

**China's Lead Negotiator to the Vienna Talks Wang Qun Expressed Hope That All Parties Will Work to Reach a Final Agreement in the Shortest Possible Time**

# IRAN NEWS

**A High-Ranking Iranian Lawmaker Has Said Iran's Red Lines in the Vienna Talks Are Enjoying Economic Benefits of the 2015 Nuclear Deal, JCPOA, and Preserving Its Atomic Capabilities**

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## U.S. Must Be Condemned For Violating Int'l Norms

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top human rights official says the United States is practically violating all norms of international law and its practices must be condemned by the entirety of the international community.

Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights and the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs, made the remarks while addressing the 49th regular session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday.

He said sanctions against Iran have prevented the country's access to essential medicines and medical supplies and blocked the transfer of humanitarian aid to Tehran in times of natural disasters and the coronavirus pandemic.

"The United States, which acts as a global self-appointed police force, is violating all international rights and norms," he added.

He emphasized that the international community should not accept such an illegal, unlawful and illegitimate approach.

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## Leader Says Ukraine Victim of Crises Concocted by U.S.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has blamed the American regime for the current Ukraine crisis, and demanded an end to the war in Ukraine, saying the Islamic Republic of Iran has always opposed war and destruction anywhere in the world.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks during a televised speech on the auspicious occasion of Eid al-Mab'ath, which marks the day on which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was chosen as God's final messenger and started his prophetic mission. The Leader said Ukraine fell victim to the U.S.'s policies and the crises created by Washington.

"The U.S. disrupted the stability of the country by interfering in its affairs and organizing rallies and creating a color coup," he said. "We oppose the killing of people and the destruction of the infrastructure of nations."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader called the US a perfect example and manifestation of modern ignorance, saying it feeds off the crises it creates all around the world.

"The American regime is a perfect example of modern ignorance. This regime is a crisis-producing and crisis-consuming regime, and it feeds off creating crises in the world," Ayatollah Khamenei maintained.

As an example, the Leader pointed to the U.S. formation of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group, denouncing Washington for plundering oil resources in eastern Syria, stealing Afghanistan's assets, and supporting Israeli crimes against Palestinians.

"America is a regime in which immorality is promoted, discrimination is increasing exponentially, and national wealth is being exploited by the rich and wealthy," he said.

"A country as rich as the United States is in a situation where people die on the streets when it gets hotter or colder. What do these events mean?" Ayatollah Khamenei noted.

The Leader also slammed the U.S. as a mafia-ruled country, saying the U.S. mafia installs individuals or overthrows them in other countries.

"America is basically a mafia regime - political mafia, economic mafia, arms mafia and all kinds of mafias that run and rule the policies of that country and control the country," the Leader explained.

"If the United States fails to create a crisis, the arms factories will not be able to make the most of it," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "They have to create crises in order to maximize the interests of these mafias."

The Leader then pointed to the West's double standards in dealing with the crisis in Ukraine, stating that Western countries support the killing of Yemeni people, but they call for an end to the Ukraine crisis.

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## Tehran Has Its Own Plan B, Will Not Wait Forever

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has warned the U.S. administration against "bluffs and blusters" in the Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 Iran deal, stressing that Tehran is willing to reach an agreement through negotiations but will not wait forever.

Khatibzadeh made the comment in a post on his Twitter account early on Tuesday after U.S. State Department's spokesman Ned Price said Washington was prepared to walk away from the talks in the Austrian capital if Iran displayed "an intransigence to making progress."

The U.S. is not a party to the Vienna talks because it is no longer a member of the nuclear deal, but it has sent a delegation to the Austrian capital to keep abreast of the negotiations.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman stressed that since the U.S. was the party to have withdrawn from the landmark deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Tehran had to make sure it would not happen again.

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## Tehran Urges Int'l Response Against Use of ICT for Criminal Purposes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's UN ambassador has underlined the need for adopting a convention that promotes and expedites international cooperation against crimes committed via the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks in a statement to the Ad Hoc Committee for Elaboration of the Convention on Countering the Use of ICT for Criminal Purposes.

He said that criminals are exponentially misusing ICT to carry out their illicit activities which often transcend geographical boundaries.

"As such, a strengthened collective response at the international level within a sound international legal framework, one which promotes harmonized and context-specific regulations and sets standardized operating procedures for expedited international cooperation, is more than necessary," he added.

The Iranian envoy also stressed that the Islamic Republic has long been among the strongest advocates for an international cybercrime convention, and thus co-sponsored resolution 74/247, pursuant to which the Ad Hoc Committee was established.

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## Iran Strongly Opposes Any Use of Chemical Weapons

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's deputy permanent representative to the UN, Zahra Ershadi, says the Islamic Republic, as the main victim of chemical weapons, strongly opposes the use of such lethal weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

Ershadi made the remarks in an address to a UN Security Council session on the situation in Syria on Monday, during which she strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons across the world.

Expressing concern over the serious effects of politicizing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on its credibility, Ershadi said the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) should not be exploited for political purposes to help certain countries achieve their goals and that Syria has over the last few years experienced such efforts by some member states.

**See Page 7**

## Iran Trade With Eurasia At \$5.3b in 11 months

IRAN NEW ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Director General of the International Customs Cooperation Office of Iran said that the value of non-oil trade between Iran and the members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) reached \$5.38 billion in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021 - February 20, 2022).

Hossein Kakhki said on Monday that based on the mentioned data, the value of trade shows a 48 percent increase, as compared to the same period of time last year.

According to him, over the 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year, Iran's exports to the Eurasian Economic Union member-states increased by more than \$1.84 billion, indicating a 15 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

The Director General of the International Customs Cooperation Office of Iran in his remarks said that Russia and Armenia were the top export destinations among five EEU member-countries during the period with \$547 million and \$278 million, respectively. Iran and Eurasian Economic Union reached a free trade agreement in October 2018 based on which about 862 commodity items were subjected to preferential tariffs.

Iran and the EEU have listed 862 types of commodities in their three-year provisional trade agreement. As per the deal, Iran will enjoy easier export terms and lower customs duties on 502 items and the same goes for 360 items from the EEU member countries.

## Iran Offering Fewer Crude Cargoes to China

LONDON (Dispatches) - Iran's state-owned National Iranian Oil Company was offering fewer cargoes to trading houses as it looks to keep barrels to sell directly to the market ahead of the potential lifting of sanctions, Chinese trading sources who deal with Iranian cargoes said on Feb. 28.

"Iran is paving its way back to the market officially, which buyers are eagerly [looking forward to] to compensate for the possible reduction from Russia," a Beijing-based analyst said, adding that the market generally expected NIOC to stop offering discounts on its crude once the sanctions are lifted.

"Our reference case has long assumed an interim deal by April, but significant diplomatic progress in the current round of talks now makes a full return to the 2015 JCPOA the most likely outcome in our view," S&P Global Platts Analytics said in a note. "An agreement by end-February could realistically lead to full implementation and the lifting of all oil export restrictions on Iran by May. We estimate this would facilitate 750,000 b/d of production growth within three months of sanctions relief, plus around 300,000 b/d of shipments from floating storage, lifting August crude and condensate exports to 1.75 million b/d," it added.

Currently, China imports Iranian barrels as crude grades from other origins, such as Malaysia Blend, Oman and Upper Zakum. Independent refineries in eastern China's Shandong province took almost all of these cargoes, which amounted to 22.8 million mt, or 458,000 b/d in 2021, and 2.275 million mt in January, S&P Global Platts data showed.

A trader based in Qingdao city, Shandong province, said his company only got 100,000 mt of Iranian crude delivery in February, compared to about 300,000 mt in the previous months. Meanwhile, it was also getting difficult to discharge Iranian barrels stored in the floating storages in Shandong waters unless full payment has been provided, market sources said. Previously, cargoes could be discharged upon payment of a deposit.

The price for Iranian cargoes has been more or less stable at a discount of around \$5/b against ICE Brent crude futures for a few weeks, according to refinery sources. This can be translated to about Yuan 400/mt (\$8.65/b) lower than other similar grades, making them attractive for independent refineries.

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## Top General Hopes for Peace in Muslim Eid Message

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – In congratulatory messages to senior military officials of Islamic nations on the occasion of Eid al-Mab'ath, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri expressed hope for peace and friendship in the world.

The top Iranian commander on Monday sent separate messages to high-ranking military officials of the Islamic countries,

offering warm wishes on the occasion of Eid al-Mab'ath -the anniversary of the day Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was chosen as God's messenger.

The Iranian general expressed hope that abiding by the teachings of Islam as well as close rapport, unity, and fraternity among the Muslim states would contribute to peace, affection, friendship and all other values that the world needs today.

