

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **138,260** With **144** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Transit of Goods Through Iran Rose 70% in the First 11 Months of the Current Iranian Calendar Year, as Compared to the Same Period in the Past Year, According to the Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce

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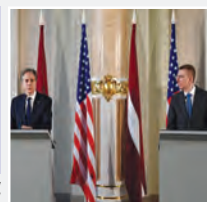


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Iran Trade Volume Exceeds \$90b

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Government spokesman says that the volume of Iran's trade passed \$90 billion.

In his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Ali Bahadori-Jahromi said that President Ebrahim Raisi's administration was determined not to tie people's needs to the Vienna sanctions removal talks, saying that Iran's foreign trade has enjoyed a 40% growth.

Bahadori-Jahromi stated that since the beginning of the Raisi administration, the country's foreign trade has grown by 40% and with \$45 billion of exports, of which 73% were non-oil exports.

He said: "During the past 6 months, the government has been able to establish 6 business centers in Turkey, UAE, China, Turkmenistan, Armenia and Russia, and our economic growth and foreign trade has reached 412% with the establishment of these business centers."

He added: "According to the emphasis of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on controlling the price of home appliances in the last month, we have witnessed a 5 to 13 percent decrease in the price of home appliances."

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Iran in Talks With Taliban to Resume Silk Road Rail Project

KABUL (Dispatches) - Iran is in talks with the Taliban to extend a rail link from its border city of Khaf to the Afghan city of Herat, an official has said.

The two neighbors marked the opening of their first shared railway network in December 2020, linking Khaf with the Afghan town of Rozanak about 150 kilometres away. But plans for the project to be expanded to reach Afghanistan's third largest city of Herat have been thrown off course since the sudden collapse of the US-backed government in August.

On Tuesday, deputy head of the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company Abbas Khatibi said talks were underway with the Taliban to resume the project.

"Due to the political developments in Afghanistan and the change of government in the country, the construction and completion of the project was stopped for a while, but Iranian officials have recently held talks with the Taliban leadership in this regard and both sides intend to extend the railway to Herat and operate it," he was quoted by Tasnim news agency as saying.

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Iran Successfully Places Homegrown Satellite in Orbit



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force has launched its second homegrown satellite into a low Earth orbit (LEO), nearly two years after the launch of its first military satellite.

The IRGC successfully put Noor-2 (Light-2) into orbit on Tuesday morning. The homegrown satellite was launched with a three-stage satellite carrier, dubbed Qased (Messenger), from a launchpad in Dasht-e Kavir, a large desert in central Iran.

The satellite was launched at the velocity of 7.6 kilometers per second and was placed into an LEO orbit 500 kilometers above the earth's surface some 480 seconds after the blast-off.

Noor-2 satellite is expected to carry out a range of military and civilian missions in Iran, including reconnaissance and natural disaster response operations.

Stating that Iran is the first Muslim country that launched satellites into orbit, the IRGC chief noted that this important achievement is not just a technical act, but overcoming the wills that wanted to stop Iran's progress.

Speaking in the ceremony of launching the Iranian 'Noor-2' Satellite into orbit, IRGC top commander Major General Hossein Salami said that today, Iran is able to defeat the enemy by acquiring sophisticated technologies and turning the knowledge into successful products.

Back on April 22, 2020, the IRGC successfully placed Nour-1 into an orbit 425 kilometers above the earth's surface.

A day later, the commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force said several earth stations across Iran had received signals from the Nour-1 satellite, unveiling plans for the launch of another satellite into a higher orbit.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the Nour-1 satellite was circling the Earth once every 90 minutes.

The land stations in Tehran, Zahedan and Chabahar have received signals from the satellite, the commander noted.

Iran-Pakistan Border Fencing Work to Be Completed by Dec. 2023

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The work on fencing remaining 171-km border with Iran is set to be completed by December 2023, with 659-km out of the total 830-km border already fenced to check human trafficking, smuggling and cross-border terrorist movement.

Sources in Pakistan Defense Ministry confided to Business Recorder that the border with Iran is 70.30 per cent fenced and the remaining will be completed by the end of 2023. The fencing process could not be completed by December as scheduled 2021 due to the difficult terrain and lack of funds.

The sources further stated that the installation cost is around Rs. 3 million per km and this cost does not include equipment and other costs.

The total border to be fenced is 830.60-km and so far 658.751-km border has been completed whereas 83.39-km will be completed by the end of June 2022.

The Pakistan-Iran border begins at the Koh-i-Malik Salih Mountain and ends at Gwadar Bay in the Gulf of Oman. It includes a diverse landscape of mountain ridges, seasonal streams and rivers, and is notorious for human trafficking and smuggling, as well as, cross-border terrorist movement.

The sources further revealed that efficient border management is important to strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. Porous nature of border and unmanned border crossings are being exploited by terrorists, Baloch sub-nationals, smugglers, narcotics and human traffickers which create security problems besides causing serious economic losses to the country.

The military earlier stated that ongoing fencing including construction of border forts along Pakistan-Afghan border has proved to be a success and yielded positive results. This arrangement, if put in place, will mitigate effects of illegal smuggling causing loss of revenue, recent surge in terrorist incidents and sub-nationals' activities in southern Balochistan. In this backup, the need for fencing Pakistan-Iran border becomes a strategic priority.

The fencing and allied defensive infrastructure includes forts and surveillance system. Besides fencing, thermal cameras, surveillance radars, PTZ cameras, ground and seismic sensors and solar lights will also be installed along the border.

The matter of fencing the Pak-Iran border was also discussed during the recent visit of Interior Minister of Iran, Ahmad Vahidi to Pakistan. He held meetings with Prime Minister Imran Khan, army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa and Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid to discuss a wide range of issues but focusing primarily on border management matters. The two countries also decided to form a joint working group to deal with these matters. His visit has come at a time when Pakistan is facing renewed terror incidents in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Time to Bounce Back

The current government in the Islamic Republic of Iran unlike the former government is determined to use all domestic capacities to propel the national economy towards success and growth and now that the Vienna talks seem to end successfully, it will be the best time for the government to accelerate its foreign trade and oil production.

In recent days and due to the Ukraine war and sanctions on Russia, the oil price is soaring with full speed and it has touched \$140 per barrel and it can be a good opportunity for Tehran to compensate for the years it has been deprived of full access to the market.

On Thursday, Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji said the country will return to its maximum oil output within one to two months from the conclusion of ongoing international talks that are meant to revive a 2015 nuclear deal known as the JCPOA.

"As soon as the Vienna negotiations are concluded we will reach the maximum oil output within one or two months although we will never wait for these negotiations," Owji was quoted as saying.

Owji said that Iran will not tie its crude output increase plans to the negotiations in Vienna as he insisted that the country has alternative solutions to sell its oil or to increase supplies to domestic refineries or petrochemical plants.

Of course President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has repeatedly said that the government will not tie the economy of the country to the outcome of the Vienna talks but he welcomes deal in Vienna if it is in favor of the nation.

Owji's comments came a day after he attended a virtual meeting of the OPEC+ alliance of the oil producing nations where members agreed to stick to previous plans for a small increase in crude oil output in April.

That comes as many expect a return of Iranian crude to the market can calm down prices that have risen to record levels in recent days because of a military conflict in Ukraine.

Iran's current oil output is believed to be more than 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) while exports have reached over 1 million bpd in defiance of U.S. sanctions.

Iran pumped nearly 3.8 million bpd before the imposition of U.S. sanctions. Industry sources say the country has also around 80 million bpd of oil in floating storage.

Now the nation can see the difference between the governments and policies as one of them is trying hard to drive the economy forward without reliance on the West and just with reliance on the domestic capacities and the other one which had tied all actions to the ties with the West and the JCPOA.

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IAEA Vows Narrow Gaps With Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi says the UN nuclear watchdog will try to narrow the gaps with Iran as diplomatic efforts to revive the 2015 deal continue in the Austrian capital of Vienna.

Speaking after a meeting of the IAEA's Board of Governors in Vienna, he added that the agency will continue to verify Iran's compliance with the safeguards issues.

He added that the IAEA team is preparing for huge verification work in Iran and will continue monitoring activities in the country whether an agreement is reached between Tehran and the P4+1 group of countries on the revival of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in Vienna or not.

In a joint statement issued at the end of Grossi's visit to Tehran on Saturday, Iran and the IAEA stressed the importance of accelerating and strengthening cooperation and dialogue to resolve some of the remaining issues between the two sides.

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Muscat Hosts Iran-Oman Naval Security Dialogue

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The 3rd round of coast guards meeting of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Oman, titled Iran-Oman Naval Security Dialogue, was held in Oman's capital city, Muscat on Monday.

During the meeting, officials focused on cooperation between the two countries and explored ways of boosting naval security.

The Omani delegation was headed by Ali Bin Seif al-Muqbeli, the Omani Coast Guards Commander, and the Iranian delegation by his Iranian Deputy Coasts Guard Commander Hassan Kargar.

Gov't Not to Retreat From Red Lines In Vienna

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Pointing out that the government seeks to develop relations with all countries, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi referred to the talks in Vienna and added, "We have not, and will not, retreat from any of the red lines".

Speaking on Tuesday morning at the meeting of the Assembly of Experts, Raisi said, "The power of the Islamic Republic is based on the support of the people and their presence in various arenas, and social capital and public trust are the most important components of power, authority and national security of the country".

