

IRAN NEWS Felicitates Its Readers on Nowruz (new year) And Wish Them a Prosperous And Happy New Year. The Next Issue Will Hit the News-Stands on Sunday, April 3

IRAN NEWS

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Iran-Russia Ties to Develop Regardless of Int'l Developments

TEHRAN (MNA) – The relations between Iran and Russia will develop regardless of international developments, said Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in his meeting with Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized good relations with Russia as a friend and neighbor,” said Amir-Abdollahian who arrived in Moscow on Tuesday at the head of a diplomatic delegation, in his meeting with Lavrov.

Referring to the deepening of cooperation between the two countries in various fields, the Iranian Foreign Minister added, “Relations between Iran and Russia will develop regardless of international developments.”

“During Mr. Raisi’s recent visit and meeting with Mr. Putin, important agreements were reached between the two countries,” he noted.

Amir-Abdollahian also appreciated the Russian negotiating team in Vienna talks for their constructive efforts to help come closer to an agreement to lift sanctions on Iran.

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Iran Trade Value With Neighbors Hits \$46.2b

TEHRAN (MNA) – Spokesman for the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) said that country’s trade value exchanged with 15 neighboring states in 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year hit \$46.2 billion at large.

Seyyed Rouhollah Latifi said on Tuesday that Iran’s value of trade exchanged with 15 neighboring countries from March 21, 2021, to Feb. 22, 2022, reached \$46.2 billion, showing a \$14 billion growth as compared to the same period of last year.

Some 92,256,219 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$46.2b were exchanged between Iran and 15 neighboring states in the 11 months of the current year, showing a 22 and 42 percent growth in terms of weight and value respectively as compared to the last year’s corresponding period.

He put the value of trade exchanged between Iran and 15 neighboring states in 11 months of the previous year in 1399 (from March 21, 2020, to Feb. 22, 2021) at \$32.4 billion, the rate of which registered a considerable growth in the same period of the current year.

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IRGC Foils Israeli Sabotage At Fordow, Captures Plotters



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has captured members of a network planning to sabotage Iran’s underground Fordow nuclear plant, official IRNA news agency reports.

The plot involved an agent paid by Israel attempting to approach a person working with advanced IR-6 centrifuges at the plant, the Monday report said.

The agent was provided with secure communications and paid in cash and cryptocurrencies to approach the plant employee using a contact at a cover company in Hong Kong as a mediator who was in reality an Israel spy officer. After approaching the plant employee, all wages are exchanged in cash and digital currency so that no traces remain.

The Israeli operative then contacts the plant employee through the agent and orders a software as he gradually moves to approach him himself.

The plant employee continues to cooperate after knowing about the real identity of the Israeli spy, but that is when all their moves are being monitored by the IRGC’s intelligence arm.

According to IRNA, the IRGC Nuclear Command was able to prevent one of the major sabotages of the country’s nuclear facilities in cooperation with the IRGC’s Counterintelligence Command.

The sabotage attack was set to happen before Nowruz which marks the end of the Iranian year on March 20. Iran’s nuclear program has been the subject of sabotage for more than a decade. Several Iranian scientists have also been assassinated by Israel.

Meanwhile according to reports, the missile attack by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on the Israeli spy agency’s secret compound in northern Iraq targeted 10 Israeli operatives, killing three of them and leaving seven others wounded, according to a report.

A report in The Cradle, citing a senior Iranian security source, said 12 Fateh missiles launched by the IRGC struck the Mossad base in Erbil at around 1:20 am on Sunday.

“The operation has so far killed three people, two of them senior officers, and estimates show seven wounded, some of whom are probably in critical condition,” the unidentified source stated.

The source said an air ambulance was requested from the German city of Stuttgart shortly after Sunday’s attack, but the ambulance landed in Qatar due to security concerns.

U.S. troops reportedly used a C130 aircraft to transport the dead and wounded to the ambulance.

“This operation sends a message to all countries in the region that Iran is sensitive to the Israeli regime’s activities near its borders and does not tolerate it,” the source is quoted as saying.

The strike took place “at a symbolic hour when the resistance commanders were assassinated,” the source noted, referring to the assassination of top anti-terror commanders, Gen. Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, on 3 January 2020.

According to the source, the operation was in retaliation to an Israeli attack on an IRGC-operated drone base in the Mahidasht district of Kermanshah in western Iran on February 14.

Shadow of Iran Oil Failure Looms Over Japan’s Sakhalin Decision

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Twelve years after leaving an oil field project in southwestern Iran under pressure from Washington, Japan finds itself in a familiar position, this time over an energy project in Russia’s Far East.

With 26 billion barrels, Iran’s Azadegan oil field had one of the world’s largest reserves. The government-funded Japan Oil Development Co. (now INPEX) acquired a 75% stake in the project in 2004, eager to develop an oil field that Japan had strong control over.

Japan and Iran have historically had good relations. Even after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which kicked off a four-decade souring of U.S.-Iran ties, Tokyo and Tehran maintained diplomatic relations. As the U.S. and Europe slapped sanctions on Iran over its nuclear development, Japan stuck with the Azadegan project in the 2000s.

But in the end, the U.S. government made clear to Tokyo that if Japan continued to hold its stake in Azadegan, it would be hit with sanctions. “We gave it up with a heavy heart,” a senior official at the Ministry of Energy, Trade and Industry (METI) recalled.

Burned by the experience in Iran, Japan turned to Russia’s Far East to reduce its energy dependence on the Persian Gulf.

But in a twist of fate, Japan’s stakes in the Sakhalin energy projects there are now under the spotlight. Following the invasion of Ukraine, oil giants ExxonMobil and Shell announced their withdrawal from the Sakhalin 1 oil field and the Sakhalin 2 gas field, respectively.

Japan’s METI and trading houses Itochu Corporation and Marubeni Corporation have invested in Sakhalin 1. Rival trading houses Mitsui & Co. and Mitsubishi Corporation are investing in Sakhalin 2.

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ViewPoint New Year, New Horizon

As the countdown has started for the beginning of new Iranian calendar year and Nowruz is approaching, people in Iran pine hopes for better condition and prosperous new year and we wish them and all people in the world who celebrate Nowruz a merry and prosperous new year.

The current year, 1400, has witnessed several ups and downs in the world and especially in Iran but what is important is that Iranians are gradually putting behind the problems and entering a new phase of their lives and they expect a better horizon ahead of the country next year.