## U.S. Seeks to Maintain Syria's Economic, Security Problems

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

**TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says the United States seeks to maintain the security and economic problems that are now facing the war-torn Syria in a different manner.**

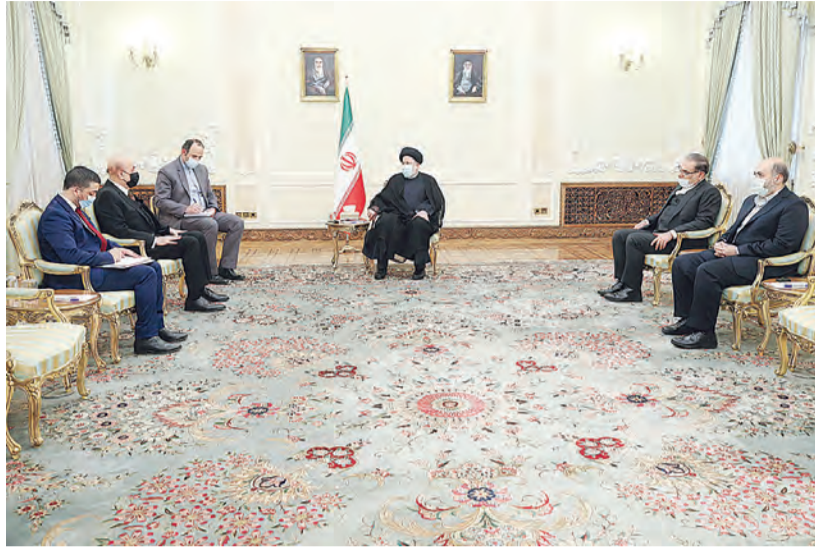
Iran's chief executive made the remarks in a Monday meeting with the visiting director of Syria's General Security Directorate Major General Ali Mamlouk, during which he lauded the Syrian people's resistance against terrorist groups and called for protection of the country's territorial integrity.

"The animosity of arrogant powers against the regional nations has not decreased and the United States seeks to keep up the security and economic problems that it has created for Syria in a different form," Iran's president said.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy over the past decade.

Reflecting on the profound relations between Tehran and Damascus, Raisi noted that the two nations cannot be separated from each other.

"Syria is the frontline of the fight against the Zionist regime and the unity of Muslim



countries and nations is necessary to counter this regime's actions," the Iranian president said.

He stressed the importance of improving bilateral economic cooperation between Tehran and Damascus and said, "The existing obstacles to the promotion of economic relations must be removed and the current strategic relations between the two sides must be developed."

Mamlouk, for his part, extended warm greetings of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to the Iranian people and government and said Damascus would never forget Tehran's support for Syria in the battle against terrorists.

In a Sunday meeting with Mamlouk, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani said the illegal presence of US occupying forces in Syria is the most important barrier to the establishment of peace and security in the war-torn country.

## Europe Not Fulfilling Its Int'l Responsibility Towards Refugees in Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - The Director-General of Citizens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs of the Iranian Interior Ministry said that Europe is not fulfilling its international responsibility towards refugees in Iran.

In a meeting with Finnish Ambassador to Tehran Kerry Kahloto, Sadeq Rezadoust criticized Europe's inaction on its international responsibility for refugees in Iran, saying that Iran provides the most services to Afghan refugees.

The Director-General of citizens and foreign immigrants' affairs of the Iranian Interior Ministry said Iran has proven over the past 40 years that it has always been a significant supporter of refugees and displaced people, and despite economic hardship and harsh sanctions, it has provided valuable services to refugees and foreign migrants in areas such as education, health, treatment, livelihood, vocational training, and employment.

He also highlighted that 97% of Afghan refugees and migrants live with the Iranian people, and about 3% of refugees live in dedicated cities because they are vulnerable.

Sadeq Rezadoust underlined that the Islamic Republic of Iran government has always provided services to the Afghan refugee community in all fields without taking into account the limited assistance of international organizations.

## 98% of Draft Agreement Over JCPOA Completed

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh says Iran and the P4+1 group of countries have completed more than 98 percent of their draft agreement to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, JCPOA but a few issues remain.

Khatibzadeh said the remaining issues are however highly important for the interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He added that issues like sanctions removal and guarantees as well as some political claims must be fixed in a proper manner.

He added a good deal is achievable in a very short time if there's a will to resolve the remaining issues. He said Iran's not in Vienna for a new deal but it wants to make sure the U.S. will return to JCPOA after sanction

Speaking at his weekly presser in Tehran on Monday, Khatibzadeh added that chief Iranian negotiator Ali Bagheri came to Iran for consultations over the draft agreement because everything must be examined carefully before signing the deal.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman noted that Bagheri is now back in Vienna and Iran is waiting for the other side to make a final decision.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also said Iran committed itself to keep uranium enrichment at a certain level and that what Iran is negotiating is sanctions removal and the return of the U.S. to the JCPOA.

He also spoke of the situation in Ukraine and talks reportedly held between the country and Russia. Khatibzadeh said Iran will try to encourage both sides to find a negotiated solution to their disputes. He described Iran's relations with Russia as multi-layered and said this originates from the fact that Tehran and Moscow are determined to raise their ties to an excellent level.

## Isolation Policy Against Syria Fully Defeated

DAMASCUS (IRNA) - Ali Asghar Khaji, a senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister, said that Iran stands by the side of the Syrian government and nation, and added that some countries' measures to isolated Syria have been fully defeated.

Khaji who has travelled to Syria at the head of an Iranian delegation made the comment in a meeting with the Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad.

Khaji and Miqdad in the meeting exchanged viewpoints on further broadening of bilateral ties, the latest developments in Syria, Ukraine developments, and the continuation of Astana constitution format consultation.

Khaji said that the Islamic Republic of Iran in line with strengthening the national Syrian-Syrian dialogues,

the return of the Syrian refugees to their country, and reconstruction of that country will assist Syria.

Miqdad, for his part, appreciated the efforts made by Iran in support of the Syrian government and nation in the economic and political fields, including the dialogue in constitution framework in Astana.

Miqdad further reiterated that keeping in mind the strategic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria, consultations among high ranking officials of the two countries will continue at turning points of the regional developments.

"The enemies of the Syrian nation are trying to achieve what they have failed to gain at through military intervention, in the political scene and through imposing sanctions," he added.

## Iran Breaks Record of Rail Transport

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Director-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) said Monday that exports through railway network have exceeded 1.7m tons since president Raisi's government assumed took office last summer.

Thanks to God, with the support of the 13th government, in addition to breaking the 100-year record in rail transit, the record of exports through railways in exports through the country's rail borders was also broken," Miad Salehi, the Director-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) who is also the Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development wrote in a tweet.

Salehi added the figures of exports through the rail network has exceeded 1.7 tons, predicting that the trend to continue.

## 38th Iran Int'l Quran Competitions Kicks Off

TEHRAN (IP) - The 38th edition of the Islamic Republic of Iran's International Holy Quran Competition was kicked off on Monday in Tehran.

As the most significant event of the Islamic world, Iran's 38th International Quran Competition is underway from February 28 until March 5, with the participation of 62 competitors from 29 countries, virtually.

The event also coincides with the 5th edition of the Quran Competition for the Blind and the 7th edition of the International Quran Competition.

The judging of the recorded video files sent to the competition secretariat will start as of March 1, with Iranian and foreign judges in the Andisheh Hall of the Arts Center, and continues until March 4.

The closing ceremony of the event also will be held on March 5.

## Iran to Boost Exports Volume, Trade Corridors

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Affairs said that if there is a unified management system to make decisions on borders, Iran's share of exports and trade corridors can be increased more than threefold.

Mehdi Safari made the remarks on Monday at the meeting of Foreign Economic Relations Coordination Headquarters.

The meeting was held with two agendas in the fields of problems of border areas and the latest situation of economic cooperation between Iran with China, as chaired by Mehdi Safari Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Affairs.

In the meeting, Safari considered unified border management 'important' for increasing exports and imports share as well as exporting technical and engineering services to neighboring countries and said, "If there is a unified management system for decision-making at borders, Iran's share of exports and trade corridors can be increased optimally."

## Iran to Expand Cultural Cooperation With Regional Countries

BEIRUT (IRNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili in his visit to Lebanon in separate meetings with the Lebanese president, parliament speaker, and prime minister on Monday said that the Iranian government has broad programs for expansion of cultural regional interactions.

Esmaili said in his meetings with President Michel Aoun, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, and Prime Minister Najib Azmi Miqati on Monday that Iran and Lebanon have a long record of cultural ties and the new popular Iranian government has broad programs for expansion of cultural regional interactions.

"Lebanon, due to the long record of its friendship with Iran and its cultural and civilizational relation with our country, is the first destination of our cultural diplomacy in this round of the Islamic Republic of Iran Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry," he added. Esmaili said that the Iranian and Lebanese personalities have highly influenced these two brother and friendly nations, contributing to cultural commonalities.

Esmaili also referred to the holding of the Iran Culture Week in Lebanon, adding: This important cultural and artistic event can open a new chapter in our bilateral cultural ties.

The Iranian culture minister further emphasized that the efforts made by the Lebanese culture minister for holding the Iran Culture Week in Lebanon are praiseworthy.

"A similar event will be held in Iran in the presence of Lebanese artists," he added.

Esmaili also conveyed the warm regards of President Ebrahim Raisi to his Lebanese counterpart and the other Lebanese high ranking officials.

## Air Force Ready to Share Experiences With Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - The commander of the Air Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran terming the unilateral sanctions an opportunity, especially on the Armed Forces said that the Iranian air force is ready to share experience with Pakistan Air Force in all areas.

Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi said that during an important meeting his Pakistani counterpart expressed desire to further strengthen relations with the Republic Islamic Republic of Iran in defense sector.

"We will welcome any expansion of relations with Pakistan because it will stabilize the security of the two countries," he said.

He hoped that stronger ties between Iran and Pakistan would lead to the development of the two countries especially in the military areas.

Hamid Vahedi added fortunately, over the past 43 years, Iran Air Force has made significant progress adding that sanctions have been a blessing for Iran and have made it stand on our own feet.

He said Iran Air Force is self-reliant and by taking advantage of this achievement, it can expand its cooperation with the brotherly country of Pakistan.

He added that the yesterday's meeting with his Pakistani counterpart was very good and valuable and it was felt that there was a really good relationship between the two countries which

could be upgraded.

The Commander said, "We told the Pakistan Air Force Chief that sanctions were a blessing for the holy system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the armed forces, because before the Revolution, the armed forces, including the air force, were dependent on the foreign support."

Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi in his views said that the Iran Air Force has stood by the Revolution since the very beginning till today, despite the sanctions, the Force is doing its job self-sufficiently.

"All heavy repairs, overhauls of all the planes are done by our country's engineers without any external support," he noted.

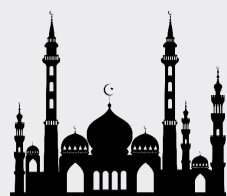
He said, "We have made very fundamental changes to our flying equipment, according to modern science."

"The Air Force of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the center of UAV training in the army."

"The Iranian and Pakistani air forces have made good progress in various areas and we are able to take advantage of this situation," said the Brigadier General.

He also said, "We have informed the chief of the Pakistan Air Force that we are ready for strong bilateral cooperation with Pakistan."

He said that the purpose of interaction and brotherhood between the two countries is that Islamic countries unite and be able to stand against the enemies of Islam.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:16
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:18
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:18
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:31

25. "For me, I have faith in the Lord of you (all): listen, then, to me!"  
26. It was said: "Enter thou the Garden." He said:  
"Ah me! Would that my People knew (what I know)!"

Surah 36, Ya-sin (25 - 26)

## Tehran, Warsaw Call for Direct Flight to Boost Trade Activities

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – Iran and Poland called for launching direct flights to boost their tourism and trade activities with their existing trade potentials.**

In a meeting, which was held at Iran's Chamber of Commerce on the anniversary of establishment of Iran-Poland Joint Chamber of Commerce, both countries explored ways for broadening trade ties and called launch of direct flight between the two states.

In the meeting, Head of Iran-Poland Joint Chamber of Commerce Mr. Rahim Bana Molaei pointed to the history of cooperation between the two countries and the current trade potentials and called for broadening the level of trade exchanges between Tehran and Warsaw. He added that laying ground for acquaintance of traders of the two countries is one of the main goals of the chamber which is seriously pursued. He noted that adopting suitable mechanisms for promoting tourism and attracting tourists is of the other measures which can boost the bilateral trade.

Bana Molaei reiterated that restoration of direct flights between Tehran and Warsaw is the prerequisite of developing tourism activities between the two states, adding that to expand halal trade has this capability for granting halal brand by the Islamic Chamber Research and Information Center (ICRIC) to the Polish factories which deserve. He stated this issue can turn Poland into a country to enter the halal market in Europe.

He further said that there are capabilities for organizing joint activities between Iran and Poland in the fields of clean energies and mining.

Then Polish Ambassador to Tehran Mr. Maciej Falkowski, for his part, emphasized significance of broadening level of cooperation between Iran and Poland and called for joint cultural and human activities and said he wants both countries to compensate for two years of lapse for the Covid pandemic.



He estimated the trade between the two countries was around \$100m last year which should be strengthened. He noted that after conducting studies they have realized Iran and Poland can broaden cooperation in the fields of transportation, customs and agriculture and to improve cooperation, the joint chamber can take serious steps.

He went on to say that now it is the time to resume implementing agreements and to jump in enhancing cooperation. He said therefore the solutions and efforts should be operationalized and the restrict laws should be put aside and the ties should be strengthened with more ease.

Falkowski reiterated that talks between officials of the two countries are underway for return of Iranian students stranded in Ukraine and vowed his country will do its best.

Then deputy of Iran Trade Organization on developing export markets Mr. Ahmad Reza Alaei pointed to the special role of the private sector in planning and implementing different models of development for the level of ties between Iran and Poland, adding that although governments play important role is providing the ground for the cooperation between economic activists, adding that the joint Iran-Poland Commission has not convened for some 17 years and it is not justifiable due to the historic relation between Iran and Poland.

He added that lack of information among the economic activists regarding the capacities of the both countries has been the main reason behind the current low level of trade exchanges and called for establishing joint trade centers in Iran and Poland as well as holding B2B meetings and holding exhibitions.

## Tehran, Istanbul to Hold Webinar on Promoting Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Mine (TCCIM) and Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICOC) will hold a joint webinar on March 12 on reviewing ways for broadening trade ties.

According to the reports, the webinar will be held on March 12 morning and it is part of decisions made during recent meeting of the secretary general of TCCIM with his ICOC counterpart.

The webinar is to explore ways of boosting trade between the two countries and many economic activists of the two countries are to attend the webinar.

## Producing Filters of Water Desalination Machines to Save Country \$35m Annually

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Mr. Mohsen Salehinia says producing each filter of water desalination machine will save the country some \$500 and it will be totaled around \$35m annually.

He said that the annual capacity of the project for producing membrane desalination filters is 70,000 module of one-meter filter with 8-inch diameter. He added that the total investment on this project is 9m euros as well as 750b rials with participation of the private sector and direct occupation for 75 people.

Meanwhile director for planning and development of IDRO Mr. Mohammad Nouri Amiri said that the main application of these filters is in water purification systems with using the reverse osmosis (RO) technology and it can also be used in desalination of drinking water, water required by the industries, petrochemical and food industries.

He added that the output of desalinated water of each filter equals to almost 50% of input salty and bitter water. He noted that desalination through membrane filters is the most advanced and cheapest method of getting healthy water from the saline and bitter water that in the past this technology was in the monopoly of a few countries like Japan, the U.S. South Korea and China.

## Sangan Project Fully Revived as Schedule

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Khorasan Steel Complex Company (KSC) announced signing main contracts and provision of required equipment for the project of constructing iron ore concentrate plant of the company in Sangan mines.

Kasra Ghafoori broke the news and said fortunately with cooperation of board of directors and major shareholders of the company, KSC has succeeded in observing all of its obligations timely and currently it is witnessing acceptable mobility in this project.

He noted that since the time of signing the MoU for accelerating the construction of the iron ore plant, all legal and contractual, developmental and construction, mechanical and other technical measures of the project related to the equipment have progressed as schedule.

Ghafoori said that the contract for providing main equipment of the project of crushing system has been signed with South African company NCP, adding that the contract for provision and manufacture of main equipment of the transfer sector and storage of materials (including equipment of conveyors of the stone crushing unit, stacker and reclaimers) with China's DHHH and the contract for providing distribution equipment and transfer of power have been signed with the domestic companies.

He reiterated that the project for construction of iron ore concentrate in Khaf has special place in the mission of Khorasan Steel Company due to its undisputable impacts in sustaining production.

This project is to come on stream in 24 months and with construction of this plant Khorasan Steel Company with annual production of 2.5m tons of concentrate will make Khorasan Razavi as the number one in the region whose steel production chain from A to Z will be all completed in this province.

## Gov't to Launch Major Water Transfer Project From Sea of Oman

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Majlis has authorized the start of construction works on a major water transfer project from the Sea of Oman in southeastern Iran.

In a Monday letter addressed to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the parliament enacted the Legislation on Transfer of Water from Sea of Oman to Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

The letter, signed by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, gives the administrative government five days to start implementing the legislation.

The legislation was ratified in the parliament on Saturday when 210 lawmakers in the 290-member chamber voted for it. The project is aimed at responding to an acute water shortage in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran's largest province by area which is located along the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The project comes amid Iran's renewed push to obtain its water rights from the Helmand River in Afghanistan. Iranian authorities say they are not happy with the amount of water released by a new government in Afghanistan from a dam on Helmand.

The water transfer project from the Sea of Oman has its own critics inside Iran as some have expressed concerns about the environmental ramifications of the projects as well as its huge financial costs.

Others, however, believe the project will fix economic and social problems in the region while it will allow water transfer pipelines to spread to the economically more prosperous region of Khorasan in eastern Iran.

## Iran Ready to Receive Sports Tourists From Qatar World Cup

TEHRAN (IP) - Ezatullah Zarghami, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran, emphasized: "Coordination has been done with various organizations for the arrival of tourists during the World Cup in Qatar, but after the final studies, we will announce the exact forecast of the number of tourists entering the country."

The 2022 FIFA World Cup is the 22nd World Cup is scheduled to take place in Qatar from 21 November to 18 December 2022.

One of the most touched-on issues of the Qatar World Cup is the small extent of the country, which does not allow the accommodation of all football fans, so Iran, as a neighboring country, has announced its readiness to welcome the tourists.

