and 2002.

He took over when Brazil's fortunes were at low ebb, having been eliminated in the group stage of the Copa America in the United States in 2016.

Under Tite, Brazil went out in the quarter-finals of the 2018 World Cup, only to win the Copa America at home the following year.

Although he has led the team on a successful undefeated qualification campaign to reach Qatar, the Selecao's style of play has come under steady criticism.

Kristoffersen Wins Slalom In Garmisch

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen won the men's World Cup slalom in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on Saturday as several top names struggled to recapture their medal-winning form from the Winter Olympics.

Kristoffersen is the seventh different winner this season in seven slalom races on the World Cup circuit after clocking a winning time of one minute, 46.14 seconds.

Loic Meillard of Switzerland was second at 0.14sec back with Manuel Feller third at 0.51.

His fellow Austrian Johannes Strolz, who won Olympic silver ten days ago in the slalom, finished just off the podium at 0.76 in fourth.

The other slalom medallists from the Beijing Winter Games struggled in the warm conditions.

French Olympic champion Noel Clement paid the price for a conservative first run, after which he was 1.11 seconds off the pace, and then did not finish the second.

Norway's Sebastian Foss-Solevaag, who earned slalom bronze in Beijing, had already crashed in Saturday's opening run.

The soft snow in the Bavarian Alps also accounted for overall slalom World Cup leader Lucas Braathen, who failed to finish the first run.

Kristoffersen's win leaves him just one point behind Braathen in the slalom rankings with another race in the same discipline to come Sunday in Garmisch.



Poland Refuses to Play 2022 World Cup Play-Off Against Russia

WARSAW (Dispatches) - Poland will not play their 2022 World Cup play-off with Russia in Moscow on March 24 due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the president of the Polish football federation said on Saturday.

The conflict has entered the third day since Russian leader Vladimir Putin unleashed a full-scale invasion that has killed dozens of people, forced more than 50,000 to flee Ukraine in just 48 hours and sparked fears of a wider conflict in Europe.

"The time for talking is over. It is time to act. Due to the escalation of the Russian Federation's aggression in Ukraine, the Polish team does not envisage playing the play-off against Russia," wrote Cezary Kulesza, adding it was the "only correct decision".

He said he would work with the Swedish and Czech federations -- the winners of their match would have to play in Russia (on March 29) if the latter beat Poland -- to present a unified position to Fifa.

The three federations issued a joint statement on Thursday demanding Fifa move the respective play-offs from Russia -- who only four years ago hosted the World Cup finals.

Polish captain Robert Lewandowski -- who had tweeted on Friday he would consult his team-mates about the match -- welcomed his federation's move.

"The right decision!" tweeted Bayern Munich's star striker.

"I cannot imagine playing a match with the Russian national team in a situation when armed aggression in Ukraine continues."

"Russian footballers and fans are not responsible for this, but we cannot pretend that nothing is happening."