Several issues had made the country to challenge for survival and the COVID pandemic was one of them which has been almost controlled in the country by wide vaccinations and taking some restrictive measures which helped the number of death toll drops sharply and one can say that this deadly virus is almost under control but not completely.

But the most important event of the year for Iranians and almost the most decisive one was the end of presidency of Hassan Rouhani and election of Hojjatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi which put an end to eight years of inefficient presidency of Mr. Rouhani. Now the country has a revolutionary president with revolutionary decisions. He goes to the public in case of problems. This is one important property of Mr. Raisi that his predecessor had missed it.

Since the first day Mr. Raisi took office, he has taken measure decisions especially in the economic sector to lower the spiraling inflation and his government has been successful to control the inflation rate and the government is trying hard to lower the rate.

His focus on interaction with neighboring and friendly countries has been very effective in the country’s foreign trade especially when the country is under the cruel sanctions. This focus has encouraged producers and exporters to boost the national economy and with some more efforts the national economy will back on the right track, something which had been derailed during Rouhani’s era. So production and exports are very crucial for the country to overcome the problems.

Of course, the country has witnessed many ups and downs in this year and election of President Raisi has been one of the ups. The country has achieved several successes in the scientific and military sectors. Unveiling different types of drones, weapons, medical production and above all several types of COVID-19 vaccines have been of the major highs of the country this year.

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India Hopes for Oil From Iran, Venezuela

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India, the world’s third-largest energy-consuming and importing nation, is pinning hope on resumption of crude oil supplies from Venezuela and Iran as well as higher production from OPEC+ nations to help cool international oil prices that have hit multi-year highs.

It will also evaluate the Russian offer to sell crude oil at discounted prices after considering aspects such as insurance and freight required to move the fuel from the non-traditional supplier.

Replying to supplementaries during question hour in the Rajya Sabha, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said oil export from Venezuela and Iran had been hit due to sanctions.

The two nations are among those with the highest oil reserves in the world and were significant suppliers to India before U.S. sanctions halted purchases.

“It is our hope and expectation that oil, not only from Venezuela, but other countries under sanction, will become available,” he said. “I am hopeful that we will all use collectively, our margin of persuasion... to request the international community to make more oil available including from Venezuela.”

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Majlis Lawmakers Vote to Scrap Clock Shifts

TEHRAN (IFP) – Majlis voted to end one-hour clock changes which extended daylight hours from the beginning of spring across the country.

The administration is now allowed to set the starting hours of organizations, departments and affiliated centers in different parts of the country in accordance with the hot months of the year.

The lawmakers voted to stop the clock changes despite opposition from the parliament's research center.

The research center has reiterated that clock shifts play an important role in reducing electricity consumption. It demanded that the country continue to move clocks forward by an hour in spring then back again in the autumn.

President Terms Books as Bridges Connecting Civilizations

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi said at Iran's World Book Award ceremony here on Tuesday that a "book" is a bridge that can link civilizations.

Books can help people get familiarized with different cultures and civilizations, the President said.

Books and cultural works facilitate cultural cooperation, President Raisi noted.

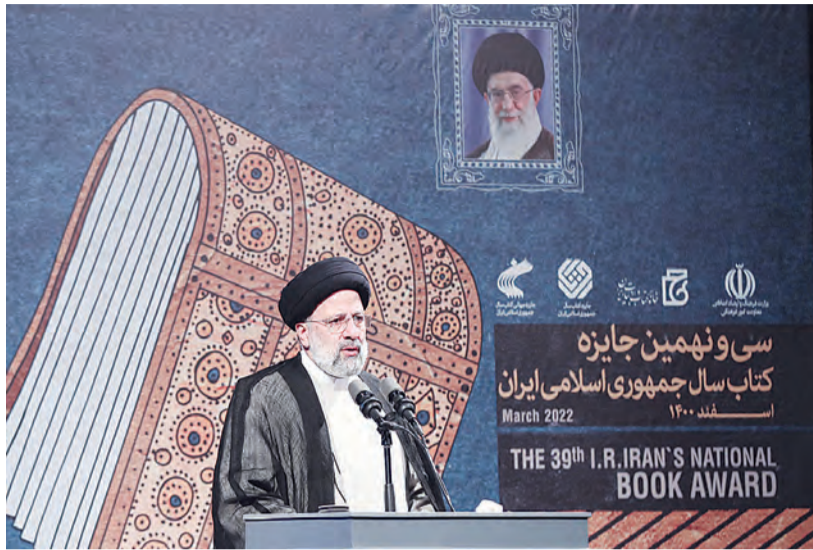
He went on to say that books play an important role in economic and political analyses.

Raisi described research, writing and publishing facts and countering distortion as manifestations of 'jihad of explanation' and said, "Apart from freedom of speech and thought, justice in writing and expression is also one of the values of the culture of the Islamic Revolution."

He went on to say: "Holding such a great cultural event, in addition to introducing top and magnificent works, and strengthening cultural and social ties, is a platform for identifying top talents and supporting scientific and cultural elites".

The President added, "Despite technological and digital advances and the advent of social networks, books still have a glorious cultural status and almost no media has been able to replace books".

Raisi described the book as a bridge between cultures and civilizations and a means of disseminating the thoughts and ideas of intellectuals and scientists, saying, "If great works such as Avicenna, Hafez, Sa'adi, Sheikh Ansari, Akhund Khorasani and other great personalities were not preserved and published in books, who knew them today?"



After describing the decisive place of books in the life of a nation, the President said, "The Islamic Revolution of the Iranian people was a kind of Cultural Revolution, and the late Imam and the Supreme Leader of the Revolution have always promoted the culture of reading books".

Ayatollah Raisi also referred to the high position of freedom of expression and thought in the Islamic Republic and said, "Apart from these important values, justice and fairness in writing and expression are also among the values of the culture of the Islamic Revolution".

Dr Raisi added, "In the view of the Qur'an, in which God has sworn by the pen, the pen that is the guide of human beings, is valuable and its essence is justice, rationality, spirituality and morality".

Emphasizing the importance of intellectual property, copyright and translation, the President said, "One of the most important rights in the field of writing and publishing is the rights of the reader and the audience, which must be observed, and justice and fairness in expression govern these rights".

Iranian Women Struggling With Cruel Sanctions



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Vice President for Women and Families Affairs Ensieh Khazali said that Iranian women were struggling with cruel unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States.

Speaking in the 66th meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on Monday, Khazali said that Iranian women who have recorded significant results and figures alongside men are now struggling with the pressure arising from the cruel unilateral sanctions imposed by the US against Iran.