He stated that the popular government has announced that it expects the people to do the main task of creating change in the country.

Emphasizing that the Declaration of the Second Step of the Islamic Revolution is the document and the basis of change in the government, the President stated, "The main axis of the activities of the Popular Administration is to establish justice and eliminate backwardness in this field".

Raisi went on to describe the government's actions in significantly reducing the mortality rate of COVID-19, and said that concerns about the state of basic commodity reserves were another concern of the government at the beginning of its activity and said, "After eliminating the concerns about the stock of basic goods, the government has focused on budgeting and liquidity control, and achieved good results in this area as well".

He added, "The budget bill for 1401 was prepared without a budget deficit and taking into account the realisation of 8% economic growth, while in previous years the average economic growth of the country was less than one percent and about 4 tenths of a percent".

The President raised the question of whether it is possible to achieve the goal of 8% economic growth or not, he stated, "According to the 1401 budget document, if expenditures are controlled, revenues increase and cash flow is directed towards production".

"Naturally, when large corporations and banks become active in the productive economy and production, the private sector is encouraged to increase its presence in this area," he said.



The President continued, "For example, construction workshops in Khuzestan have multiplied several times before the government's visit, or the Gorgan Bay restoration operation has begun during the last few days since the government's recent visit to Golestan province".

Raisi said, "In the period since the beginning of the government, we have tried to curb the increase of liquidity and not to borrow from the Central Bank".

Referring to the significant increase in trade with neighboring countries, he said, "Some accuse us of looking one-dimensionally to the East and say that today, as in the past, the government is looking to the East. This is not true, and the government seeks to develop relations with all countries and create a balance in the country's foreign policy".

In another part of his speech, the President said that the elimination of absolute poverty is another serious concern of the government, and said, "Although there are different indicators to determine absolute poverty in the world, we are trying to define absolute poverty based on our customary definition to eradicate it completely in the Islamic society".

Referring to the issue of nuclear talks, the President explained the government's strategy in this regard, "In the first step, the government seriously pursued the lifting of sanctions, and in the second step, it seeks to lift the sanctions in negotiations that are based on complete respect".

Raisi emphasized, "The government is following the nuclear talks in full accordance with the principles and framework set by the Supreme Leader and has not and will not back down from any of the announced red lines".

FM Voices Support for Ceasefire, Political Solution in Ukraine

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian voiced support for ceasefire in Ukraine and stressed the need for a political solution to stop the war in the country.

In a phone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu on Monday, he discussed the latest developments in bilateral relations, as well as some regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

They also exchanged views on the forthcoming visit of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Iran which will take place to further develop Tehran-Ankara relations.

The Iranian foreign minister also expressed satisfaction with the developing ties between the two countries and wished success for the trilateral meeting of foreign ministers of Turkey, Ukraine and Russia to be held in Antalya, Turkey, on Thursday.

He said Iran supported a political initiative to stop the war and stressed that sanctions are no problem for Iran.

Cavusoglu said sanctions are no solutions to any problems and expressed concern over the escalating crisis in Ukraine crisis which might lead to a humanitarian catastrophe and the rising tide of refugees and migrants.

He also renewed his invitation for Amirabdollahian to visit Turkey.

Gov't Permits Voluntary Injection of Noora Vaccine in Emergency

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Food and Drug Administration of Iran has granted permission for receiving home-made Noora vaccine as booster shot and in emergency cases.

About the news, Head of Food and Drug Administration Bahram Daraei said the permission was given to Noora coronavirus vaccine after Barekat, PastoCovac, Razi Cov Pars, Spicogen, and Fakhra.

Noora is a recombinant vaccine produced by Iranian researchers, doctors, and experts.

The vaccine can be used as a booster shot.

About Noora, Dean of Iran's Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences Hassan Abolqasemi said that five million doses of the vaccine have been produced and are ready to be delivered to Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Reportedly, Iran's Barekat Foundation conducted human trial of COVID-19 vaccine by injecting it to the first volunteer at the first phase on December 29, 2020.

In a related development, the third phase of double-blind clinical trial of Iranian-Cuban COVID-19 vaccine started in central Iranian city of Isfahan in April, 2021.

Once, director general of Pasteur Institute of Iran (IPI) said the IPI is the first institute in West Asia to embark on producing COVID vaccine.

Iran Precedes West in Focusing on Basic Science

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran found out the necessity of giving special importance to basic sciences a decade prior to Western and industrialized countries, an Iranian official emphasized.

Ahmad Pakatchi, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), made the remarks in opening ceremony of the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development.

Iran's top managers, as well as scientists, attached importance to basic sciences when they prepared a strategic scientific document in 2010, he argued.

A wave of paying attention to basic sciences and distancing from absolute focus on applied sciences happened in 2019, reflecting the results of UNESCO general conference, so the 2022 seminar has been named International Year of Basic Sciences, while Iranian scientists and statesmen have stressed the significance of the basic sciences for 10 years, he noted.

A roundtable concerning basic sciences was formed on the sidelines of the 33rd UNESCO General Conference in 2005, which emphasized expansion of regional and scientific exchanges between North and South (developed and developing) countries, Pakatchi said.

No Hindrance to Enhance Tehran-Baku Cultural Ties



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance has said that there is no obstacle to growing Tehran-Baku ties particularly in the area of art and culture.

Iran and Azerbaijan enjoy long-lasting relations in the cultural fields, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili said in a meeting held in the Iranian capital with Azeri Ambassador to Tehran Ali Alizadeh on Monday.

In the meeting, the culture minister stressed the importance of making efforts to upgrade and revive mutual agreements on cultural cooperation.

Good meetings are underway between political and cultural officials of both nations, Esmaili added.

Referring to Nowruz celebrations as common heritage of the two countries, the minister said Tehran has invited its northern neighbor to take part in the New Year feast in Iran.

Annually, Iranians from all over the world celebrate Nowruz – the ancient festival of spring and the new Iranian year – which informs arrival of spring and the Persian New Year. Hundreds of millions of people across the world also celebrate Nowruz.

As Esmaili noted, Iran-Azerbaijan friendly relation are so deep that no ill-wishers can damage it.

He went on to say that the Islamic Republic of Iran's firm policy on Azerbaijan is brotherly cooperation and mutual understanding.

For his part, Alizadeh said Baku is after fostering cultural ties along with political and economic relations with Iran.

The meeting of the presidents of the two neighboring countries is an indication of expansion of cooperation, he underlined.

Also, holding a ceremony on the 30th anniversary of Baku-Tehran relations indicated deep bilateral cooperation, the ambassador stressed.

Further, Alizadeh thanked Iran for hosting Fajr international theatre and film festivals where Azerbaijan was also present.

At the end, the Azeri ambassador called for promoting Baku-Tehran media cooperation in order to truly reflect the news.

Sanctions Not to Affect Iran's Cooperation With Any Country

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says cooperation between Iran and other countries, including Russia, should not be affected by sanctions imposed on those countries.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a Monday phone call with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in which the two top diplomats discussed a host of regional and international issues, including the Ukrainian crisis and the ongoing talks on the removal of anti-Iran sanctions in the Austrian capital.

Stressing the need to effectively remove all sanctions, Amir-Abdollahian said achievement of an agreement in Vienna can provide a good ground for Iran's diversified cooperation with other countries, including its close allies.

"We are opposed to both war and imposition of sanctions," Iran's top diplomat said, adding, "It goes without saying that sanctions should not affect Iran's cooperation with any country, including Russia."

Pointing to the ongoing talks between Iran and the P4+1 group of countries in Vienna aimed at securing the revival of the landmark 2015 Iran deal, Amir-Abdollahian said, "We are making serious efforts to reach a good and strong agreement in Vienna."

"Good progress has been made [in the Vienna talks] so far, but despite such progress, some issues have not yet been resolved in Vienna, which require a political decision by the West," Iran's top diplomat said.

Lavrov, for his part, stressed the importance of improving bilateral cooperation in different areas, particularly in trade and economic sectors.

The Russian foreign minister also slammed the sanctions imposed on his country.

In a Monday meeting with a number of Iranian parliamentarians, the Iranian foreign minister said the Islamic Republic will not allow any foreign factor to have an impact on the ongoing Vienna negotiations.

Minister Calls for Reviving Iran-Bolivia Cultural Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili stressed reviving cultural relations between Iran and Bolivia and called for following up comprehensive cultural agreement between the two countries.

Speaking in a meeting with Bolivian Ambassador to Iran Romina Guadalupe Pérez Ramos, Esmaili said that Iran's Islamic Revolution has a cultural nature and the Iranian leaders have always stressed cultural issues.

He described the occupiers and colonialists' oppression in Latin America as a bitter experience.

He underlined Iran's interest in developing cultural and artistic relations with Bolivia.

Meanwhile, Ramos said that Bolivia is after



developing relations with Iran in the framework of signing cultural agreements.

She referred to agreements with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

She noted that these agreements are aimed at promoting Iranian culture in Bolivia.

She went on to say that Western media are seeking to wage psychological war and media campaign against Iran and are trying to tarnish Iran's image.

She expressed readiness for holding cultural events aiming to introduce Iran's culture.

She stressed joint cooperation in films, plays, and training courses.

She suggested establishing Iran-Bolivia friendship houses to teach language, cultural, and artistic topics.