With 1,648,195 square kilometers, Iran is 142 times larger than Qatar, with an area of about 11 thousand 571 km, which is slightly larger than Qom province (with 11,526 km).

The Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism added: "We have established a headquarters for tourism in Qatar, and if the agencies cooperate well to attract tourists, we will see the foreign tourists in the country."

## Boosting Ties With Qatar to Connect Iran to Global Market

TEHRAN (MNA) – According to the deputy chairman of the Non-Oil Export Development Commission of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, developing relations with neighboring Qatar can connect Iran to the global market and increase Iran's trade.

Commenting on President Raisi's recent visit to Qatar and the signing of 14 cooperation documents with the neighboring country of Qatar, Mustafa Mousavi said, "The agreements signed between the two countries can have a positive impact on the development of trade and increase the country's non-oil exports."

Referring to the establishment of the Iranian trade office in Qatar, he emphasized that this is an important event that can stabilize the situation of Iranian traders in the market in this country.

Also, the signing of an agreement on launching regular shipping lines between the ports of the two countries will connect Iran to the global market, he said.

He also said that there is a good market for Iranian food and nutritious commodities in the southern neighbor.

## Iran Trucks Allowed to Travel Directly to Pakistan Territory

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's freight trucks can transit from Mirjaveh Border directly to Pakistan territory from February 25 after two years hiatus.

According to the official website of the Iranian Roads and Urban Developments Ministry, after almost two years hiatus, Iran's trucks can transit from Mirjaveh Border in southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province to Pakistan's territory through the follow-ups of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO), according to the general-director of Sistan and Baluchistan Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization.

Previously, during two years of covid-19 pandemic, Iran's trucks were allowed to transit through Mirjaveh border crossing just up to Taftan custom; however, from February 25 onwards Iranian trucks resume transit directly to Pakistan's territory.

This is particularly important for trucks that need to be transited to the destination without stop.

Currently, more than 150 trucks transit through Mirjaveh Border to Pakistan per day.

With 900 km border between Iran and Pakistan and huge cultural, religious, and historical commonalities, development of commercial relations is very important for expanding bilateral ties in different spheres.

Development of trade with the neighboring countries is top priority of Iran foreign policy and Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) is eagerly advancing this policy by facilitating transit.

## Lamerd Zone to Build Industrial Sheds With Over 1,500b Rials

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Lamerd Special Economic Zone is to build four industrial sheds for its customs warehouses as well as completing industrial sheds with total investment over 1,500b rials.

According to the public relations of the zone, due to the expansion of industrial units and rise in the production volume and customs exchanges and in order to serve investors favorably, four industrial sheds will be launched and also completing operation of industrial sheds installations will be followed.

As per report, after pursuit and consultation of the



CEO of Lamerd Special Economic Zone for developing and equipping the infrastructures in the region, Amen Development and Construction Company won the tender to carry out the project with the investment over 1,500b rials and its executive operation of the project will soon start.

The operation for construction of electricity supply lines to those industrial sheds are underway and investors involved in the project will soon start executive operation for this infrastructural project in Lamerd Special Economic Zone.

According to reports, it is estimate implementation of the project to reach 430b rials.

## Neutral Swiss Adopt EU Sanctions Against Russia

ZURICH (Dispatches)- Neutral Switzerland will adopt European Union sanctions against Russians involved in Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and freeze their assets, the government said today in a sharp deviation from the Alpine country's traditions.

"In view of Russia's continuing military intervention in Ukraine, the Federal Council took the decision on February 28 to adopt the packages of sanctions imposed by the EU on February 23 and 25," the government said in a statement. Switzerland also adopted financial sanctions against Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, effective immediately, it said.



## Canadian TV Giants Pull Russia's RT Network

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - Major Canadian TV providers have pulled Russian state television network RT from their output, they announced separately.

The move to take the station off the airwaves came days after Russia invaded Ukraine, sparking the biggest security crisis in Europe since the Cold War ended.

Regularly accused of contributing to disinformation, RT is in the crosshairs of several Western nations, which accuse it of being a Kremlin mouthpiece.

A spokeswoman for Bell, one of Canada's biggest TV providers, told AFP: "Since February 27, RT is no longer available on Bell channels."



## Ukraine Fighting Rages, Huge Column Approaches Kyiv



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russia on Tuesday faced increasing isolation over its invasion of Ukraine, with fierce resistance on the ground denying President Vladimir Putin decisive early gains despite heavy shelling and a huge military convoy outside the capital, Kyiv.

Ukrainian officials reported a Russian bombardment of Kharkiv, the country's second largest city, had killed dozens of civilians. It was not possible to independently verify the casualty figures.

"Barbaric rocket attacks and MLRS (multiple launch rocket systems) of peaceful cities are evidence that they are no longer able to fight armed Ukrainians," Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on Facebook.

Ceasefire talks between Russia and its southern neighbor held Monday failed to reach a breakthrough and negotiators have not said when a new round would take place.

Putin faces mounting international pressure for last week launching the biggest assault on a European state since World War Two, and the systemic impact of Western sanctions led to a near 30% collapse in the rouble on Monday before central bank intervention rescued the currency from its lows.

Staging a push for the capital, Russia has massed a convoy of armoured vehicles, tanks and other military equipment that stretches about 40 miles (64 km), U.S. satellite company Maxar said.

"What I think is pretty certain is Russia is off their timeline. I think they thought that within 72 hours they'd hold Kyiv," U.S. Republican Senator Marco Rubio said after a classified briefing with top Biden administration officials. But fighting on several fronts was taking a toll.

Some 70 Ukrainian servicemen were killed on Sunday by Russian shelling of a base in the town of Okhtyrka, between Kharkiv and Kyiv, the regional governor said on Facebook.

The United States and its allies have imposed sanctions on Russia's central bank, its top businesses, oligarchs and officials, including Putin himself, and barred some Russian banks from the SWIFT international payments system.

NATO ally Turkey delivered another blow to Moscow on Monday by warning warring countries not to send warships through its Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits that separate the Black Sea from the Mediterranean, effectively bottling up Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Washington has ruled out sending troops to fight Russia or enforcing a no-fly zone as requested by Ukraine, fearing an escalation between the world's top two nuclear powers.

But, the United States and its allies have instead promised military aid to Kyiv, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned the capital was under constant threat.

"For the enemy, Kyiv is the key target," Zelenskyy said in a video message late on Monday. "We did not let them break the defence of the capital, and they send saboteurs to us ... We will neutralize them all."

Zelenskyy said Russia, which calls its actions in Ukraine a "special operation", was targeting a thermal power plant providing electricity to Kyiv, a city of 3 million people.

Human rights groups and Ukraine's ambassador to the United States accused Russia of using cluster bombs and vacuum bombs. The United States said it had no confirmation of their use.

Public health experts say Ukraine is running low on critical medical supplies and fears of a wider public health crisis are growing as people flee their homes and health services and supplies are interrupted.

Russia says its actions are not designed to occupy territory but to destroy Ukraine's military capabilities and capture what it regards as dangerous nationalists. More than 500,000 people have fled Ukraine, according to the United Nations refugee agency, setting off a refugee crisis as thousands await passage at European border crossings.

## Looming FATF Decision on Dirty Money List Poses Risks for UAE

DUBAI (Dispatches) - A global financial crime watchdog will decide this week whether the United Arab Emirates has made enough progress to avoid landing on a 'grey' watchlist, a designation which risks reputational damage to the Middle East's business hub.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 2020 called for "fundamental and major improvements" by the UAE, the region's financial capital and a gold trading hub that has tightened regulations to overcome an image as a hotspot for illicit money.

Countries on the 'grey list' face increased FATF monitoring and risk reputational damage, ratings adjustments, trouble obtaining global finance and higher transaction costs, experts say.



### China Willing to Work With U.S. On Build Back Better World Initiative

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China is willing to work with the United States on a G7-led global infrastructure plan and welcomes Washington to join its Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said.

The Group of Seven (G7) richest democracies, consisting of United States and its allies, proposed the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative in June to help developing countries meet infrastructure needs, as they sought to counter China's growing influence.

"We are also willing to consider coordinating with the U.S. 'Build Back Better World' initiative to provide the world with more high-quality public goods," Wang said in a video message at an event for the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique, which marked the normalizing of relations between United States and China.

He said China is also open to the United States participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Global Development Initiative, a call by Chinese President Xi Jinping in September for all countries to work towards sustainable development.

G7's B3W initiative is seen as an alternative to rival China's BRI, which was launched by Xi in 2013. More than 100 countries have signed agreements with China to cooperate in BRI projects like railways, ports, highways and other infrastructure.

Wang urged Washington to work with China in Asia-Pacific to build a "family of openness, inclusiveness, innovation, growth, connectivity and win-win cooperation", rather than turn the region into one of conflict and confrontation.

The Shanghai Communique, a document which marked the end of isolation between both countries and issued during then U.S. President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China, meant that two major powers with different social systems were willing to coexist peacefully, he said.

Wang reiterated a call for the United States to stop supporting independence for Taiwan, a self-ruled island China claims as its own.