She said that Iran could successfully emerge from the global coronavirus pandemic by relying on its domestic capabilities despite the limitations arising from sanctions, especially in Iran's access to medicine and medical equipment.

About 12,000 Iranian bread-winning women were professionally trained during the pandemic and linked with legacy and virtual markets, Khazali noted, adding that over 1.4 million women as the family breadwinner were covered by governmental charities.

She also highlighted various programs implemented in Iran on women's affairs, including women resilience improvement in 31 provinces, plans to reduce social harm on women and empowering social emergency workers.

IRGC Navy Equipped With New Specialized Defense Equipment

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a ceremony on Tuesday, some specialized floating, missile, and subsurface defense equipment with new capabilities and operational features joined IRGC Naval Combat Organization.

For the first time, intelligent submarines were added to IRGC Naval Combat Organization, marking the beginning of a new chapter of military capability in missions.

High maneuverability, increasing the speed up to 95 knots, the capability of carrying and firing various missiles and rockets are the unique features of IRGC's new defense equipment.

The ceremony was attended by Commander-in-Chief of Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein, Commander of IRGC Navy Force Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, and a group of high-ranking commanders and officials of the Armed Forces.

The new achievements added to IRGC's Navy will significantly increase Iran's deterrent capability to counter subterranean threats, Tangsiri said in this ceremony.

He further added that this will mark a new chapter in the military power of IRGC in its naval missions.

The commander reiterated that the Iranian Armed Forces' preparedness has established security and stability in the Persian Gulf region, saying, "Iran has several times sent messages to the Persian Gulf littoral states that this region belongs to the Persian Gulf littoral states and we are capable of establishing security through sympathy among the neighboring states in the region."

Earlier in December, a number of 110 speedboats with high maneuverability, missile launchers, and rocket-launchers, and capability of reconnaissance-intelligence measures joined the IRGC Navy's Combat Organization.

Iran Supports Any Political Effort to Resolve Ukraine Crisis

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has expressed Iran's support for any political effort aimed at putting an end to the conflict in Ukraine.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a phone conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba on Monday, during which the two conferred on the latest developments as Russia's military operation in the former Soviet state undergoes its third week.

The two sides stressed the need for protection of diplomatic facilities during the ongoing conflict and delivery of humanitarian aid.

Amir-Abdollahian expounded on Iran's stance and its opposition to any kind of war across the world, underlining the need for a political solution and diplomatic dialogue to resolve the crisis between Moscow and Kiev.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran supports any political effort to resolve the crisis," the top Iranian diplomat said. "We are against war whether in Ukraine, Afghanistan or Yemen and any other place without exception."

Amir-Abdollahian said Iran, in coordination with the Polish foreign ministry, plans to establish a Red Crescent medical team at the Ukraine-Poland border to assist Ukrainian refugees.

During the phone conversation with the top Ukrainian diplomat, Amir-Abdollahian also called on Ukraine's government to help Iranians stuck in the country's conflict zones to leave.

Kuleba, for his part, expressed gratitude for Iran's anti-war stances and its delivery of humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees at the border with Poland, stressing that Kiev will spare no effort to protect diplomatic missions, including those belonging to the Islamic Republic.

Underlining Kiev's stance on the ending the conflict, Kuleba cited his recent talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and said the continuation of bilateral negotiations was necessary to resolve the crisis.

The top Ukrainian diplomat appreciated Iran's opposition to war and called for the Islamic Republic's support to stop the conflict in the former Soviet state.

Pakistan, Iran FMs Discuss Ways to Expand Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign ministers of Iran and Pakistan, during a phone conversation, have discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations.

According to a statement issued by Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Monday.

"Both sides agreed to intensify efforts to further expand bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest," the statement said.

The two ministers also discussed regional developments.

The top Iranian diplomat also congratulated his counterpart on the 75th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence.

Pakistan and Iran enjoy close fraternal relations, rooted in shared history, common culture, and people-to-people linkages, the statement said, adding that the two countries share perspectives on a range of regional and global issues of mutual interest.



UNSC Criticized Over Bias Approach Regarding Syria

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister's senior advisor in political affairs Ali Asghar Khaji in a telephone conversation with Sweden's special envoy for Yemen Peter Semneby on Monday said that the UN Security Council's biased approach is against the political process of resolving the Yemen crisis.

During the phone call on Monday, Khaji and Semneby discussed the latest developments in Yemen.

Criticizing the UNSC's biased approach to the Yemen crisis, which has been affected by the political considerations and lobbying of the aggressor states, Khaji named it on the opposite path of the political process toward resolving the Yemen crisis, which further deepens distrust between the warring sides.

The two sides stressed the need to develop cooperation to help resolve the Yemen crisis and end the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in the country as quickly as possible.

President Urges Economic, Trade Ties With Baku

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Ebrahim Raisi underlined the need for further expansion of economic and trade relations between Iran and Azerbaijan which he said would benefit the interests of both nations.

The president made the remarks in a message to his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Baku.

Referring to historical, cultural and religious affinities between Iran and Azerbaijan, Raisi said that the two countries have experienced warm relations coupled with mutual respect over the past 30 years of bilateral relations.

Regional and international situations doubles the need for strong and regular relations between neighboring countries, particularly those with cultural, historical, and civilizational common grounds.

Iranian, Italian Officials Review Issues Related to Women

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali and Italy's Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family held talks here on vulnerability of women in calamities and necessity for helping them.

The talks were held in New York on the sidelines of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on Monday evening.

During the talks, Khazali said Iranian women have been among those who could well help vulnerable strata in the society in critical conditions.

Khazali made the remarks while referring to the pandemic conditions when women more than others helped and supported the patients by providing face masks for them and giving cash help.

The sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is taking place from 14 to 25 March in New York.

Mass Executions in Saudi Arabia SA Contrary to Most Basic Human Rights

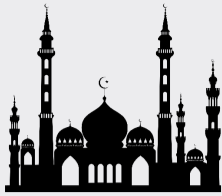
TEHRAN (MNA) - Condemning the mass execution of innocent people in Saudi Arabia, Iran's Parliament Speaker said that such acts are contrary to the most basic human rights and international law practices.

"It is necessary for the governments of the world to put aside hypocrisy and inaction and to condemn such inhumane acts and to prevent such unfortunate incidents," Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf stated.