Iran, China Emphasize Broadening Tourism Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) – Islamic Republic of Iran and China stressed the need to develop and enhance cooperation in the field of sports and tourism in particular.

In a meeting held between the Iranian Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali-Asghar Shalbafan and the Chinese Ambassador to Iran Chang Hua in Tehran on Tuesday, the two sides expressed their readiness to boost bilateral cooperation in the tourism field.

The Iranian official pointed to the cultural and historical commonalities between the

two countries and stated that Iran and China enjoy high capabilities and potentials to develop their cooperation in the field of tourism.

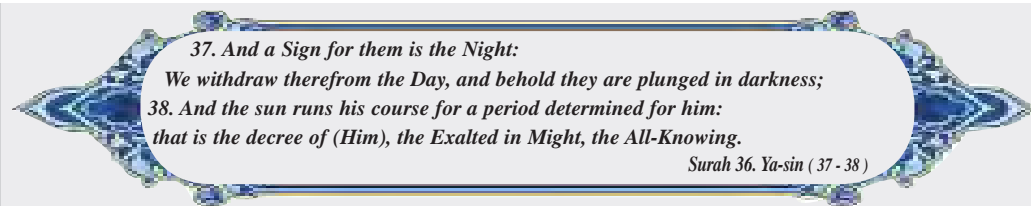
Executive planning has been compiled by the Iranian tourism ministry with the aim of expanding tourism relations between the two countries, Shalbafan underscored.

Chinese envoy to Iran, for his part, pointed to the salient tourism attractions of Iran and said that capacities such as favorable skiing environment and rail lines are among the attractions that have been put at the focal attention of Chinese people.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:14
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:24
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:54
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:27



U.S. Sanctions Failed By Domestic Experts In Steel Industry

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSC) Ataollah Maroufkhani says we see the defeat of the U.S. cruel sanctions against Iran by domestic experts with indigenization in the steel industry and it is considered an honor for the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the 2nd International Conference on Steelmaking and Continuous Casting (ISCC 2022) in Bandar Abbas, Maroufkhani said that the approach of Hormozgan Steel Company is to take advantage of the latest technologies of the world and to interact with all experts in the steel industry.

He added that this year during the festivities marking the victory of the Islamic Revolution, HOSCO started four developmental projects after years with the support of Mobarakeh Steel Company.

He added that revival of 900,000 tons of steel in HOSCOI with reservoirs for storing 30,000 tons of sponge iron are of these projects. He noted investment of 10,000b tomans has started and in the upcoming months the capacity of hot rolling of this industrial unit will reach 3.5m tons.

Maroufkhani added that these projects are to be completed in 30 months and it will lead to creation of thousands of jobs. He also emphasized the importance of infrastructures for completing production chain, adding that investment in this sector is very necessary.

He then said that cruel sanctions caused Italian and German experts to leave the developmental projects of HOSCO and it led to indigenization and using domestic experts. He expressed hope that steelmaking unit of the company would produce up to 2.2m tons in near futures and then the capacity is increased to 3m tons by the domestic experts.

Maroufkhani added that this year the company won the organizational excellence award as well as some more awards.

Then the secretary of the conference Alireza Kazemi addressing the conference



pointed to the rotating economy in the steel industry and said rotating economy is the economy which can reduce the burden of the nature and in the past 50 years many investments have been done for production of resistant steel with lower weight and the weight of steel products has increased by 40%.

On the sidelines of the conference, the manager of public relations of HOSCO said that the conference has been warmly welcomed by experts and steel industry activists and more than 230 experts of this field have gathered in this two-day conference which will exchange views through presenting paper or attending the specialized workshops.

He added that the conference is aimed at restoring connection between the industry and science among the steel activists and they should find solutions through talks and exchange of views.

Then secretary of the conference Mr. Kazemi reiterated that the goal behind this conference is to create opportunity for exchange of ideas and experiences and finding solutions for problems in the steel industry.

Researchers from countries like Australia, Austria and Norway have also participated in this big steel event in the country.

Continuous Visits of Mr. Rokhsati From Projects, Production Lines at ESCO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN- Caretaker of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) Eng. Iraj Rokhsati paid a visit to the developmental projects of the steelmaking section of the company as well as the coke and chemical production unit and talked with their staff.



Addressing the personnel of the visited units, Rokhsati hailed the efforts of the company and said the biggest asset of ESCO is efforts of its steel men who have manifested deservedly the real meaning of endeavor and zeal.

During his visit of developmental projects of the steelmaking section of the company, he said: "Manufacture of LF3 will end by first half of next year and reconstruction of LF1 will end by the end of next Iranian calendar year and these projects are very important in removing hurdles in way of production in the steelmaking sector as well as production line of the company."

Pointing to the importance of these projects for the company, Mr. Rokhsati called for acceleration in implementation of them and installing related equipment and hailed efforts of those who are active in the field of development, executive elements and officials of Technique Steel Company for their efforts for advancing the projects.

It is noteworthy to say that these projects have begun since early this year and LF3 project has progressed 90% in its building and structure and the executive costs of these projects are over 50b tomans as well as 8.2m euros.

Rokhsati also visited the coke and chemicals production unit of the company and talked with its staff. In the meeting Mr. Rokhsati hailed the efforts of the staff and called for improving the products through upgrading facilities and increasing productivity.

Domestic-Made Cars Conform With Standards by 90%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Mr. Mohsen Salehinia says auto industry and part manufacturing has serious position in the volume of production value chain, adding that currently about 85 standards are conducted in some vehicles and in some of them due to their types of platforms 76 key standards are conducted and 9 other standards cannot be carried out and the organization have submitted its report on this issue to the President.



Referring to eight orders of the President which are the final say, he said that the burden of 50% of car production will be on the shoulders of part manufacturers but due to the devised plans and strong determination of the industry minister, this goal will be definitely materialized.

According to Salehinia, Iran's auto industry has faced international restrictions in the global level while auto and part making industries due to the complication of technology are among the top level industries.

He went on to say however auto-makers have acted well during the sanctions era and preserved this industry. He noted that comparing to four years ago, cars have been both better qualities and have had more options.

Salehinia went on to say that regarding handing over of shares of two giant carmakers of Iran, IRAN KHODRO and SAIPA, the organization is ready to provide required grounds for accelerating the process of transfer of shares in interaction with other related bodies.

"Sheida Nebesht" A Spring Guest at Ragadid Complex

IRAN NEWS ART DESK

TEHRAN – A calligraphy exhibition and volumetric works with the title of "Sheida Nebesht" (Frenzied With Writing) will open on Sunday March 13 at the Ragadid Complex at Enghelab Club of Tehran with curatorship of Behdad Najafi Asadollahi.



According to Mr. Najafi Asadollahi besides the main topic, the exhibition has a look at the application of writing in Iran's contemporary illustration culture and imaginary artistic works related to this approach.

He went on to say that artistic activities in this complex will continue next year by holding exhibitions on water color works, calligraphy, painting, volumetric and photography, adding that some special plans have been devised for the modern artistic media which will soon come into effect.

Then art manager of this event Ms. Saeedeh Arian said that calligraphy is a rising phenomenon in the modern Iranian art, adding that in this art, painting has come to the help of calligraphy so that calligraphy, which is the outcome of passion and frenzy of painters and calligraphists, steps into a new scene with blend of writing, form and color although it has faced ups and downs but it is developing and evolving and stepped into the international scene.

She added that 44 artists and maestros will put on display in this exhibition over 80 works.

The exhibition will be the second one of this type which is going to be held by Contemporary Khanesh Art Institute in collaboration with Faradid-e Farda Cultural Institute at Ragadid Complex.

The Exhibition will open on March 13 and it will be open to the public from March 14 to April 20 from 11 a.m. to 20 p.m. at Ragadid Complex of Enghelab Club of Tehran.

A Glance at Actions of Pars Environmental Index

Pars Petrochemical Co. Receives Golden Statue for Green Industry



Pars Petrochemical succeeded in winning the golden statue of the country's selected green industry due to various measures to protect the environment, according to Pars Petrochemical Public Relations, at the 23rd National Conference on Green Industry, Mining and Services, which took place in the morning.



The statue was presented today to Massoud Hassani, CEO of Pars Petrochemical, by Ali Selajgeh, Vice President and Head of the Environmental Protection Organization, at the International Conference Hall for Environmental Martyrs. Last year, Pars Petrochemical won the Simin Statue of Green Industry due to the implementation of the National Environmental Plan and efforts to preserve the environment. Student and continuation of this project, creating artificial forest of native trees and maintaining it in Bostano village with an area of 35 hectares, purchasing a leak detection camera and carrying out LDAR project, turning off Feller 491 of this company to reduce air pollution in the area and Pulling the steam transfer line to Feller 991 in order to improve Feller has been one of the Pars Petrochemical Index measures in order to protect the environment and fulfill social responsibilities. The petrochemical company has already received the Special Prize of the World Energy Foundation 2017 in the field of Earth for the implementation of the project "Creation and development of forests in Bostano Assaluyeh and its recreational and welfare town." EAST had received a certificate from the World Energy Foundation for carrying out environmental projects and carrying out the LCA project, obtaining a carbon and water footprint calculation certificate for the green project. Has taken.