## Belarus Approves Hosting Nuclear Weapons

MINSK (Dispatches) - Belarusians voted to allow the country to host nuclear weapons and Russian forces permanently, results showed, part of a package of constitutional reforms that also extended the rule of leader Alexander Lukashenko.

The referendum was held Sunday as the ex-Soviet country's neighbor Ukraine is under attack from Russian troops and delegations from Moscow and Kyiv are expected to meet for talks on the Belarusian border.

Central Election Commission head Igor Karpenko said 65.16 percent of referendum participants voted in favor of the amendments and 10.07 percent voted against, Russian news agencies reported.

According to Karpenko, voter turnout stood at 78.63 percent.

To come into force, the amendments need to receive at least 50 percent of the vote with a turnout of over half the electorate.

Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994,

promised the referendum in the wake of historic protests against his disputed re-election in 2020.

By amending the constitution Lukashenko, 67, follows in the footsteps of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who in 2020 oversaw a vote on constitutional changes that made it possible for him to remain in power until 2036.

The constitutional changes also grant immunity to former leaders for crimes committed during their term in office.

Russia is a key ally of Belarus and last week Lukashenko allowed Russian troops to use Belarusian territory to invade Ukraine from the north.

Belarus inherited a number of Soviet nuclear warheads following the break-up of the USSR in 1991, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative think tank, which it then transferred to Russia.

Lukashenko first floated possible changes after a presidential vote in August 2020 sparked unprecedented demonstrations that were met with a brutal crackdown.



## Turkish Opposition Parties Promise To Slash Presidential Powers

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Six Turkish opposition parties set out a joint plan to slash presidential powers and strengthen the role of parliament if they win the next election.

The new system would reverse changes made in a 2017 referendum that gave President Tayyip Erdogan near unchecked authority, Muharrem Erkek, a deputy head of the Republican People's Party (CHP), said.

"This (presidential) system has led to... arbitrary governance. We oppose this system which ... damages the basis of a democratic state of law," he said.

Erdogan has dominated politics for two decades with his Islamist-rooted AK Party, which has defended the presidential system, saying it streamlined a bloated state.

But an economic downturn has eroded support for the ruling bloc and saw the CHP, with support from other opposition parties, win over the two biggest cities in 2019 mayoral elections for the first time in about 25 years.

A poll published by Metropoll on Monday showed the AK Party and its nationalist MHP allies at 32.9% and 6.4% respectively - far below the 50% needed to obtain a majority in Turkey's 600-seat parliament. The next vote is scheduled for June 2023.

The opposition's "strengthened parliamentary system" would restore the post of prime minister and return the presidency to a largely ceremonial role, party officials said.

The changes would give parliament more authority over the budget and let any party with 3% or more of the vote get seats in parliament - cutting the current threshold from 10%, they added.

The parties said they would also overhaul the bodies in charge of appointing judges and prosecutors, overseeing elections and regulating media organizations.

The six opposition leaders met for the first time in Ankara earlier this month - widening an alliance that saw four parties join forces for the 2018 elections.



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## Turkey's Economy Booms 11% in 2021

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkey's economy grew a powerful 11% in 2021 as expected, according to data on Monday showing it bounced back strongly from the COVID-19 pandemic, though economists expect a slowdown this year after an inflation surge.

In the fourth quarter gross domestic product (GDP) grew 9.1% year-on-year, just above forecast, expanding 1.5% from the previous quarter on a seasonally and calendar-adjusted basis, the Turkish Statistical Institute said. President Tayyip Erdogan is implementing an economic plan that prioritises growth, employment, investment and exports driven by a series of unorthodox interest rate cuts.



## Sanctions on Russia to Have Little Impact On Asia-Pacific in Terms of Reduced Trade

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - The direct impact on Asia-Pacific (APAC) of diminished trade with Russia would remain small if trade with the country becomes more difficult as sanctions on Russia proliferate, according to Moody Analytics.

Although Russia has a large physical presence in the region, it is not a major trading partner with APAC countries, the research house said.

"There is little reliance on exports to Russia and, with few exceptions, what reliance there is has not increased in recent years," it said in a Feb 25 commentary titled "APAC's direct trade with Russia".

It noted that exports to Russia account for no more than one per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in any of the major APAC countries.

As for imports, Moody's said no APAC economy is highly dependent on imports from Russia, which represent less than one per cent of nominal GDP for any of the major APAC countries.

"The greatest volatility of the value of imports from Russia has been in Singapore, where refined petroleum — with its volatile price — accounts for about 75 per cent of imports from Russia. And Singapore's imports from Russia have never amounted to more than two per cent of all of its imports," it added.

By far, the region's largest exporter of goods to Russia is China, amounting to \$51 billion in 2020, Moody's said, citing the International Monetary Fund's Direction of Trade Statistics. These were made up largely of computers, electronics and machinery — including mobile phones — and vehicle parts.

"Second-ranked South Korea exported US\$6.9 billion the same year, followed closely by Japan with \$5.8 billion," it said.

Moody's said that exports to Russia are somewhat important for China, however, as it is also the largest importer within APAC of goods from Russia, with nearly 70 per cent of Russian imports comprising energy-related products, including crude oil, refined petroleum and coal briquettes.

Natural gas is a small import component, Moody's said, noting that it is expected to rise with the recent agreement between China and Russia to expand pipeline capacity between the two countries.

Nevertheless, only two per cent of China's total exports go to Russia.

Moody's said while the direct impact of diminished trade is small for APAC, the indirect impact of longer-lasting global energy price inflation, due to a lingering risk premium on crude and refined energy products, will weigh on the region's economy.

"And much of this will be felt through higher input costs for food production, which accounts for a larger share of household budgets in the region compared with Europe or North America," it added.

## European Subsidiary of Russia's Sberbank Failing or Likely to Fail

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The European subsidiary of Russia's state-owned Sberbank is facing bankruptcy, the European Central Bank said Monday, in the wake of sanctions aimed at punishing Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

Sberbank Europe AG, headquartered in Austria and with branches in Croatia and Slovenia, has "experienced significant deposit outflows as a result of the reputational impact of geopolitical tensions", the ECB said.

"The European Central Bank (ECB) has assessed that Sberbank Europe AG and its two subsidiaries in the banking union, Sberbank d.d. in Croatia and Sberbank banka d.d. in Slovenia, are failing or likely to fail owing to a deterioration of their liquidity situation," the ECB said in a statement.

"The bank is likely to be unable to pay its debts or other liabilities as they fall due," it added.

The two largest Russian banks, Sberbank and VTB, were targeted Thursday by tough US sanctions aimed at limiting their ability to conduct business internationally.

The sanctions were stepped up over the weekend with the announcement that selected banks would be expelled from the international SWIFT payment system.

Sberbank Europe AG -- which is 100 percent owned by the bank's Russian parent company -- also has subsidiaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Serbia, which do not come under the jurisdiction of the ECB.

The ECB said it has "coordinated with national competent authorities" in those countries.



## BP Quits Russia in Up to \$25b Hit

LONDON (Dispatches) - BP is abandoning its stake in Russian oil giant Rosneft in an abrupt and costly end to three decades of operating in the energy-rich country, marking the most significant move yet by a Western company in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Rosneft accounts for around half of BP's oil and gas reserves and a third of its production and divesting the 19.75% stake will result in charges of up to \$25 billion, the British company said, without saying how it plans to extricate itself.

"I have been deeply shocked and saddened by the situation unfolding in Ukraine and my heart goes out to everyone affected. It has caused us to fundamentally rethink BP's position with Rosneft," BP Chief Executive Bernard Looney said.

The rapid retreat represents a dramatic exit for BP, the biggest foreign investor in Russia, and puts the spotlight on other Western companies with operations in the country including France's TotalEnergies and Britain's Shell, amid an escalating crisis between the West and Moscow.

It also underscores growing pressure from Western governments on their companies to curtail operations in Russia as they widen a net of economic sanctions against Moscow.

British Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, who on Friday had expressed "concern" over BP's Rosneft, welcomed the decision.

"Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine must be a wake up call for British businesses with commercial interests in (President Vladimir) Putin's Russia," Kwarteng said on Twitter.

Rosneft blamed BP's decision on "unprecedented political pressure", Russian news agencies reported, saying 30 years of successful cooperation had been ruined.

Susannah Streeter, senior investment analyst at British retail stock broker Hargreaves Lansdown, said it will be "highly difficult" for BP "to recover anywhere near what was considered to be the full value" of Rosneft.

Last week, Looney said that BP was sticking to its Russian business and would comply with any Western sanctions on Moscow.

Earlier, Putin put Russia's nuclear deterrent on high alert in the face of Western reprisals for his invasion of Ukraine, which included blocking access to the SWIFT international payment system for some Russian banks.

And Norway's \$1.3 trillion sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, will divest its Russian assets after the Ukraine invasion, its prime minister said.

BP said its move and financial hit will not impact its short and long term financial targets within its strategy to shift away from oil and gas to low-carbon fuels and renewables energy.

But Hargreaves Lansdown's Streeter said a write down of this magnitude is "likely to limit the extent to which BP can continue to accelerate its transition towards renewables."