Qalibaf also said that Iran, unlike Western governments, opposes hypocrisy in human rights and believes in the protection of human rights in all countries and at all levels.

Iran considers contradictory approaches and the instrumental use of human rights wrong and inhumane, he added.

Referring to the crisis in Ukraine, the Iranian parliament speaker stressed the importance of protecting the civilians' lives, calling on the parties to end the war and resolve tensions through diplomatic means.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:13
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:30
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:48
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:12

48. Further, they say, "When will this promise (come to pass), if what ye say is true?"
49. They will not (have to) wait for aught but a single Blast: it will seize them while they are yet disputing among themselves!

Surah 36. Ya-sin (48 - 49)

Tehran, Baku Discussing Joint Development of Oil Fields in Caspian Sea

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Azerbaijan and Iran conduct discussions on the joint development of oil fields in the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Iran Ali Alizada told Trend.

In his words, there are some proposals from the Iranian side on the development of oil fields. Of course, he said, these proposals are evaluated by Azerbaijani relevant authorities.

According to Alizada, the relevant bodies of Azerbaijan are currently conducting discussions with all parties on Azerbaijan's participation in the activation of the Persian Gulf - Black Sea route. A number of discussions on the establishment of the Persian Gulf-Black Sea route have already been carried out. In this regard, all issues have been considered by the proposed member states. Azerbaijan has also been proposed to take part in activating the route. If it serves the interests of our country, of course, Azerbaijan will participate in the activation of this route.

The ambassador also added that work is underway between Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia on a project to establish a North-South energy corridor. In this regard, on February 22, 2022, a meeting of energy ministers of Azerbaijan, Iran and Russia was held in Doha, Qatar and certain discussions were conducted.

At the same time, bilateral meetings were also held between Azerbaijan and Iran and necessary discussions were conducted in this direction. Regular meetings are held in video format among the working groups of the mentioned countries. All three countries support the implementation of this project. The necessary work on this project must be implemented by the Monenco Iran Consulting Engineers Company. The relevant authorities of Azerbaijan will assess this. Currently, work is underway in this direction. We are confident that the project will be implemented in the near future.

"Hopefully the construction of a new bridge over the Astarachay River on the border between Azerbaijan and Iran will be completed and put into operation in a short time. The construction of the mentioned bridge has already begun and is progressing rapidly. The new bridge will facilitate the movement of both vehicles and people. Azerbaijan-Iran relations, trade and economic relations are developing every year. Taking into account the trade congestion on the borders, the governments of both countries have decided to build new bridges. One of them is the Astara bridge, the foundation of which has already been laid. We are confident that the bridge will contribute to the growth of trade and economic ties in the future," he said.

Alizada pointed out that as is known, within the meeting of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, a contract was signed on the



swap of Turkmen gas to Azerbaijan via Iran. The project has been implemented since the beginning of this year. In this regard, there is great cooperation in both bilateral and trilateral formats.

Azerbaijan and Iran conduct discussions on the joint development of oil fields in the Caspian Sea. There are some proposals from the Iranian side on the development of oil fields. Of course, these proposals are evaluated by our relevant authorities.

If the proposals for the projects are updated, they will be discussed at the next meeting of the Azerbaijan-Iran Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission to be held in Baku soon and the future prospects in this regard will be determined by our relevant authorities.

Both the Azerbaijani side has offered and invited Iranian companies to work on the reconstruction of the liberated territories, as well as, the Iranian side is very interested in participating in the reconstruction and restoration work. If any Iranian company wants to invest in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan, it can apply to the relevant authorities of Azerbaijan.

Alizada noted that a joint meeting of businessmen of the two countries is planned before the meeting of the Azerbaijan-Iran Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission to be held in Baku. During the mentioned meeting, the businessmen will get acquainted with the investment opportunities created in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. After getting acquainted with these opportunities, Iranian businessmen will share their views with us.

According to the ambassador, during his visit to the Iranian cities of Tabriz and Urmia, he met with governors of East Azerbaijan and West Azerbaijan provinces, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as chambers of commerce, and invited Iranian companies to invest in Azerbaijan's liberated territories, to participate in reconstruction work. Several Iranian companies have already shown interest. They are currently studying the projects and researching the opportunities created. Of course, if both sides are satisfied, these projects will be implemented.

In particular, Iran Tractor Manufacturing Company (ITMCO) also known as Tabriz Tractor Sazi Company is also interested in establishing its branch in the liberated territories.

Grounds for Trade Reform Must Be Paved

TEHRAN (IP) - Vice-President for economic affairs emphasizes that the grounds must be prepared for trade reforms in Iran.

The 8th National Conference on Jihadi Management was held today, March 14, 2014, in the presence of Mohsen Rezaei, Iran's Vice President for Economic Affairs, and a group of economy managers at the Interior Ministry.

Emphasizing the formation of business groups, Rezaei said: "The formation of these groups will help businesses move in the right tracks."

Rezaei said that entrepreneurs should help the government and small and medium-sized businesses by creating business groups.

"Jihadi management overcomes all obstacles either with the thought or with spirit to make the economy move and change for better," he added.

NITC Orders 113,000-Ton Tanker to Local Builders

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The CEO of the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) announced that his company has ordered construction of an Aframax tanker to domestic companies.

According to the National Iranian Oil Company, Hossein Shiva pointed to the company's new round of support for domestic industries and companies, and said: "In line with the emphasis of the Supreme Leader and the realization of domestic support, the order to build an Aframax tanker has been given to the Iranian Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) in Bandar Abbas and its contract will be signed soon."

He announced the capacity of the tanker as 113,000 tons, and added: "According to the order of NITC, this tanker will be the first domestically built hybrid vessel fueled with liquefied natural gas (LNG) and low sulfur fuel oil (less than 0.5%)."

The CEO of the National Iranian Tanker Company continued: "This Aframax tanker, which is environmentally friendly and is designed and built according to the latest standards of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), will comply with phase three of the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI)."

Shiva stated that by ordering and building this tanker, "we will see the creation of several thousand jobs in the shipbuilding industry and the prosperity of ancillary and related industries in this industry."

He also underlined the seriousness of NITC in repairing the company's fleet inside the country, and noted: "So far, the repair of 24 tankers and barges has been entrusted to domestic yards, which is aimed at supporting domestic industries and creating jobs."