Easy Access to Electricity Services by "My Electricity" App

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Head of sales and subscribers' services in Head of sales and subscribers' services in Isfahan Electricity Company in a press conference delved into details of applied program of "My Electricity" application and said parallel to implementing digital development in the electricity industry, welfare of citizens and easy access to the services, the company put on agenda the project for improving online services for its subscribers.

Mehrdad Jannatani went on to say that all sales and after sales services in the country are done via the applied application of "My Electricity", adding that services which are offered in this software is divided into four categories of bills services, subscribers' services, electricity network and consumption management.

He noted that so far 25% of subscribers in the city of Isfahan have installed this application, adding that encouraging subscribers to install this application is of the approaches of the company and the company has taken action to define incentive package for its subscribers in this regard.

Touching upon the incentive package, he said that the company has started to give cash or travel bonuses via draw which will continue till the New Year.



French Army Says Senior Al Qaeda Leader Killed in Mali

PARIS (Dispatches) - France’s army said Monday that its anti-jihadist force in Mali had killed Yahia Djouadi, a “senior leader” of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) responsible for finance and logistics.

Djouadi, an Algerian also known as Abu Ammar al-Jazairi, was killed overnight from February 25 to 26 around (160 kilometres (100 miles) north of Timbuktu in central Mali, the army said in a statement.

His death “once again weakens Al-Qaeda’s governance” in Mali, it added, calling him “a major link in northern Mali and especially the Timbuktu area” to the Qaeda-aligned GSIM group.



Syria Says 2 Dead in Israeli Strikes Damascus

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Israeli missile strikes killed two civilians early Monday near the Syrian capital Damascus, state media said, although a war monitor said the victims were pro-Iran fighters.

Israel carried out the strikes at around 5 am (0300 GMT), hitting positions south of the capital, Syria’s official SANA news agency said.

“Our air defense systems intercepted the missiles, downing most of them,” SANA added. “Two civilians were killed and some material damage was incurred,” it said.



Nervous Baltics NATO to Protect Them From Russia



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday assured Lithuania and Latvia of NATO protection and American support as he made quick visits to two of three Baltic states that are increasingly on edge as Russia presses ahead with its invasion of Ukraine.

Along with Estonia, which Blinken was to visit on Tuesday, the former Soviet republics are NATO members, and the Biden administration is aiming to calm any fears they have about their security in the event Russia chooses to expand its military operations.

In the Latvian capital, Riga, Blinken said the Baltics have “formed a democratic wall that now stands against the tide of autocracy” that Russia is pushing in Europe. “The United States is more committed than ever to standing with you as our democracies rise to the challenge,” Blinken said.

“We are bolstering our shared defense so that we and our allies are prepared,” he said, stressing that the U.S. commitment to NATO’s mutual defense pact is “sacrosanct” and that NATO and the US were discussing the permanent basing of troops in the Baltics.

“We will defend every inch of NATO territory if it comes under attack,” he said. “No one should doubt our readiness. No one should doubt our resolve.”

Leaders in both countries expressed grave concerns about Russian President Vladimir Putin’s intentions as it relates to former Soviet bloc countries that are now allied or otherwise linked to the West.

“We have no illusions about Putin’s Russia any more,” Latvian foreign minister Edgars Rinkevics said after meeting Blinken in Riga. “We don’t really see any good reason to assume that Russia might change its policy.”

Rinkevics said that the Russian invasion of Ukraine had shown the Baltic countries, in particular, the need to bolster air and coastal defenses and that Latvia would like its security cooperation with NATO to be “more efficient”.

“Unfortunately, the worsening security situation in the Baltic region is of great concern for all of us and around the world,” Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda told Blinken earlier in Vilnius. “Russia’s reckless aggression against Ukraine once again proves that it is a long-term threat to European security, the security of our alliance.”

Memories of Soviet rule are still fresh in the Baltics and since the invasion of Ukraine last month, NATO has moved quickly to boost its troop presence in its eastern flank allies while the US has pledged additional support.

Blinken opened his Baltic tour in Vilnius, where Lithuanian support for Ukraine’s resistance to the Russian invasion was palpable as signs of solidarity with Ukrainians are evident in many businesses and on houses, public buildings and buses. He later traveled to Riga, which has been similarly festooned with blue and yellow Ukrainian flags.

Lithuania’s Nausėda said a policy of deterrence was no longer enough and that “forward defence” was now needed. He predicted that “Putin will not stop in Ukraine if he will not be stopped.”

“It is our collective duty as a nation to help all Ukrainians with all means available,” said Nausėda. “By saying all, I mean, indeed all means all, if we want to avoid the Third World War. The choice is in our hands.”

Lithuanian foreign minister Gabrielius Landsbergis called for a surge in assistance to Ukraine, noting that the NATO allies “are doing a lot, but we cannot stop”. He also called for an immediate halt to imports of Russian energy. “We cannot pay for oil and gas with Ukrainian blood,” he said.

Leader of S.Korea’s Ruling Party Attacked Ahead of Presidential Election



SEOUL (Dispatches) - The chief of South Korea’s ruling party was admitted to hospital on Monday after being hit on the head by a stranger while campaigning for this week’s presidential election, in which early voting has been marred by some lapses.

A tight race between Lee Jae-myung of the ruling Democratic Party and Yoon Suk-yeol of the conservative main opposition People Power Party was reflected in a record turnout of nearly 37 per cent in two days of absentee voting that ended on Saturday.

Monday’s attack on Song Young-gil, leader of the Democrats and Lee’s election campaign, was yet another twist in a race overshadowed by scandals, smear tactics and gaffes.

Nearly 400 Civilians Killed in Afghanistan Since Taliban Takeover

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Nearly 400 civilians have been killed in attacks in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover, more than 80% of them by a group affiliated to Islamic State, a U.N. report shows, underscoring the scale of the insurgency faced by the new rulers.

It is the first major human rights report since the Taliban seized power from the former U.S.-backed government in August, triggering concerns in the West about a broader rollback of rights for women, journalists and others.

It covers the period from August 2021 to the end of February and said that 397 civilians were killed mostly in a series of attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan (ISIS-K) group.

More than 50 people with suspected ties to the extreme militant group had been killed in the same period, it said, with some tortured and beheaded and cast by the roadside.

“The human rights situation for many Afghans is of profound concern,” said Michelle Bachelet, High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a speech introducing the report to the top rights body in Geneva.

ISIS-K, which first appeared in eastern Afghanistan in late 2014, is thought to have spread in the wake of the Taliban takeover and is blamed for several suicide attacks in recent months, including one at Kabul airport last August.

In the same speech, Bachelet said that Taliban rulers had curtailed women’s rights and freedoms. She called for women to be allowed to “fully participate” in public life.

Bachelet also referred to “a number of disturbing cases of enforced disappearances” of activists and protesters and expressed concern about restrictions on freedom of expression.

“I remain concerned by the progressive erosion of civic space,” she said.

Under their previous rule from 1996 to 2001, the hardline Islamist Taliban barred women and girls from education. They say they have since changed.

Modi’s BJP Set to Retain India’s Most Populous State After Vote

LUCKNOW (Dispatches) - Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s party is expected to retain control of India’s most populous state after a month-long voting process ended on Monday, according to opinion polls which have a mixed record in the country.

Holding onto Uttar Pradesh would give a huge boost to Modi’s hopes of winning a third straight term office in the 2024 general election and bolster his image as the most popular politician in the country in decades.

His Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies are expected to win anywhere between 211 to 277 seats out of 403 in the state, a comfortable majority, according to four polls carried out for new channels. Votes will be counted on Thursday.

The BJP and its allies won more than 300 seats in the last state election five years ago.

Uttar Pradesh, estimated to have more people than Brazil, seems to have gone for continuity despite the BJP state and federal governments’ much-criticized handling of a catastrophic COVID-19 wave last year, high unemployment, and anger against farm reforms that Modi had to roll back late last year after months of protests.

The BJP has maintained all along that it was going to keep the northern state because of its policies like giving free staples to the poor during the pandemic, a fall in crime rates, and Modi’s personal popularity, especially among Hindus.

“The guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the improved condition of law and order, beneficiary schemes are going to keep us in power and today’s opinion polls are also suggesting the same,” said Sameer Kumar Singh, a BJP spokesperson in the state.

The BJP’s nearest rival in Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party, said it would return to power in the state.

A win in Uttar Pradesh could also be a seal of approval for Hindu monk Yogi Adityanath, the state’s current chief minister who is seen as a possible successor to Modi.

In elections held in four smaller states, the Aam Admi (Common Person) Party that rules Delhi is projected to win in Punjab, while the race is tight but slightly in favour of the BJP in Manipur, Goa and Uttarakhand.



U.S., Venezuela Discuss Easing Sanctions, Make Little Progress

CARACAS (dispatches) - U.S. and Venezuelan officials discussed the possibility of easing oil sanctions on Venezuela but made scant progress toward a deal in their first high-level bilateral talks in years, five sources familiar with the matter said, as Washington seeks to separate Russia from one of its key allies.

Both sides used the meeting in Caracas to present what one of the sources described as “maximalist” demands, reflecting longtime tensions between the Western Hemisphere’s main power and one of its biggest ideological foes.

A U.S. delegation led by Juan Gonzalez - the top White House Latin America adviser - and Ambassador James Story held talks at the Miraflores palace with socialist President Nicolas Maduro and his Vice President, Delcy Rodriguez, the sources said.

Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, was also a member of the U.S. group and made the case to the Venezuela government for the release of American citizens and dual nationals held there, including six Citgo executives, according to one person familiar with the matter.

U.S. officials saw the meeting as a chance to gauge whether Venezuela, one of Russia’s closest Latin American allies, is prepared to distance itself from President Vladimir Putin over his invasion of Ukraine, a source in Washington said.

Washington also wants to identify alternative oil supplies to fill the gap if it seeks a boycott of Moscow’s energy industry. Venezuela could boost crude exports if Washington eases sanctions.

The White House, the U.S. State Department and Venezuela’s Information ministry declined comment.

The U.S. willingness to re-engage after years of shunning such contact appeared to be a boost for Maduro.





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S/p, Sauna
J, L.balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Jordan Villa (\$4000)
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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Parsian

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180sq.m, 3bdrs
balcony, & F.F
(\$2200) 2bdrs, S/p, F.F
(\$2500) 3bdrs, S/p, F.F
(\$3000) 4bdrs, S/p, F.F

Elahieh bldg (\$6000)
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2bdrs, 110sq.m, & F.F

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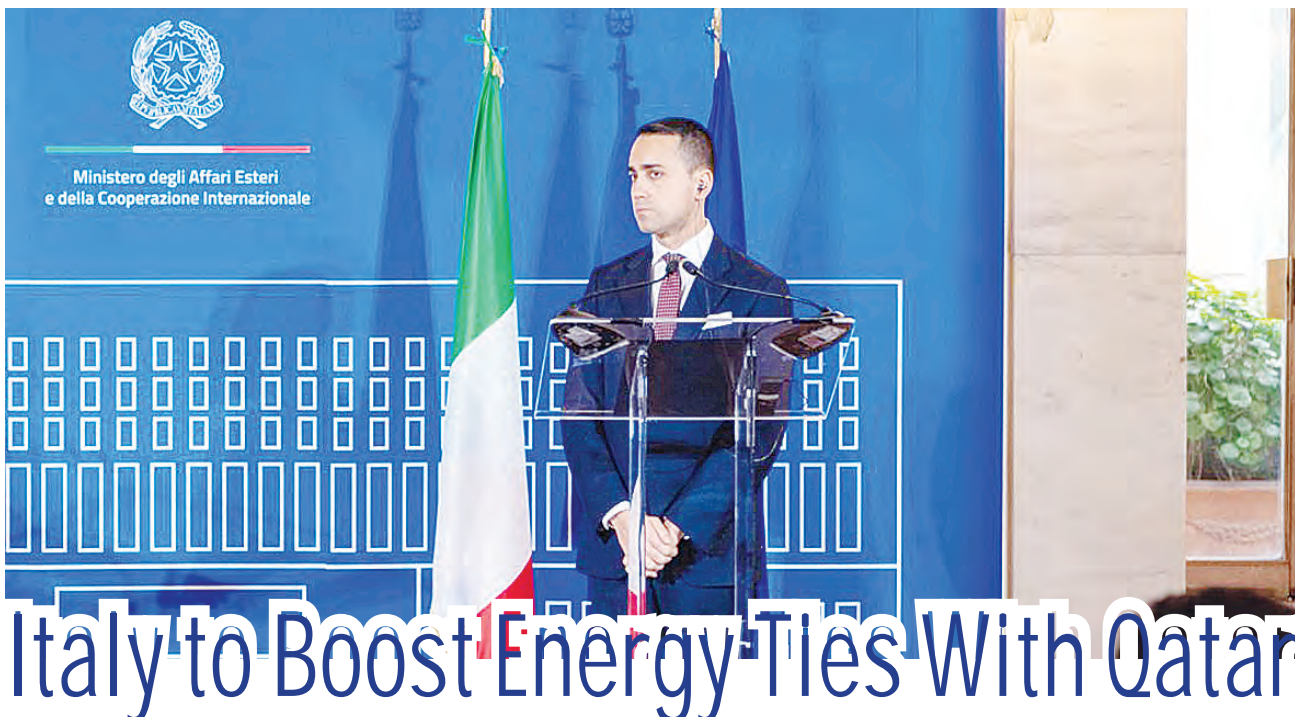
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Germany Earmarked \$220b for Industrial Transformation by 2026

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - Germany has earmarked 200 billion euros (\$220 billion) to fund industrial transformation between now and 2026, including promoting climate protection, hydrogen technology and expanding electric vehicle charging stations, its finance minister said on Sunday.

"200 billion euros in funding for the transformation of the economy, society and the state," Christian Lindner told the public broadcaster ARD, adding this also included the removal of renewable energy levies.



Italy to Boost Energy Ties With Qatar

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy is looking at Qatar as a potential replacement for gas supplies after Ukrainian crisis puts Russian exports on the line. Qatar, the world's biggest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), welcomed Italy's Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio on Saturday for plans to boost energy ties between both countries, a move the European country desperately needs as tensions persist in the region.

The official was accompanied by the head of the Italian energy group Eni, Claudio Descalzi.

In a further move to bolster relations, the country's Prime Minister Mario Draghi discussed potential energy plans with the nation's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on a recent call, Draghi's office said in a statement.

The latest discussions came in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which triggered Western sanctions that might impose a threat to commodity flows. The escalations cause a wide fear of gas shortages, blackouts, and further price increases.

For Italy, its gas supply is one the line. The country relies heavily on gas to generate 40% of its electricity, with imports accounting for more than 90% of its needs. In 2020, Russia exported 40% of those imports.

Now, the government wants to cut its reliance with Qatar as a potential replacement.

On Saturday, Italy's Energy Transition Minister Roberto Cingolani said that his country aims to 'rapidly cut' more than half of its Russian gas import and to be independent of Russian supplies within two or three years.

"We are working to increase our gas supplies in the short, medium and long term, to avoid any kind of blackmail and to have alternatives to Russian gas," Di Maio said in a statement on Saturday.

"We must act quickly to stem the potential economic effects of this war that is being waged by the Russian government and protect Italian families and businesses."

Both countries enjoy strong trade-ties that exponentially grew in recent years. In the first month of 2021, Qatar and Italy's trade exchanges grew by 56%.

The visit also comes ahead of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of Qatar and Italy's establishment of diplomatic ties. Next year, the Persian Gulf nation set to hold next year's Qatari-Italian strategic dialogue.

"We must act quickly to stem the potential economic effects of this war that is being waged by the Russian government and protect Italian families and businesses."

"Algeria will support Italy in supplying gas, our partnership will become stronger both in the short term and the medium and long term," Di Maio said.

U.S., Europe Mulling Bans on Russian Oil Imports

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States said it was in "active discussions" with European nations about banning Russian oil imports as further economic penalty against Moscow for invading Ukraine, but stopped short of announcing an outright boycott.

With Western nations mulling the prospect of a boycott, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba waded into the debate to strongly call for a ban on such imports, saying Russian oil "smells of Ukrainian blood."

Late last week the White House said it was looking for ways to reduce U.S. consumption of Russian oil while protecting American families from price hikes, but pressure has mounted on Western nations to cut off Russian energy imports as a way to tighten the screws on the Kremlin.

"We are now in very active discussions with our European partners about banning the import of Russian oil to our countries, while of course at the same time maintaining a steady global supply of oil," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told NBC talk show "Meet the Press."

"The actions we've taken to date have already had a devastating impact on the Russian economy," he added, referring to biting sanctions that have economically isolated Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin. Ukraine's Kuleba, however, stressed that choking off Russia's oil exports is crucial.

Asked Sunday on CNN about Shell's announcement that it continued to buy Russian oil -- and donate the profits to Ukrainian causes -- Kuleba urged Shell and other energy giants to cut off Moscow's biggest revenue source and "stop buying Russian oil."

Bangladesh, India to Conduct Study on Economic Partnership Pact

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Bangladesh and India have agreed to conduct a joint study on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) at a commerce secretary-level talk, according to an official statement.

The Indian delegation led by commerce secretary BVR Subrahmanyam and the Bangladesh delegation under senior secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh appreciated stronger bilateral ties between the two countries.

They noted significant growth in the bilateral trade between the two countries in recent years, the statement said.

The two sides also discussed other issues of mutual interest, including development of railway and port infrastructure, border haats (markets), regional connectivity through multimodal transportation and harmonization of standards, the commerce ministry statement said on Saturday.

The two countries have been making endeavors to deepen trade ties after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bangladesh visit in March last year, and they are eager to negotiate a CEPA for mutual benefit, one official said, requesting anonymity. Modi had paid a state visit to Bangladesh in March 2021 and agreed to enhance bilateral trade.

Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia, according to the Indian foreign ministry. "Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade and the exports of Bangladesh have tripled over the last decade to cross \$1 billion in 2018-19," a note prepared by the ministry said. "In the FY 2019-20, India's exports to Bangladesh were \$8.2 billion and imports were \$1.26 billion."

To facilitate trade between India and Bangladesh through railways, the two partners on Friday agreed to develop a container handling facility at Sirajganj Bazar, the commerce ministry statement said. For running freight trains between India and Bangladesh, a 900m new siding line is being constructed at Benapole, it added.

The two nations have approved a detailed project proposal (DPP) for the development of rail and road-based inland container depot at Ishwardi and plan to open border markets that were closed due to Covid restrictions, it said.