## China Sees Biggest Growth in Energy and Coal Use Since 2011

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China recorded its biggest increase in total energy consumption and coal use in a decade in 2021, as the economy recovered from COVID-19 slowdown a year earlier, data from the country's statistics bureau showed on Monday.

China, the world's biggest coal burner and greenhouse gas emitter, used 5.24 billion tons of standard coal equivalent of energy last year, up 5.2% from 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said.

The rate of growth was the highest since 2011, according to Reuters records based on official data.

The NBS also said coal consumption in China rose 4.6% in 2021, also the strongest rate of growth in a decade.

The government has pledged to restrict construction in high energy-consuming industries and has urged companies to save energy and boost efficiency, with soaring fossil fuel use undermining plans to cut carbon emissions.

President Xi Jinping has pledged to bring the country's carbon emissions to a peak by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. However, he has not set a cap on total energy use or on carbon emission levels.

Despite rigorous measures including limiting electricity use in some regions, China's energy intensity - a ratio measuring how much energy is used per unit of economic growth - fell 2.7% in 2021, compared to targeted reduction of "around 3%" for the year.

China approved the expansion of hundreds of collieries last year, involving an annual capacity increase of about 420 million tons. Output reached a record high as it strived to guarantee energy supply following a nationwide power shortage.

## Higher Oil Prices Pose Further Risk to India's Growth Momentum

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Rising crude oil prices and supply disruptions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine could further sap an Indian economy already slowed by COVID-19, posing risks to household spending and private investments, economists said.

India, which meets nearly 80% of its oil needs through imports, could be hit by a widening trade deficit, weakening rupee and higher inflation after Brent crude prices shot above \$105 a barrel last week, the economists said.

The "surge in oil prices as a result of the (Ukraine) crisis poses considerable risks to the Indian economy," Aditi Gupta, an economist at Bank of Baroda, said in a note.

India's economy probably grew 6% year-on-year during the three months to end-December, a survey showed last week, slower than the previous two quarters, with new fears rising over slowing momentum after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The median forecast from a survey of 38 economists interviewed between Feb. 21 and 23, was that gross domestic product in Asia's third-largest economy grew 6% year-on-year in the October-December quarter, after expanding 20.1% in the April-June period and 8.4% in July-September.

The growth forecasts ranged from 3.0% to 7.5%. India is set to announce its GDP data for the end-December period and new estimates for the year to end-March on Monday at 1200 GMT.

A 10% rise in crude oil prices could lower India's GDP growth by 0.2 percentage points, while posing risks to corporate profit margins as they would not be able to pass on rising input costs, Sonal Varma, an economist with Nomura Holdings (8604.T), in a research note.

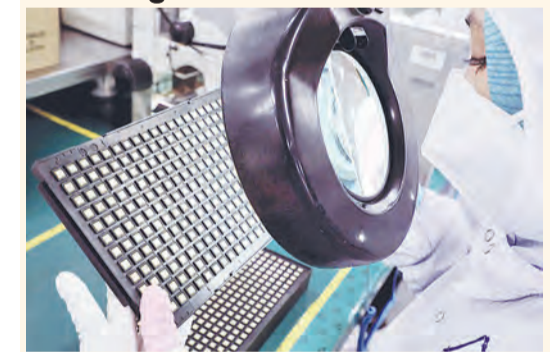
Private consumption, which contributes nearly 55% to India's GDP, is also still below pre-pandemic levels after a severe blow to household incomes from two years of pandemic disruption.

Three waves of COVID-19 have pounded small businesses, hitting restaurants, tourism, educational institutions and retail, and causing huge job losses.

New Delhi, however, says the economy has been on the mend due to its reforms and vaccination program, and that the third pandemic wave in January had a limited economic impact.

"Supply shortages remain a near-term headwind. But when they do ease, the recovery should start picking up in earnest," said Shilhan Shah, an economist at Capital Economics in Singapore.

## S. Korea Bans exports of Strategic Items to Russia



SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea will tighten export controls against Russia, by banning exports of strategic items, and join Western countries' moves to block some Russian banks from the SWIFT international payments system, Seoul's foreign ministry said today.

The Korean government has also decided to promote the additional release of strategic oil reserves for stabilization of the international energy market and to further review other measures such as the resale of LNG to Europe, the ministry said in statement.

"The Korean government condemned Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine and, as a responsible member of the international community, decided to actively participate in the international community's efforts, including economic sanctions, for a peaceful resolution of the situation," the statement said.

Among the strategic items that will be controlled are supplies of electronics, semiconductors, computers, information and communications, sensors and lasers, navigation and avionics, and marine and aerospace equipment.

South Korea will boost humanitarian aid to Ukraine, the ministry added, saying its decisions have been officially notified to the US government through diplomatic channels.

## Iranian Director Bags Int'l Woman Filmmakers Festival Award

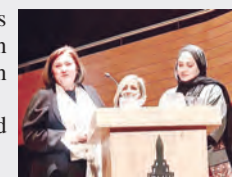
TEHRAN (IRNA) - Renowned Iranian director Narges Abyar received an award from International Woman Filmmakers Festival in Izmir, Turkey.

Some of Abyar's works will be screened in the festival and an expert workshop will be held in her presence.

According to official website of the event, "The theme of the 5th International Woman Filmmakers Festival which will take place between

February 27th and March 14th 2022 in Izmir is set as 'Boundaries'. This specific theme is not required for movies which will be competing in national and international segment; all authentic movies that reflect woman point of view will be accepted for the competition."

With her movies 'Track 143' and 'When the Moon Was Full', Abyar passed Iranian cinema borders and received the prestigious international awards.



## Climate change: a Threat to Human Wellbeing and Health of the Planet

TEHRAN (UNIC) - Human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world, despite efforts to reduce the risks. People and ecosystems least able to cope are being hardest hit, said scientists in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, released.

"This report is a dire warning about the consequences of inaction," said Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC. "It shows that climate change is a grave and mounting threat to our wellbeing and a healthy planet. Our actions today will shape how people adapt and nature responds to increasing climate risks."

The world faces unavoidable multiple climate hazards over the next two decades with global warming of 1.5°C (2.7°F). Even temporarily exceeding this warming level will result in additional severe impacts, some of which will be irreversible. Risks for society will increase, including to infrastructure and low-lying coastal settlements.

The Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC Working Group II report, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability was approved on Sunday, February 27 2022, by 195 member governments of the IPCC, through a virtual approval session that was held over two weeks starting on February 14.

Increased heatwaves, droughts and floods are already exceeding plants' and animals' tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals. These weather extremes are occurring simultaneously, causing cascading impacts that are increasingly difficult to manage. They have exposed millions of people to acute food and water insecurity, especially in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, on Small Islands and in the Arctic.

To avoid mounting loss of life, biodiversity and infrastructure, ambitious, accelerated action is required to adapt to climate change, at the same time as making rapid, deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. So far, progress on adaptation is uneven and there are increasing gaps between action taken and what is needed to deal with the increasing risks, the new report finds. These gaps are largest among lower-income populations.

The Working Group II report is the second installment of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which will be completed this year.

"This report recognizes the interdependence of climate, biodiversity and people and integrates natural, social and economic sciences more strongly than earlier IPCC assessments," said Hoesung Lee. "It emphasizes the urgency of immediate and more ambitious action to address climate risks. Half measures are no longer an option."

There are options to adapt to a changing climate. This report provides new insights into nature's potential not only to reduce climate risks but also to improve people's lives.

"Healthy ecosystems are more resilient to climate change and provide life-critical services such as food and clean water", said IPCC Working Group II Co-Chair Hans-Otto Pörtner. "By restoring degraded ecosystems and effectively and equitably conserving 30 to 50 per cent of Earth's land, freshwater and ocean habitats, society can benefit from nature's capacity to absorb and store carbon, and we can accelerate progress towards sustainable development, but adequate finance and political support are essential."

Scientists point out that climate change interacts with global trends such as unsustainable use of natural resources, growing urbanization, social inequalities, losses and damages from extreme events and a pandemic, jeopardizing future development.

"Our assessment clearly shows that tackling all these different challenges involves everyone – governments, the private sector, civil society – working together to prioritize risk reduction, as well as equity and justice, in decision-making and investment," said IPCC Working Group II Co-Chair Debra Roberts.



"In this way, different interests, values and world views can be reconciled. By bringing together scientific and technological know-how as well as Indigenous and local knowledge, solutions will be more effective. Failure to achieve climate resilient and sustainable development will result in a suboptimal future for people and nature."

This report provides a detailed assessment of climate change impacts, risks and adaptation in cities, where more than half the world's population lives. People's health, lives and livelihoods, as well as property and critical infrastructure, including energy and transportation systems, are being increasingly adversely affected by hazards from heatwaves, storms, drought and flooding as well as slow-onset changes, including sea level rise.

"Together, growing urbanization and climate change create complex risks, especially for those cities that already experience poorly planned urban growth, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and a lack of basic services," Debra Roberts said.

"But cities also provide opportunities for climate action – green buildings, reliable supplies of clean water and renewable energy, and sustainable transport systems that connect urban and rural areas can all lead to a more inclusive, fairer society."