Iran Cement Market Expands 5% MoM in February

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian cement consumption reached 4.43Mt in February 2022, supplied entirely by the domestic industry, according to the Iranian Cement Association. This represents a 5.2 per cent increase when compared with January 2022. While cement production stood at 4.43Mt (+5.2 per cent MoM), clinker output reached 4.83Mt (-7.6 per cent MoM).

The country exported 1.084Mt of clinker and 0.326Mt of cement in February 2022, representing MoM increases of 33.8 and 35.8 per cent, respectively.

Iran Urged to Set Up Pharmaceutical Firms in Oman



TEHRAN (MNA) - Omani ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran announced his country's readiness to establish Iranian pharmaceutical manufacturers in Oman.

In his meeting with the Director-General of Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare for International Affairs Hamed Forouzan in Tehran on Monday, Ibrahim bin Ahmad Al-Moeini Omani envoy to Iran reiterated that his country is ready to establish Iranian pharmaceutical firms in Oman.

During the meeting, the envoy said, "I believe that bilateral relations between Iran and Oman should be increased in all fields since the two countries enjoy high capacities and potentials."

The Director-General of Ministry of Labor, for his part, pointed to the historical, cultural and friendly relations between the two countries and stated that brilliant experiences of the Ministry of Labor and its affiliated organizations in relevant field will be transferred to corresponding Omani firms.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Forouzan pointed to the special emphasis of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on increasing trade and economic ties between the two countries of Iran and Oman.

Iran Happy With Pace Iraq Is Repatriating Blocked Funds

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior businessman who coordinates trade between Iran and Iraq says that Baghdad has returned part of the Iranian funds that have been blocked in the Arab country in recent years because of American sanctions on Tehran.

Yahya Al Es'haq said that Iran has been happy with the pace Iraq has been repatriating funds it owes Tehran for energy imports.

Speaking to ILNA news agency, Al Es'haq did not elaborate on any figures but said that Iraq had repatriated part of the nearly \$5 billion in blocked Iranian funds in cash.

"Iran is satisfied with the process of releasing the blocked funds in Iraq," said the businessman who chairs the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce.

He said that the funds that have remained frozen in



an account in the Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI) have also been used for barter payments to Iran.

Iran and Iraq have been holding regular meetings over the past year to find a solution on the issue of Iraqi energy arrears.

Little information has been released from those meetings and if there has been any concrete agreement about the issue.

Iran decided to slash its supply of natural gas to Iraq last year as authorities said that energy arrears and fines that could accrue had accumulated to more than \$6 billion.

Al Es'haq said that Iran's gas and electricity exports to Iraq have continued normally in recent months.

He said that the two neighbors and their businesses have had no problem settling payments related to non-energy trade.

Gov't Halts COVID Vaccine Imports Amid Rising Domestic Output

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian customs office (IRICA) data shows the country has halted commercial imports of coronavirus vaccines because of a major surge in domestic output reported in recent weeks.

IRICA Spokesman Rouhollah Latifi said that Iran will continue to take delivery of coronavirus vaccines donated by other countries and international institutions.

The official said, however, that the country has temporarily halted placing orders for foreign brands of vaccines both because of a rise in domestic manufacturing and the fact that a majority of people in Iran had received two or three doses of vaccines needed to become inoculated against the coronavirus.

The comments came as Iran took delivery of over 1.4 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccines donated by Germany earlier on Monday. Officials said another part of the consignment containing nearly 780,000 doses was due to arrive later in the day.

IRICA figures show that Iran has imported more than 158 million doses of coronavirus vaccines since February 2020 when the disease was first detected in the country.

A bulk of those jobs have been imported from China while vaccines manufactured outside the United States and Britain have also been cleared for shipment into Iran.

Health ministry figures published on Monday showed that the number of coronavirus vaccines delivered in the country had exceeded 145 million while more than 25 million people had received a third shot to boost their immunity against the new variants of the disease.

The daily number of deaths from the virus stood at 114 from a caseload of 3,813 reported until Monday afternoon, said the ministry.

Elimination of Preferential Exchange Rate Must Be Properly Managed

TABRIZ (IP) - Majlis Vice-Speaker said that the discussion about eliminating the preferential exchange rate in the parliament is acceptable in practice, but it must be appropriately managed.

Massoud Pezeshkian stated that the main concern about eliminating the preferential exchange rate is how to manage it, and if it is not managed correctly, many problems will be created.

"Governments pay subsidies for electricity, water, gas, etc., but most of these subsidies go to the rich, and residents of rural areas and suburbs in cities do not benefit from these subsidies," Pezeshkian added.

The MP stated that the money allocated to some people (rentiers) in the name of subsidies and the preferential exchange rate was misused, and now those who pay the price are the citizens.

Memoirs of the Front and Captivity of Dr. Mohammad Reza Kamali Writer, Veteran and Sacrifice:

A Martyr who was in the hands of Imam Khamenei

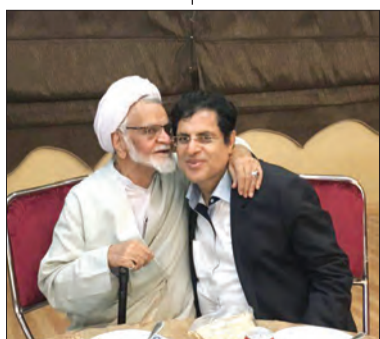
Mr. Bani Sadr asked Hazrat Agha why you did not lie down? They said that when you are in the hands of a real and sincere fighter, you will never be afraid. In order to fight against deprivation in the province, which was very large, after agreeing with other activists in 1983, he was initially responsible for the construction jihad in the Jazmourian region, which was directly under the supervision of the Central Jihad Council of Tehran. Then he was appointed as the head of construction jihad in Bardsir city. Jazmourian is a very large area. One day, the son of a man named Fakhreddin Bamri, who was a large rancher and a capitalist, fell ill and needed a doctor. Together with Mr. Zol-Ali and Dr. Dirmina, he was driving to Fakhreddin Bamri's house on a tractor. Apparently, the boy had eaten raw milk and had brucellosis. Near the village of