To boost trade, the two partners have agreed to launch the first meeting of the CEO forum soon, it said.

Pakistan Aims to Spur Economic Growth to 6%

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said the government is also focusing on improving productivity by reviving industries and improving the agriculture sector with the help of China.

Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said the government is also focusing on improving productivity by reviving industries and improving the agriculture sector with the help of China.

Pakistan economy is on the right track to post 'an inclusive and sustainable growth' of up to five per cent this year that will help the country to get rid of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September, its top official says.

Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin, who steers tough economic reforms, is confident of accelerating the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth to six per cent in the next fiscal year starting in July.

"We don't need the IMF if we achieve sustainable growth of six per cent. I don't think we need another IMF program once we complete the ongoing extended fund facility (EFF) in September," Tarin told Khaleej Times in an exclusive interview in Dubai.

The IMF, which forecasts four per cent GDP growth for Pakistan, said the EFF programme had strengthened Pakistan's fiscal buffers before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and a strong economic recovery has taken hold since the summer of 2020.

The IMF, which forecasts four per cent GDP growth for Pakistan, said the EFF programme had strengthened Pakistan's fiscal buffers before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and a strong economic recovery has taken hold since the summer of 2020.

Pakistan, which secured more than 20 bailouts from the IMF in the past five decades, signed a \$6 billion loan program in July 2019. It completed the fund's six reviews and drew \$3 billion so far to support the country's foreign exchange reserves, which currently stood firm at \$23 billion.

"We are going to start a two-week process of seventh IMF review of Pakistan economy on Monday [March 7, 2022]. The successful review will help draw another \$1 billion tranche as we have already achieved the targets in December," Tarin said, and adding that the eighth and ninth reviews will bring the remaining \$2 billion to the national kitty by September.

The IMF, which forecasts four per cent GDP growth for Pakistan, said the EFF programme had strengthened Pakistan's fiscal buffers before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and a strong economic recovery has taken hold since the summer of 2020. It also warned that Pakistan's economy remains vulnerable to flare-ups of Covid-19, tighter international financial conditions, a rise in geopolitical tensions and delayed implementations of structural reforms.

Turkey Wants Gold Savings To Shore Up Ailing Lira



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Gold has a central place in Turkish customs from birth to weddings. As the country is battling economic woes and low foreign currency reserves, the authorities want to draw the yellow metal stored by citizens into the banking system.

As Turkey's annual inflation surged to a two-decade high of 48.7 per cent in January, while the local currency lira was steeply depreciating against the U.S. dollar, the government tried to encourage citizens to bring the so-called "under the mattress" gold worth billions of dollars into the system to save the lira.

"Under the mattress" gold is a term describing the asset stored by Turkish citizens at home as a buffer against rising prices and currency devaluation. Turkey's Treasury and Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati announced on Saturday in Istanbul, Turkey's financial hub, a new scheme of converting households' gold into lira.

As of next month, citizens will be easily and safely deliver their gold savings to the financial system via banks and jewelry stores, he said.

This plan aims to strengthen the lira by depositing 5,000 tons of gold into the banking system, which is equivalent to nearly 350 billion dollars.

Nebati said part of that amount will support the Central Bank's foreign currency needs.

In a jewelry shop in capital city Ankara's bustling neighborhood of Kizilay, consumers are making an inquiry as the gold price in the Turkish Lira change daily.

"Culturally, gold has a prominent influence and place in the daily life of Turks, they use it mostly as a commodity besides adornment purposes," Ismail Yuksek, a veteran jeweler who deals in an alley full of gold jewelry stores.

During an economic storm, Turkish people put the gold "what we call under the mattress to protect their savings against price fluctuations," Yuksek said.

ECB Reckons With Impact of War on Eurozone's Doorstep

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin's military operation in Ukraine has added an extra layer of complexity to the decisions facing European Central Bank (ECB) policymakers as they meet on Thursday.

Already managing record inflation figures and a fragile recovery from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, members of the bank's 25-member governing council now have to reckon with the impact of war on the edge of the eurozone.

The pace of consumer price rises shifted up a gear in February, rising to 5.8% from 5.1% the previous month, a new all-time high for the euro area.

The spike has been driven in no small part by soaring prices for energy, caught in the middle of the conflict with Russia, a major supplier to European countries.

ECB President Christine Lagarde responded to the Feb. 24 invasion by saying the central bank would "take whatever action is necessary" to stabilize the euro region's economy.

Prices for gas and oil were "likely in the short term to increase inflation," she said, sustaining it for longer than the bank previously expected. Soaring inflation has put the ECB under pressure to follow its peers in the United States and Britain by moving to end its economic stimulus and raise interest rates soon.

At its last meeting at the beginning of February, the ECB left its plan for a "step-by-step" reduction in its asset-purchasing programs untouched.

The pandemic emergency bond-buying program, which has been the ECB's main crisis-fighting tool, aimed at keeping borrowing costs low to stoke economic growth, will come to an end in March.

Under the current guidance, a separate pre-pandemic bond-buying scheme will be boosted to 40 billion euros (\$44 billion) monthly in the near term and carry on till at least October.

Any policy tweaks were pushed back to the meeting this week, when the governing council will make use of new economic forecasts to support their decision making.

In December, when the figures were last updated, the bank foresaw inflation at 1.8% in 2023, below its two-percent target.

The new inflation projections, which will take account of the Ukraine conflict and the most recent data, could see a sharp upwards revision.



Investigation of Terrorists' Case Underway

TEHRAN (IP) – Judiciary Spokesman says the investigation of the ringleaders of Al-Ahwaziyah and Tondar terrorist outfits is underway by observing necessary standards.

Zabihullah Khodaeian said: “The case of the ringleaders of the two terrorist outfits of Al-Ahwaziyah and Tondar is being investigated from the international and domestic aspects while observing the necessary standards.” Speaking at a press conference, he said that the investigation into the cases of these terrorists continues and the trials will be held in public.



Turkey Tourism Recovery Hurt by Ukraine War

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Every Sunday Noori Sani welcomes his old friends around a bountiful Turkish breakfast in Istanbul. But surrounding him now are empty tables on his terrace at his restaurant by the Blue Mosque.

“On a day like this, we should be full,” the owner of Serbethane restaurant said in the city’s historic district.

Within a few days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Ukrainians and Russians cancelled reservations for trips, disastrous for Turkey where tourism represented 10 percent of GDP before the pandemic.

There had been high hopes for a tourism revival in 2022 and the sector was in desperate need of a boost after the Turkish lira lost significant value last year and inflation soared to over 50 percent in February.

Visitors from Ukraine and Russia made up over a quarter of all tourists who arrived in Turkey last year, usually opting for the turquoise beaches on the Mediterranean and Aegean, according to tourism ministry figures.

“Russia and Ukraine are very important markets for us,” Hamit Kuk of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TURSAB) said.

Around 4.5 million Russian and two million Ukrainian tourists descended on Turkey last year.

TURSAB expected seven million Russians and 2.5 million Ukrainians this year, but Kuk said it would “likely have to review these figures”.

“The war between Russia and Ukraine is making everyone nervous here. Both from a human and commercial point of view,” Kuk said.

“Normally, there would be a rush of summer reservations in March. But the demand has stopped,” he added.

“If it goes on like this, there will be a very serious problem,” warned TURSAB president Firuz Ballikaya.

“We try to wait as calmly as we can.”

In front of the Hagia Sophia mosque, Russian tourists were rushing to follow their guide, ducking their heads and refusing interviews.

There were even a few Ukrainians, including a young couple from Kyiv who “arrived as tourists and became refugees” and who were now tearfully looking to leave for a third country.

“Maybe the United States?” they asked, wishing to remain anonymous.

The situation is tricky for Turkish travel agents like Ismail Yitmen because of Western sanctions against Russia.

In his office opposite the Hagia Sophia, Yitmen despaired.

“Travel agencies like mine working with Russia are really suffering right now. Taking into account the deposit amount I have paid for hotels, my loss is more than 11,000 euros (\$12,000) so far,” he said.

If more groups cancel, he could lose between \$65,000 and 76,000.



“A group was supposed to arrive in Turkey in two months, but we couldn’t receive the money, so it’s cancelled. It’s because they stopped SWIFT transfers. We had already paid for the hotels.”

Several Russian banks were cut off from the SWIFT messaging system, which allows banks to communicate rapidly and securely over transactions.

Despite being a NATO member, Ankara did not sanction Russia and unlike many other countries, Turkey has not closed its airspace to Russian planes.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the tourism sector was recovering after multiple terror attacks in 2015 and 2016 scared tourists away.

On the edge of the Middle East, the country had suffered in the few years from the impact of wars in Syria and Iraq, both on its southeastern border.

“When the war started in Iraq and then in Syria, European and American tourists stopped coming. They thought we were too near,” said Hassan Duzen, sitting with his friends at the back of his deserted carpet shop.

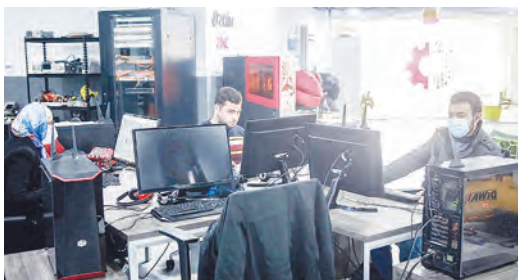
He was convinced the same thing would happen after the invasion.