There is increasing evidence of adaptation that has caused unintended consequences, for example destroying nature, putting peoples' lives at risk or increasing greenhouse gas emissions. This can be avoided by involving everyone in planning, attention to equity and justice, and drawing on Indigenous and local knowledge.

Climate change is a global challenge that requires local solutions and that's why the Working Group II contribution to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) provides extensive regional information to enable Climate Resilient Development.

The report clearly states Climate Resilient Development is already challenging at current warming levels. It will become more limited if global warming exceeds 1.5°C (2.7°F). In some regions it will be impossible if global warming exceeds 2°C (3.6°F). This key finding underlines the urgency for climate action, focusing on equity and justice. Adequate funding, technology transfer, political commitment and partnership lead to more effective climate change adaptation and emissions reductions.

"The scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human wellbeing and the health of the planet. Any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a livable future," said Hans-Otto Pörtner.

### Leader Says...

FROM PAGE 1

According to Ayatollah Khamenei, there are lessons to be learned with regard to the Ukraine crisis, first of which is the fact that "Western powers cannot be trusted" and their support for their puppet regimes is only "a mirage".

"All governments need to know this," he warned.

Both Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani have acknowledged that the U.S. simply abandoned them amid their domestic crises, he said.

The second lesson, he continued, is that the people are the most important supporters of the governments.

"If the people of Ukraine had been involved, the Ukrainian government wouldn't be in this situation. The people didn't get involved because they didn't approve of the government," he said.

The Leader added that the situation in Ukraine is reminiscent of the situation in Iraq when the U.S. invaded the Arab country and the Iraqi people did not defend their homeland so that the U.S. would take over.

"But in the same Iraq, when Daesh attacked, the people got involved and were able to push back and crush Daesh, which was an enormous danger," he stated.

"The main factor in the independence of countries is the people, and we have experienced this in the Holy Defense (Iraq's imposed war on Iran), during which although all global powers supported Saddam, the Islamic Republic of Iran was able to overcome and defeat the enemy with the help of the people," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"Everyone should open their eyes and ears and think and act correctly and be able to benefit from these great lessons. We cherish the memory of the great Imam who taught us these lessons," he added, referring to the founder of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

### U.S. Must Be Condemned...

FROM PAGE 1

"Given the predictable and costly consequences of sanctions, they should be viewed as a weapon and a means of aggression. Unilateral economic and commercial coercive measures are contrary to the aims and objectives of human rights and are in fact the collective punishment of ordinary people and should be considered a crime against humanity," Gharibabadi emphasized.

Iran has repeatedly denounced the sanctions as an act of "economic war," "economic terrorism," and "medical terrorism."

The Iranian human rights official said the Islamic Republic is one of the biggest victims of terrorism and thousands of innocent Iranian people have been killed or wounded by terrorist groups over the past 43 years.

He added that the anti-Iran Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MKO) terrorist group has carried out the most acts of terror against the Iranian people which amount to crimes against humanity and noted that out of the 17,000-plus people who have lost their lives in terror attacks, 12,000 of them were killed at the hands of the MKO terrorist group.

Gharibabadi said that this terrorist group, with its dark history, has had administrative organizations in some European countries from the very beginning and their agents have traveled freely across European countries and the US without any restrictions or legal prosecution while some of these countries have become a safe haven for the terrorists.

He asked, "How can some countries that claim to advocate human rights and fight terrorism, call a group that has on its hand the blood of thousands of innocent women and children in Iran, Syria and Iraq ... as defenders of human rights? How can this contradiction be justified?"

The Iranian human rights official called on the officials of European countries, the European Union, the United Nations and the Human Rights Council to address widespread crimes committed by the MKO and takes serious action to prevent the terrorist group from operating freely in Europe and bring its criminal perpetrators and ringleaders to justice. The anti-Iran cult was on the US government's list of terrorist organizations until 2012. Major European countries, including France, have also removed it from their blacklists.

### Tehran Has Its Own Plan B...

FROM PAGE 1

"U.S. has already 'walked away' from JCPOA. We must make sure it won't happen again. Everyone has its own plan B, though U.S.' has proven hollow. Blusters & bluffs have/will not work. Decisions do," Khatibzadeh tweeted. "A deal is at hand, if WH makes its mind. Iran is willing, but will not wait forever."

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Monday that the Vienna talks on the removal of anti-Iran sanctions have not reached a conclusion yet and it is time for the United States to make its difficult decision.

Amir-Abdollahian also explained about the efforts made by the incumbent Iranian administration and the negotiating team to clinch a deal through the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital.

### Tehran Urges Int'l...

FROM PAGE 1

He further commended the invaluable efforts of Russia and China in proposing a draft convention that deserves to be considered as a basis for discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee.

"With the support of all Member States, we have now before us a singular opportunity to elaborate on an international convention under the aegis of the United Nations. We need to revisit the raison d'être of such process in the first place, by way of which, we concur that the convention should, amongst others, aim to effectively promote, facilitate, support and expedite international cooperation and assist States Parties in the fight against such crimes," Takht-Ravanchi said.

"Our collective response to the use of ICT for criminal purposes could be well-realized through a vision that cherishes a shared future in cyberspace for all, with equal opportunities and without discrimination."

Meanwhile, he emphasized that a cybercrime convention should endeavor to ensure that its signatories uphold the fundamental principles of international law, in particular, sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and non-intervention in domestic affairs of other states.

"In this context and taking into account that promoting international cooperation among states is expected to constitute as the purpose of the convention, no state shall hinder cooperation among other states in countering such offenses, particularly, by adopting unilateral measures to the detriment of any state party," the ambassador noted.

"Therefore, member states should desist and refrain from promulgating and applying Unilateral Coercive Measure which, in violation of the fundamental principles of international law, stymie effective cooperation among member states and undermine the ability of states to fight the ever-evolving crimes perpetrated by the use of ICT."

## ECB Policymakers Told Ukraine War May Shave 0.3%-0.4% off GDP

PARIS (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank's chief economist Philip Lane has told fellow policymakers that the Ukraine conflict may reduce the euro zone's economic output by 0.3%-0.4% this year, four people close to the matter told Reuters.

This was the "middle scenario" presented by Lane at a Governing Council meeting in Paris on Thursday, hours after Russia invaded Ukraine and as the ECB is grappling with how the crisis may affect its plans to withdraw monetary stimulus measures.

Lane also presented a severe scenario where GDP is reduced by close to 1% and a mild scenario where events in Ukraine had no impact on the 19-country currency bloc, which the sources said was now considered unlikely.

One source described the estimates as "back-of-the-envelope" calculations, another said they were "very preliminary" and a third said they were mostly derived from commodities prices.

All sources said Lane would bring more refined forecasts to the ECB's March 10 policy meeting, at which it is expected to decide the future of its long-established Asset Purchase Programme (APP). It has already said it will stop making new bond purchases under a pandemic emergency scheme after March.

Lane did not present new inflation forecasts but he did tell Thursday's meeting there would be a significant increase in the 2022 projection, while hinting that estimates at the end of the horizon could still be below the ECB's 2% target.

An ECB spokesperson declined to comment. At a news conference later on Friday Lagarde said it was "premature" to assess the exact impact of the conflict on the economy.

The ECB's forecast horizon currently stretches to 2024.

The inflation and growth forecasts will be crucial to determine if the ECB can wind down the APP, paving the way for its first rate hike in more than a decade.

Greek central bank governor Yannis Stournaras, a policy dove known for favouring lower rates, told Reuters the ECB should continue buying bonds at least until the end of the year to cushion the fallout from the Ukraine crisis.

Even his hawkish Austrian colleague Robert Holzmann said events in Ukraine may delay the ECB's exit from stimulus measures.

Inflation has been exceptionally high in the euro zone, hitting 5.1% in January, and many economists expect energy and food price rises resulting from the Ukraine crisis to drive a further increase.

A preliminary reading put the Consumer Price Index at a higher-than-expected 4.1% in France, the euro zone's second largest economy.

Until recently, investors were expecting the ECB to end its bond purchases and raise rates by 50 basis points by December but they have since trimmed their bets.



## Coleman Ready For Worlds

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Christian Coleman warmed up for next month's World Indoor Championships with a blistering 60m victory in the U.S. trials.

Coleman, who returned to the track this season after serving an 18-month suspension for breaching anti-doping rules, clocked a world-leading 6.45sec to claim his third US indoor crown.

The 25-year-old reigning 100m and 60m world champion exploded from the blocks to lead from start to finish, holding off the challenge of Marvin Bracy, who was second in 6.48sec.

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## Russia Stripped of World Junior Swimming Championships

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Swimming's governing body FINA pulled the world junior championships from Russia Monday and said no other events will be held in the country "if this grave crisis continues".

Swimming powerhouse Australia welcomed the decision, which came after criticism that FINA had been slow to follow other sports in cancelling events following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

# Embiid, Harden Put on a Show in Sixers' Win Over Knicks

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - James Harden posted his first triple-double as a 76er on Sunday and clicked again with star teammate Joel Embiid to lead Philadelphia to a 125-109 NBA victory over the New York Knicks.