Ashkan, two miscreants had blocked the road in the middle of the road. As they went forward, they saw that they were armed and were getting ready to shoot. Dr. Kamali tells Zol-Ali to stop the car, get off, and think that if he says who he is, they will open the way. He starts talking, but they both laugh. Apparently they were the ones they had been looking for for a long time. They close their eyes and move to another place under protection. When they opened their eyes, they saw a person (Asa Bamri) sitting in front of them and drinking tea. He was asked where the boy with the fever was and he pointed to the other side. He was lying in a room with Ms. Fakhreddin sitting on top of her, having a high fever. Ironically, Fakhreddin Bamri leaves the village for work that day and when he leaves, he tells his brother that the doctor will come to visit. Dr. Dirmina's hands were opened and she went to the room for an examination and gave an explanation to Ms. Fakhreddin. The mother was upset and restless. Asa Bamri asks which of them is the leader in jihad and which is subordinate? Dr. Kamali introduces himself and says that I am Haji Kamali (he was known by that name in that area) and they immediately released Zul Ali and the doctor. Asa Bamri frankly says that she does not like his work and has no heart for the revolution or the work that the revolutionaries do. It was clear what their problem was and what their pain was, he was not happy with the changes. They loved the traditional atmosphere in which the master and the peasant lived. In a word, they were against the consciousness of the people. Asa Bamri asks why do not you beg us to release you! Dr. Kamali says that I have had goals and now I have achieved many of them, I am not afraid of death, I think it is a great honor to be martyred in the service of the homeland. I have come from the battlefields and I am not afraid, and I am proud to be a martyr for the sake of religion and the country. Saying these words closes his eyes again. The last sound I heard was the sound of a cup and a saucer, followed by the sound of angry footsteps. Fakhreddin Bamri's wife, whose child was ill, secretly brought him water and some food. A few hours later, they opened his eyes and hands and welcomed him. As it turned out; After the release of Zol Ali and Dr. Dirmina, they introduced themselves to a friend named Seyyed Abbas, and he started working. Haidar Beg Bamri goes to Delgan region with Ahmad Bamri and informs Dr. Kamali about the capture of the tribe to the head of the tribe, "Nawab Khan Bamri". Two days later, Nawab Khan's representative arrives in Ashkan to negotiate with Asa Bamri, who was the head of the miscreants. When he sees Nawab Khan's representative, he tells Gholam Hossein Bamri to open Dr. Kamali's hands.



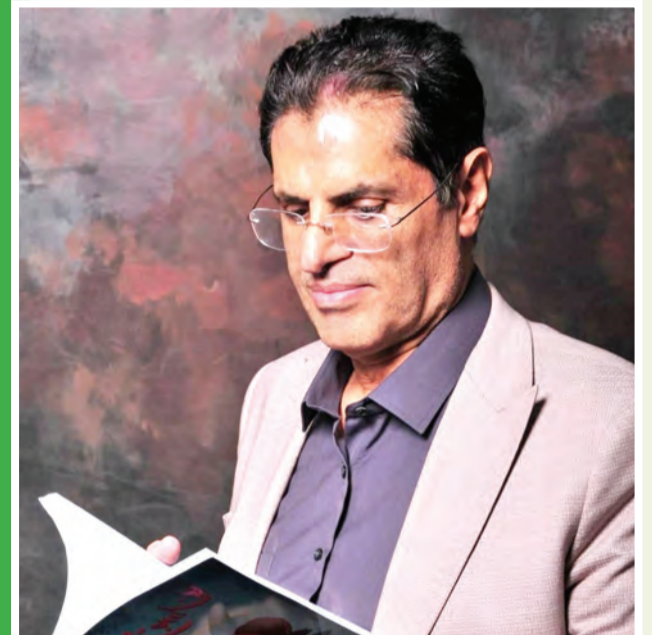
people of that region by name and had a good sense of their spirit and temperament. The Supreme Leader emphasized that the Baloch people were very warm-hearted and kind and had not seen anything good about them in those years. Dr. Kamali told the story of their captivity and stated that if it was not for Nawab Khan's help, God knew what fate awaited them. He also nodded his head in approval and said, "Send my greetings to Nawab Khan." He said, "Asa Bamri was also a good person. I do not know why he did such a thing, and tell Nawab Bamri that he thanked us for supporting our people in jihad and not letting them harm you." On the same day, he ordered the preparation of funds for the construction of the Chah Hassan to Zahkloot road, and talked with the then Prime Minister (Engineer Mir Hossein Mousavi), and he was scheduled to visit the region and visit the Jazmourians. This happened to speed things up. After that, they helped the Jazmourian section a lot and sent Martyr Avini to that area to make a documentary about Jazmourian and the life of Dr. Kamali. One day during the jihad, uninvited guests entered the office. He was Seyyed Morteza Avini, a jihadi filmmaker and documentary filmmaker. Everyone was happy to see him. After greeting him, they asked him why he was there. Because they were sure that after the broadcast of these documentaries, the people would be attracted to this area and that they could collect more donations for the development of this area. Finally, filming for the documentary began. This work took about two months and resulted in 10 documentary episodes from the Jazmourian region that were broadcast on television. Collect and send general necessities, clothing and food for the people of Jazmourian. When man looks at this tortuous path, his heart is filled with joy and happiness and pride, even after all these years that have passed since that date. The imposed war and the period of eight years of holy defense encouraged him to The title of one of the soldiers of Islam should also go to the fronts of truth against falsehood. He bravely participated in various operations and was eventually chemically wounded in Operation Shalamchah. Now, after several years, he is not safe from chemical effects and occasionally makes him sick.



Fakhreddin Bamri, who was ashamed of what had happened, apologized. There were three people there when they were released. Asa Bamri, Eiduk and Gholam Hossein Bamri. They were the leaders of the wicked. There was no sign of resentment on Asa Bamri's face. Apparently, with Nawab Khan's recommendation, the situation had returned to normal. At that time, Jazmourian Jihad was under the direct supervision of the Tehran Jihad Council, which was run by the late Mr. Firoozabadi, Engineer Bijan Zanganeh, and Mr. Forouzeh. The work of jihad was carried out in an orderly manner. Ayatollah Hojjati Kermani, who was the first Friday Imam of Kerman and an adviser to the then president, had heard of the group's efforts to rebuild Jazmourian. He suggested to Dr. Kamali to meet with Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, who was then President. When they arrived at his service, they were warmly welcomed. The Supreme Leader of the Revolution, because they were exiled in that region (Delgan) before the victory of the Islamic Revolution, knew the native