“When they look at a map, they will see the Black Sea and think we are very close,” Duzen lamented. “Why would they take a risk?”

The Ukrainian couple had the same fears.

“We can’t stay here, this place isn’t safe, it’s too close. Their missiles can hit you,” the young man said, his eyes clouded with anxiety.

“TechWorks” Brings Dreams of Jordan Inventors to Life



AMMAN (AFP) - In the age of Covid, Jordanian mechanical engineer Saliba Taimeh pondered how to deal with one contaminated everyday surface: the handrails of escalators in shopping malls and transport hubs.

He came up with a device to sterilize them with UV rays -- and this is where TechWorks stepped in.

A wealth of ideas would not have seen the light of day without TechWorks, a Jordanian platform aimed at bringing together youth, ideas and resources to jump-start innovations.

Set up in 2018, TechWorks says its mission is “to plug into entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems” and turn ideas into reality.

It is equipped with state-of-the-art technology such as 3D printers and affiliated with a foundation set up by Crown Prince Hussein.

Last year, it attracted about 100 inventors and start-up companies, enabling them to produce prototypes quickly and at low cost.

Taimeh, 39, said TechWorks “provided me with every support, back-up, advice and guidance” to help perfect the sterilising device, after 23 attempts over almost two years.

His invention sterilizes the handrails of escalators “from all kinds of viruses, such as coronavirus and bacteria,” he said.

After contacting several international companies, a German firm specialising in health and safety in public places signed up to manufacture the “Brigid Box”.

Weighing in at 7.2 kilograms (almost 16 pounds), it can be installed in less than 15 minutes.

Taimeh’s success story is only one of many.

High school student Zain Abu Rumman, 18, has developed a tracking device for elderly patients and people with special needs, worn like a watch or around the neck.

The “SPS Watch” has a battery that lasts eight days and is resistant to water, heat and breakage.

“The device can send alerts to the mobile phone of a family member through a special application in case the person wearing it falls or is hurt, or if he strays from a certain place,” Abu Rumman said.

Russia Sanctions Snarl Flights, Compound Airline Industry Woes

LONDON (Dispatches) - Airlines are bracing for potentially lengthy blockages of key east-west flight corridors after the European Union and Moscow issued tit-for-tat airspace bans and Washington did not rule out similar action in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Industry officials say the Biden administration would ban Russia from U.S. airspace. The White House said on Monday while barring Russian flights was not off the table, it had yet to make a decision.

“There are a lot of flights that U.S. airlines fly over Russia to go to Asia and other parts of the world and we factor in a range of factors,” White House spokesperson Jen Psaki told reporters.

The issue has been a subject of intense U.S. government discussions in recent days. Senator Dick Durbin, the second-highest ranking Democrat in the U.S. Senate, voiced his support for the ban.

“Other countries have done it in Europe and turning the lights out at the airport on those guys isn’t a bad idea,” he told reporters.

A European official, who asked not to be identified, said the EU had full confidence Washington would follow suit. U.S. Representative Carlos Gimenez, a Republican member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said on Twitter that he would file legislation this week to ban Russian-operated airlines and private jets from flying in U.S. airspace.

A move by the White House to ban Russia’s carriers is expected to provoke a response from Moscow, which could affect carriers like United Airlines . The Chicago-based carrier, for example, uses Russian airspace for flights from Delhi.

American Airlines said it was not using any Russian airspace for international flights and it would suspend interline deals with Russian carriers Aeroflot and S7 Airlines indefinitely.

Russia on Monday banned airlines from 36 countries including all 27 members of the European Union after EU ministers agreed to refuse entry to Russian airplanes including the private jets of the country’s oligarchs.

In one of the first signs of differences in European ranks, the chairman of Italy’s civil aviation authority called the airspace sanctions against Russia a violation of international treaties.

The European official, however, said the EU’s sanctions were “carefully crafted in line with international law.”

The sanctions have sparked flight cancellations and costly detours, denting the industry’s pandemic recovery and dealing a blow to the mainly Ireland-based leasing industry which was ordered to stop doing business with Russian airlines.

The rerouting meant that flights in Kazakhstan’s airspace tripled to more than 450 on Monday. read more

Without access to Russia’s airspace, many carriers will have to divert flights south while also avoiding areas of tension in the Middle East.

Iran in Talks With...

FROM PAGE 1

The Khaf-Herat railway runs along the East-West transit corridor, connecting China to Turkey and Europe via Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

“This project will somehow revive the Silk Road. It can connect the East to the West and play an important role in reducing export and transit costs,” Khatibi said.

The railway, he said, has an annual transport capacity of one million passengers and 6 million tonnes of goods which will accelerate transit and cut associated costs.

“The origin and destination of this railway is two economic poles in Iran and Afghanistan, and through this railway line, the possibility of communication between Afghanistan and the southern ports of Iran will be established.

“As a significant portion of the railway passes through Afghanistan and Iran, it will connect China to Turkey and Europe via Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran,” Khatibi added.

Afghanistan has almost no functioning passenger rail service. The only railway dating from the Soviet times in the 1980s is a short link from Uzbekistan towards

the Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Khatibi described the 657 km Herat-Mazar track a missing link, which both Uzbekistan and Iran have indicated interest to build.

“If the Afghan sides move to complete and continue this railway line, there will definitely be a big change in the field of transportation. Offers of various investment methods have also been made by Iran to Afghans,” he said.

The Khaf-Herat railroad will boost trade further, allowing trainloads of Afghan goods to reach not only Iranian cities but also the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, the Caspian Sea and land ports in western and northwestern Iran from where they will head to European markets.

Iran is Afghanistan’s largest trading partner, with around \$2 billion in bilateral trade each year, nearly a third of Afghanistan’s total trade volume. It is a key fuel provider to its eastern neighbor, exporting 274,000 tonnes of gasoil and 80,000 tonnes of gasoline to Afghanistan in 2020.

Time to...

FROM PAGE 1

In recent days Oil Ministry has signed many deals with the domestic companies to advance the oil and gas projects without waiting the Vienna talks. Of course Oil Ministry will welcome any deal with foreign countries for developing oil and gas fields but it will not sit and wait for foreign companies’ interests which are mostly politically motivated.

Oil Ministry has awarded over half a billion US dollar worth of flare gas projects to domestic companies as part of efforts to reach a zero flares target by 2025.

The contracts will be worth 470 million euros (\$520 million) and will reduce the gas flared from the Iranian oilfields by 600 million cubic feet (nearly 17 million cubic meters) by 2024.

The eight contracts are part of an investment package of \$1.22 billion introduced by the Iranian government in 2018 to recover flare gas from oilfields in southwestern Iran.

Of course the policy of the government and the establishment has changed in recent years from raw material sales to the value added product sales and petrochemical products earn the country considerable revenues per year and the government is focused on improving petrochemical sector by implementing different projects rather than only selling crude oil.

Recent economic policies of the government can be successful in the long term and it needs hard working and logical decisions in any compartment of the economy as well as the nation’s trust.

As the New Year of Iranians is approaching, all economists and analysts have pinned hopes on the economic prospect of the country in next year but it needs a harmony and united voice among the statesmen because any division and contradiction in promises will harm trust of the nation and the current stability in the market where inflation rate is gradually being curbed.

Boosting trade with neighboring states as well as increasing oil production will increase the revenues of the country in the current condition that the world is struggling with the consequences of Ukraine war which has ignited the hike in prices of several basic goods in the world and Iranian officials should take logical actions to minimize the side-effects of Ukraine war on the prices in the country.

Iran Trade...

FROM PAGE 1

He also said that the elimination of flare gases in the east of Karun, southwestern Iran, which would reduce greenhouses gases by 10%, is among the government’s measures to protect the environment.

The flare, alternatively known as a flare stack, flare boom, ground flare, or flare pit, is a gas combustion device used in industrial plants such as petroleum refineries, chemical plants, and natural gas processing plants. They are also expected at oil or gas extraction sites having oil wells, gas wells, offshore oil and gas rigs, and landfills.

A gas burner is an extended vertical pipe used as an essential part in oil wells, refineries, petrochemicals, and chemical plants to burn waste gases and flammable.

In this regard, Bahadori-Jahromi said: “Good measures have been taken in the field of burner gases. The move also has the economic benefit of injecting 13 million cubic meters more gas into power plants and reducing pollution.”

The government official referred to the impact of the implementation of the contracts of the Ministry of Oil for flare gas, saying: “500 million cubic feet of burner gas will be removed and saved. 27 contracts will be concluded for the omission of East Karun burner gases, the total of which will reach one billion Euros.”

He stressed: “In 3-year period, 500 million cubic feet of burner gas will be removed and saved daily, and after the implementation of all contracts, we will see a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.”

IAEA...

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier on Monday, Grossi made a statement before the Board of Governors of the IAEA about the progress so far made on the clarification of the outstanding safeguards issues with Iran.

“...during my visit to Tehran on Saturday and after constructive talks, Vice-President of Iran and head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Mohammad Eslami, and I were able to agree a series of actions that will be guiding our work,” he said.

Grossi added that there is still “a lot of work ahead of us and we have already started.”