Former Most Valuable Player Harden, playing his second game for the Sixers since arriving in a blockbuster trade from Brooklyn, notched the 68th triple-double of his career with 29 points, 16 assists and 10 rebounds.

He also came up with five steals and proved the perfect complement to Cameroonian center Embiid, who scored 37 points, pulled down nine rebounds and blocked four shots.

Tyrese Maxey got in on the offensive display, scoring 21 points and grabbing seven rebounds.

Embiid said that so far the addition of Harden -- a two-time NBA scoring champion as well as a proven playmaker -- was working just as Philadelphia had hoped.

"Unstoppable," Embiid said of the Sixers' offense with Harden in the mix. "What are you really gonna do? He's a great passer and obviously I've got someone that attracts a lot of attention, too."

"So you've got to make a decision, do you stay on me or do you stay on him? And if you want to guard both of us, with the other guys, now you've got Matisse (Thybulle) driving to the rim or wide-open shooters."

Philadelphia's second straight victory saw them improve to 37-23. They are third in the Eastern Conference and just 2 1/2 games behind conference leaders Miami.

The Knicks seized the lead early in the fourth quarter, but seven straight Sixers points from Harden put Philadelphia back in front in the nip-and-tuck battle.



An aggressive Embiid set career highs with 23 made free throws and 27 attempts. Although Harden has made an immediate impact, he indicated he expects things to get even better when he gets more settled in.

"I really only know a couple plays, I'm just winging it, honestly," Harden said.

But coach Doc Rivers and Harden's new teammates found plenty to praise.

"The biggest thing was the steals, he had his hands everywhere, but I thought offensively, because they're (the Knicks) a pretty solid defensive team, they made us really think and figure things out on the fly," Rivers said. "I thought James did a great job of orchestrating where guys should be."

Harden said that was a matter of "being active" and trying to be in the right spots.

"A couple of them I gambled and didn't get, but just tried to use my IQ and just trying to be aggressive defensively. Those steals led to our easy transition offense."

The surging Utah Jazz, fueled by 26 points from Donovan Mitchell, downed the league-leading Phoenix Suns 118-114 to post their eighth victory in nine games.

Utah's Rudy Gobert returned after missing six games with a sore right knee and non-Covid illness, scoring 16 points and pulling down 14 rebounds. That included a season-high eight offensive rebounds.

The Suns, who still own the record in the NBA at 49-12, lost back-to-back games for the first time since dropping two on December 25 and 27.

Devin Booker led the Suns with 30 points. Cameron Johnson and Deandre Ayton added 23 apiece but Phoenix are clearly still finding their way in their third game since losing All-Star point guard Chris Paul to a broken thumb.

The veteran star could be sidelined the rest of the regular season.

## Nadal Claims Fourth Acapulco Title



ACAPULCO (Dispatches) - Australian Open champion Rafa Nadal captured his fourth title in Acapulco, continuing his good run with a 6-4 6-4 triumph over Cameron Norrie in the final of the ATP 500 event.

Nadal, who first won the title in 2005 and took it again in 2013 and 2020, stormed through the Acapulco draw without dropping a set, to claim his third straight title of 2022.

The Spanish world number five has won 15 straight matches since returning from a foot issue that sidelined him for nearly six months last year. He looked in fine form as he fended off a determined Norrie to wrap up the win in an hour 54 minutes.

Norrie was the first to drop his serve in the contest, as a couple of unforced errors from the British sixth seed and a perfectly executed passing shot from Nadal gave the Spaniard a 3-2 lead in the first set, which he held onto to take the set.

Nadal drew first blood in the second set, breaking Norrie's serve in the opening game. Norrie levelled immediately for 1-1, but Nadal stole his serve again to move 3-2 up with an overhead smash.

## Svitolina to Donate Prize Money to Help Ukraine's Military

LONDON (Dispatches) - Elina Svitolina said she will donate her prize money from WTA tournaments to Ukraine's military and to help with humanitarian efforts following Russia's invasion of her country last week.

The world number 15 told Eurosport her family and friends in Ukraine were defending the country and that she wanted to help.

"Really until the very last moment we did not believe that this war would actually start and then everything just happened at night ... Everyone is terrified, everyone is heartbroken," she said.

"My family is there. Lots of my friends who didn't leave the country are there. They're fighting for their life, some of them are fighting for our country. It takes a lot of courage and it's unbelievable that some people took weapons in their hands and went to fight for our land."

"The most painful thing I would say is I feel completely useless because I want to help them. I want to do something for them. Some of my friends are without electricity, without water, without food. They're really struggling."

Svitolina, who is competing in Monterrey this week ahead of tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami in the United States, said she had endured a tough time mentally but acknowledged that what people were going through back home was worse.

"So I decided the prize money from my upcoming tournaments here in Mexico and in the States will go to the Ukrainian Army and to humanitarian needs," Svitolina said.

## Stephens Snaps Long Title Drought at Guadalajara

LONDON (Dispatches) - The 28-year-old Floridian, who captured the US Open in 2017, captured her first tournament championship in almost four years when she won the Abierto Akron Zapopan. She held on to beat Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic by a margin of 7-5, 1-6, 6-2 to capture the title.

Stephens ranked No. 3 worldwide at one point but entered the match ranked No.57 in the world.



# Buffon Extends Parma Deal Until 2024

MILAN (Dispatches) - Gianluigi Buffon signed a new deal with Parma today that will keep the veteran former Italy captain at the Serie B club until 2024.

The one-year extension to his deal means Buffon, who is Parma's first choice goalkeeper, will continue as a professional

footballer until beyond his 46th birthday.

"Gigi is a great player, one of Italy's three best goalkeepers and his renewal is a great pleasure for us," said Parma president Kyle Krause.

"His passion and dedication for Parma and the city are obvious every time you see him." Italian football icon Buffon returned to Parma from Juventus last summer two decades

after leaving the club where he started his professional career.

The 44-year-old has a record 176 caps for his country, and also holds the record for Serie A matches played with 657 starting with his debut with Parma in 1995 as a 17-year-old.

He has won 27 trophies, including the 2006 World Cup and the 1999 Uefa Cup for Parma as part of possibly the best team in the club's history.

Parma were among Italy's top clubs in the 1990s under the ownership of dairy company Parmalat, winning three major European titles. After Parmalat collapsed in 2003 following a huge financial fraud scandal, the club went bankrupt. They sank to Serie D in 2015.

Three successive promotions put them back in the top flight in 2018, but they were relegated after finishing bottom of Serie A last season.

## Liverpool Win League Cup

LONDON (Dispatches) - Liverpool won the League Cup final in dramatic fashion as Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga missed the decisive penalty to give the Reds an 11-10 shoot-out victory after a pulsating 0-0 draw at Wembley.

Jürgen Klopp's side clinched their first domestic knockout prize since the 2012 League Cup when Kepa blazed his spot-kick high over the bar.

It was the only miss in the nerve-jangling shoot-out, which saw Liverpool keeper Caoimhin Kelleher score his penalty just before Kepa failed.

Ironically, Kepa was sent on at the end of extra-time to replace Edouard Mendy given his reputation as a penalty saving specialist, but the Spaniard was unable to repel any of Liverpool's kicks.

Kepa had already endured penalty misery in the 2019 League Cup final when he petulantly refused to be substituted before a shoot-out defeat against Manchester City.

Liverpool saw Joel Matip's second-half goal controversially disallowed for a marginal offside against Virgil van Dijk, while Chelsea had three goals ruled out for offside later in the match.

The Reds have lifted the League Cup a record nine times, while Klopp is the first German manager to win the tournament after finally tasting Wembley success following two previous defeats as a boss there.

"There should be space for some sentiment. Caoimhin Kelleher is a young boy, plays in all the competition. I cannot tell him he can't play the final," Klopp said.

"I'm a manager and a human being and the human being won. He deserves it."

"I'm happy for the people in dark times to celebrate something like this. Chelsea are incredibly strong, we matched each other. We needed to have luck."



## FIFA Throws Team Out of World Cup

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The International Olympic Committee urged sports federations and organisers to exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials from international events following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Just hours later, FIFA kicked Russia out of the 2022 World Cup as football's global governing body and UEFA joined forces to expel Russian national teams and clubs from all international competitions.

Russia were due to take part in World Cup play-offs this month, but plans to play on neutral territory were dismissed as "unacceptable" by their rivals Poland, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

"Football is fully united here and in full solidarity with all the people affected in Ukraine," FIFA and UEFA said in a statement.

Rugby's world governing body banned Russia and Belarus from all international rugby "until further notice" on Tuesday.

Russia's membership of World Rugby was also suspended indefinitely, meaning the country's slim hopes of qualifying for next year's World Cup in France are over.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Monday also cancelled all sanctioned tournaments in Russia and Belarus, banned them from hosting future tournaments "until further notice" and ordered their flags and anthems banned from all BWF tournaments.

The IOC, meanwhile, said it faced a "dilemma which cannot be solved".

"While athletes from Russia and Belarus would be able to continue to participate in sports events, many athletes from Ukraine are prevented from doing so because of the attack on their country," it said in a statement.