people of that region by name and had a good sense of their spirit and temperament. The Supreme Leader emphasized that the Baloch people were very warm-hearted and kind and had not seen anything good about them in those years. Dr. Kamali told the story of their captivity and stated that if it was not for Nawab Khan's help, God knew what fate awaited them. He also nodded his head in approval and said, "Send my greetings to Nawab Khan." He said, "Asa Bamri was also a good person. I do not know why he did such a thing, and tell Nawab Bamri that he thanked us for supporting our people in jihad and not letting them harm you." On the same day, he ordered the preparation of funds for the construction of the Chah Hassan to Zahkloot road, and talked with the then Prime Minister (Engineer Mir Hossein Mousavi), and he was scheduled to visit the region and visit the Jazmourians. This happened to speed things up. After that, they helped the Jazmourian section a lot and sent Martyr Avini to that area to make a documentary about Jazmourian and the life of Dr. Kamali. One day during the jihad, uninvited guests entered the office. He was Seyyed Morteza Avini, a jihadi filmmaker and documentary filmmaker. Everyone was happy to see him. After greeting him, they asked him why he was there. Because they were sure that after the broadcast of these documentaries, the people would be attracted to this area and that they could collect more donations for the development of this area. Finally, filming for the documentary began. This work took about two months and resulted in 10 documentary episodes from the Jazmourian region that were broadcast on television. Collect and send general necessities, clothing and food for the people of Jazmourian. When man looks at this tortuous path, his heart is filled with joy and happiness and pride, even after all these years that have passed since that date. The imposed war and the period of eight years of holy defense encouraged him to The title of one of the soldiers of Islam should also go to the fronts of truth against falsehood. He bravely participated in various operations and was eventually chemically wounded in Operation Shalamchah. Now, after several years, he is not safe from chemical effects and occasionally makes him sick.

Dr. Mohammad Reza Kamali On February 13, 1980, coinciding with the middle of Sha'ban, the anniversary of the birth of Imam Zaman (as) was born in the village of Qaleh Asgar in the city of Bardsir in Kerman province.



The interesting thing about his date of birth is that his birthday in 1400 is repeated three times. First, on the occasion of the birthday of Hazrat Vali-e-Asr (AS) on the 9th of Farvardin, then 22 Bahman and again on the 27th of Esfand is the birthday of Vali-e-Asr (AS). Winter is the season of beauty and the season of happiness in Islamic Iran. In the winter of 1957, the tyranny of imperial oppression was abolished and the Islamic Revolution won. Among them, there were people who sincerely took to the battlefield to eliminate discrimination and fight against injustice. Bardsir was born in Kerman province. The interesting point of his date of birth is that his birthday in 1400 is repeated three times. First, on the occasion of the birthday of Hazrat Vali-e-Asr (AS) on April 29, then 22 Bahman and again on March 18 is the anniversary of the birth of Hazrat Vali-e-Asr (AS). Ba'ath was located, 20 km from the city of Andimeshk, there was a bridge called Naderi Bridge that was destroyed. Next to the bridge was a tunnel called the Rare Cave, where warriors were stationed. Hazrat Agha came with Mr. Bani Sadr and several military commanders of the army and the IRGC to visit the area. At that time, the Supreme Leader of the Revolution was the representative of the Supreme Leader in the IRGC. In this cave, they met Dr. Kamali and talked warmly. Hazrat Agha asked Dr. Kamali about his work history and he also recounted his background in jihad and came out of the cave together. Dr. Kamali's hand was in his hand. Meanwhile, the sound of gunfire came and they realized that the Iraqis had hit the area. Everyone was lying down and digging when a rocket hit the river. Hazrat Agha and Dr. Kamali were standing.



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Russian Default No Longer Improbable

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Russia may default on its debts in the wake of unprecedented sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine, but that would not trigger a global financial crisis, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said.

Georgieva told CBS's "Face the Nation" program that sanctions imposed by the United States and other democracies

were already having a "severe" impact on the Russian economy and would trigger a deep recession there this year.

The war and the sanctions would also have significant spillover effects on neighboring countries that depended on Russia energy supplies, and had already resulted in a wave of refugees compared to that seen during World War Two, she said.



Bukhara, Samarkand, Two Marvelous Must-See Destinations

BY: F. TAHERPOOR

In February 2021 and on the eve of presidential election in Uzbekistan, I had this opportunity to visit this beautiful Central Asian country and it was amazing experience for me especially when I visited two historic cities of Bukhara and Samarkand following my landing in the capital of the country Tashkent.

Tashkent, the capital of the Republic of Uzbekistan, is a city with the climate of the former Soviet Union which is gradually reforming and getting international and international climate which can attract millions of tourists. Although Uzbekistan due to its cultural and historical background is considered as a pleasant destination for cultural tourists, the country is also a good place for other types of leisure tourism because the country has kept its historical structure and at the same time it has developed cities and towns based on the international taste and is modernizing them.

Bullet train is one of the best means of traveling between the cities in Uzbekistan and the ticket fare is logical for foreign tourists and even for the locals. Modern Samarkand is an important railway center of Uzbekistan; all national east-west railway routes pass through the city. The most important and longest of these is Tashkent-Kungrad.



Samarkand - Tashkent High Speed Train "Afrasiyab"

High-speed Tashkent-Samarkand high-speed rail line trains run between Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara. Samarkand also has international railway connections: Saratov-Samarkand, Moscow-Samarkand, and Nur-Sultan-Samarkand. Afrosiyob is the fastest train in Uzbekistan, allowing you to quickly and comfortably travel between Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara.

Samarkand is one of the cities that I could visit and I recommend those who are cultural tourists or fun seeking tourists to visit this city because the officials of the city have kept perfectly the historic sites and at the same time have developed the texture of the city and modernized it. The city is gradually becoming international and you can find information signs in English or even signs of the stores and markets are some mostly in English.



Amir Teymur Mausoleum in Samarkand

Because of this change and development, young generation is interested in learning international languages and the number of foreign language universities or colleges is on the rise and foreign tourists can interact with them, something which was very difficult in the past because of the language barrier and domination of Russian language in the country.

Samarkand is located in northeastern Uzbekistan, in the Zarefshan River valley, 135 km from Qarshi. Road M37 connects Samarkand to Bukhara, 240 km away. So one can get to this historic city from Tashkent and with train in around two hours. Samarkand is a city in Uzbekistan known for its mosques and mausoleums. It's on the Silk Road, the ancient trade route linking China to the Mediterranean.

The city is noted as a center of Islamic scholarly study and the birthplace of the Timurid Renaissance. In the 14th century, Timur (Tamerlane) made it the capital of his empire and the site of his mausoleum, the Gur-e Amir.

The city has carefully preserved the traditions of ancient crafts: embroidery, goldwork, silk weaving, copper engraving, ceramics, wood carving, and wood painting. In 2001, UNESCO added the city to its World Heritage List as Samarkand - Crossroads of Cultures.