Wu Wins Fourth DP World Tour Title

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - China's Wu Ashun captured his fourth DP World Tour title with victory at the Kenya Open, overturning a four-shot overnight deficit to finish clear at the top. The 36-year-old carded four birdies in a row from the seventh hole and signed for a 65 and a 16 under par total. "Today I was four shots behind and still playing to my plan. Five under was my goal today and after ten holes I had a good feeling and I told myself I'll keep playing and make a couple of birdies and it's fine," Wu told the DP World Tour website.

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Kipchoge Wins Tokyo Marathon

LONDON (Dispatches) - Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge, the two-times Olympic marathon champion and world record holder, won the Tokyo Marathon in Japan with a time of two hours two minutes and 40 seconds. Kipchoge, who defended his marathon title at Sapporo at the Tokyo Games last year, fell short of his world record mark by just over a minute in his debut Tokyo Marathon. Kipchoge's compatriot Amos Kipruto was second with a time of 2:03.13 while Tamirat Tola of Ethiopia came in third with 2:04.14.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY MARCH 9, 2022

Middleton Nets 44 as Bucks Defeat Suns

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Khris Middleton scored a season-high 44 points as the Milwaukee Bucks Milwaukee Bucks defeated the visiting Phoenix Suns 132-122 to extend their winning streak to four games.

The three-time All-Star also added eight rebounds and five assists on 16-for-27 shooting to even the two-game season series with the Suns. It was Phoenix's first loss on the road since Feb. 3. Following their late-game rally against Chicago on Friday night, the Bucks once again peaked late, outscoring the Suns 14-4 over the final 3:32.

Tru Holiday contributed 24 points, nine assists and four steals. Giannis Antetokounmpo also chipped in 19 points and 13 rebounds to record his seventh consecutive double-double, although he was held to just two points in the second half before fouling out late in the fourth.

Deandre Ayton paced the Suns with a season-high 30 points and eight rebounds on 14-of-19 shooting. Cameron Payne once again stepped up in Chris Paul's absence with 23 points and eight assists. Jae Crowder supplied 19 points, and Landry Shamet had 17.

Knicks 116, Clippers 93

New York pulled out of a seven-game tailspin while snapping host Los Angeles' five-game winning streak in a rout.

The Knicks stifled Los Angeles defensively, holding the Clippers to just 33-of-88 (37.5 percent) shooting from the floor and 11-of-34 from 3-point range. Amir Coffey's 16 points off the bench led Los Angeles.

Six Knicks players scored in double figures, led by RJ Barrett's 24 points. He has scored at least 20 points in five straight games. He also grabbed nine rebounds and dished four assists. New York never trailed and built a lead of as many as 32 points.

Celtics 126, Nets 120

Jayson Tatum scored a season-high 54 points and Boston put together a late run in the fourth quarter to defeat visiting Brooklyn.



Tatum canned eight 3-pointers on the day and scored 34 points in the second half. The effort lifted Boston to its third straight win in a game that featured 28 lead changes and 19 ties. Jaylen Brown added 21 points in his return after suffering a right ankle sprain on Tuesday and missing one game. Kevin Durant scored a team-high 37 for Brooklyn, in the fourth quarter becoming the 23rd player in NBA history to reach 25,000 points.

Jazz 116, Thunder 103

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 35 points, setting a franchise record with 11 3-pointers, to lead Utah past host Oklahoma City for its 10th win in its last 12 games.

Bogdanovic was coming off his worst shooting game of the season -- going 1 of 11 from the floor and missing five of six 3-point attempts in Friday's blowout loss in New Orleans. Donovan Mitchell added 24 points and 10 assists for Utah, while Jordan Clarkson scored 20 off the bench.

Wizards 133, Pacers 123

Kristaps Porzingis dazzled in his Washington debut with two late dunks among 25 points in just 21 minutes, six teammates also scored in double figures and the Wizards ran away from visiting Indiana.

Acquired from the Dallas Mavericks at the trade deadline, Porzingis had sat out 14 straight games -- including his first eight for the Wizards -- with a sore right knee. He shot 7 for 12 overall, 3 for 4 on 3-pointers and 8 for 10 from the free throw line in his 18th 20-point game of the season.

Bastianini Claims Emotional Season-Opening Win



DOHA (Dispatches) - Enea Bastianini won the season-opening Qatar MotoGP and dedicated his first victory in motorcycling's premier class to former team boss Fausto Gresini, who died last year after contracting Covid-19.

The Italian, in his second season in the elite, took first place ahead of South African Brad Binder on a KTM with Spaniard Pol Espargaro of Honda third after leading for most of the race.

"I think now it's incredible," said Bastianini, the Moto2 champion in 2020 who rejoined Gresini Racing this season after beginning his career with the team in Moto3.

"At the end Pol was really close to me. I understood that now I could try to win the race, and I overtook Pol on the first corner after he went out."

Bastianini paid tribute to the late Gresini, the team's founder and a double 125cc world champion in the 1980s who passed away at the age of 60.

"I dedicate this victory to Fausto. He pushed me a lot from the skies, and it's fantastic for all the team. I think we've all been crying."

Bastianini started second on his Ducati but took control of the race from Espargaro with four laps remaining, improving on a couple of third-place finishes from his debut season.

Alex Espargaro on an Aprilia was fourth ahead of Honda's six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez, whose past two seasons have been derailed by injuries.

Masters Secures 12th Olympic Medal

BEIJING (Dispatches) - Most athletes spend a lifetime perfecting one discipline but American Oksana Masters' talent and resilience earned her a 12th Olympic medal across Winter and Summer Games at the Beijing Paralympics.

Silver in the long-distance sitting event in cross-country skiing was a second podium in two days for the 32-year-old, who took gold in the biathlon sitting sprint amid emotional scenes at the Zhangjiakou National Biathlon Centre.

"I was trying to upgrade it from Sochi 2014 when I got a silver, I was chasing that gold medal. This is the one race that I was really looking forward to, but I'm so proud of myself," Masters told reporters.

Masters finished behind China's Yang Hongqiong and the host nation's Li Panpan secured bronze.

"I raced this 100% honest, clean and in the right space and I just did everything I could, and I am so happy to bring home a medal for Team USA," added Masters.

Ukraine-born Masters won two gold medals in cycling at the Tokyo Paralympics last year, adding to her rowing bronze from London 2012.

What made her performance in Tokyo even more impressive was that Masters had been diagnosed with a tumor in her leg during her preparations for the Games but she underwent an operation and made a swift recovery.

Masters was born with severe physical defects believed to have been caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and spent her early years in orphanages.

Mexico Bans Away Fans After Football Violence

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Mexico's football league has banned away fans from stadiums following the weekend violence at a match that left 26 people needing hospital treatment, including three that are in a serious condition.

Fights broke out just after the hour mark of the game between Queretaro and Atlas at La Corregidora stadium in the city of Queretaro.



Medvedev Stays ATP No.1

PARIS (Dispatches) - While the ATP rankings barely moved today following a weekend when the Davis Cup replaced tournaments, there was one visible change, as the Russian flag vanished from the list.

Daniil Medvedev stayed on top, but the country column next to his name contained a white rectangle, after the ATP responded to the invasion of Ukraine, by deciding last week to

allow Russian and Belarusian players to continue to compete, but not under their national flags.

Andrey Rublev, who dropped a place to seventh, Aslan Karatsev in 22 and Karen Khachanov, who fell one spot to 26, also had their nationality hidden by the ATP.

Belarusian Ilya Ivashka, who rose two spots to 41, was also flagless.

Djokovic Offers Financial Help to Stakhovsky Amid War



PARIS (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic has offered financial support and any other help required to Ukrainian former world number 31 Sergiy Stakhovsky, who has enlisted in his country's reserve army amid Russia's invasion of its neighbor.

Stakhovsky, who won four ATP titles and had a shock win over Roger Federer in the second round of Wimbledon in 2013, joined Ukraine's reserve army last month despite a lack of military experience.

The 36-year-old posted a screenshot on Instagram of his conversation with Djokovic via WhatsApp, in which the Serbian world number two asked about his situation and hoped for things to calm down.

"Please let me know what would be the best address to send help ... financial help, any other help as well," Djokovic said in the message to the retired Stakhovsky.

Stakhovsky posted on Instagram that Ukraine was grateful for Djokovic's offer of support.

Russia calls its actions in Ukraine a "special operation" designed not to occupy territory but to destroy its neighbor's military capabilities and capture what it regards as dangerous nationalists.

Several other Ukrainian athletes, including world boxing heavyweight champions Wladimir Klitschko and Vitali Klitschko, are defending their country after taking up arms.

Rangnick Rejects Ronaldo Injury Speculation

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United interim manager Ralf Rangnick rejected any suggestion that there was more to Cristiano Ronaldo's absence from his team for Sunday's 4-1 defeat to Manchester City than a hip injury.

Former United captain Roy Keane had questioned how genuine the injury was during the Sky Sports broadcast of the derby, saying: "We talk about Ronaldo being some sort of machine, he's very rarely injured and then every now and again he comes out... and says hip flexor. It doesn't add up to me."

Keane made similar comments after the game and Rangnick was asked in his news conference to respond.

"The doctor came to see me on Friday and told me Cristiano cannot train due to a problem with his hip flexor and the same was true on Saturday and that's why he couldn't be part of the squad," Rangnick said.

"It's just a fact if players tell the medical department that they are injured and they cannot play I have to accept it," he added.

United were also without their Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani due to injury but Rangnick said he had been fit enough to train.