Modern Samarkand is divided into two parts: the old city, and the new city, which was developed during the days of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. The old city includes historical monuments, shops, and old private houses; the new city includes administrative buildings along with cultural centers and educational institutions.

Ulugh Beg Madrasah, Sher-Dor Madrasah, Tilya Kori Madrasah, and Ulugh Beg Madrasah courtyard are of famous historic mosques in Samarkand where visitors can enjoy it.

Samarkand has a Mediterranean climate that closely borders on a semi-arid climate with hot, dry summers and relatively wet, variable winters that alternate periods of warm weather with periods of cold weather. July and August are the hottest months of the year, with



The Pool and Chaihana Lyabi Haus Is at the Heart of the Old City of Bukhara

temperatures reaching and exceeding 40 °C (104 °F). So the city is a good and pleasant place for tourist and it is unlike other cities in the Central Asia which have very cold weather.

The state and official language in Samarkand, as in all Uzbekistan, is the Uzbek language. Uzbek is one of the Turkic languages and the mother tongue of Uzbeks, Turkmens, Samarkandian Iranians, and most Samarkandian Arabs living in Samarkand. About 95% of signs and inscriptions in the city are in Uzbek, mostly in the Uzbek Latin alphabet).

As it has been said earlier, this city is land of mosques and even churches because of its historic background and many famous poets of Uzbekistan and Iran lived there and there toms are in this city.

But unlike Samarkand, Bukhara is totally different and it is a blender of history and modernization as the city is divided into old and new Bukhara. Historic monuments are located in the older part of the city and the new part is getting modernized and being internationalized.

Bukhara, which is situated on the Silk Route, is more than 2,000 years old. It is the most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia, with an urban fabric that has remained largely intact. So one can see signs of this history in the older section of the city and many international tourists rush to this city especially Italians who are interested in cultural tourism and they are mostly busy filming the monuments.

Because of the rise in the number of foreign tourists to Uzbekistan and especially to Bukhara, boys and girls are interested in studying foreign language and even those who study medical science like Ms. Dilobar who was a medical science student and was learning foreign languages especially English.

This city can be said is a duplicate of Iran's Kerman and Yazd cities with the same historic and cultural climate and tombs of many famous Uzbek poets and writers are in this city.

Iranians can enjoy visiting this city where they can feel at home because this city is mixture of culture and modernization so that tourists can have a good time there. Uzbeks are really friendly people and Bukhara citizens are really super friendly.

Karakul lambs' fleeces, silk, cotton, leather, carpets and clothing were all traded from Bukhara, as well as gold embroidery and metal work, and many of these crafts are still practiced in the city today. I had this occasion to talk with one of these craftsmen who was a skilful carpet weaver with many awards and honors in his workshop.

Bukhara, "The city of museums", contains more than 140 architectural monuments of the Middle Ages. Such buildings as Poi - Kalan, Kosh Madras, mausoleum of Ismail Samoni, minaret of Kalyan and others were built 2,300 years ago, and today are popular with tourists. The famous poets Narshahi, Rudaki Dakiki and others have played an important role in the development of Bukhara.

Ark citadel is one of the most attractive historical monuments of this city which hosts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The Ark was the fortified residence of the rulers of Bukhara. Everything could be found there - palaces, temples, barracks,



Ark of Bukhara Is a Massive Fortress Located in the City of Bukhara

offices, the mint, warehouses, workshops, stables, an arsenal, and even a prison. Nowadays there are a few museums inside. It was a fortress even before the Arab conquest, and received its present form under the Shihbhanid dynasty (from 1500).

Tourists usually go to the Ark citadel to take photo while sitting on the king's throne. Of course the number of sites for taking photos is considerable and one has to spend at least one week to visit all of these historical sites.

Uzbekistan is one of the best and almost cheapest tourist destinations in 2020 that I recommend Iranians to visit this country and especially Bukhara and Samarkand during the new year (Nowruz) holidays as Uzbeks also celebrate Nowruz.

Private Jets Soar Past Global Pandemic, Oil Price Woes



GENEVA (Dispatches) - Airlines may find themselves swept up in unprecedented turbulence — with air travel shunned over climate concerns, plagued by pandemic shutdowns and soaring oil prices — but for private jet operators, business is booming.

The appeal of private jets has taken off since the start of the pandemic, amid fear of catching Covid-19 and as widespread cancellations and stringent measures have turned flying commercial into a logistics headache.

"The impact of Covid really forced people to look elsewhere for their travel needs," said Philippe Scalabrini, who heads the southern European division of the international private aviation company VistaJet.

"Anyone who can afford it wants an entire plane at their disposal," he told AFP, adding that "private aviation, as whole, has had an incredible surge of demand over the past two years."

Numbers from air traffic regulator Eurocontrol appear to confirm that.

It found that private air travel nearly doubled its global market share between 2019 and 2021, when it stood at 12 per cent.

Turkey's Unmanned Fighter Jet Hits Production Line



ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's drone magnate Baykar announced it has reached a new phase in its unmanned combat aircraft project, unveiling that the first prototype has entered the production line.

"A larger and more agile fish has entered the production line three and a half years later," Selçuk Bayraktar, the chief technology officer (CTO) at the drone maker, said on Twitter.

Bayraktar was referring to the period when Baykar started manufacturing its landmark combat drone Akinci, dubbed "the flying fish."

The National Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle System (MIUS) has been named Kızılelma ("red apple"), Bayraktar said, referring to an expression in Turkish mythology that symbolizes goals, ideas or dreams that are far away, but are more attractive the further that distance may be.

The first prototype was earlier said to be expected to make its maiden flight in 2023, if not before.

MUIS will be jet-powered and is expected to be capable of taking off from and landing on Turkey's flagship-to-be amphibious assault ship TCG Anadolu.

Russia Unable to Access \$300b Reserves Due to Sanctions



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia says it is unable to access \$300 billion worth of financial reserves due to Western sanctions over the ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

"This is about half of these reserves that we had," Finance Minister Anton Siluanov told Russian state television station Rossiya-1. "We have a total amount of reserves of about \$640 billion. Currently, we cannot use about \$300 billion of these reserves."

Because of funds being frozen by the United States, the European Union and other nations, Russia has problems meeting certain obligations and paying some debts, the minister explained.

Siluanov said some of the gold and foreign exchange reserves were held in Chinese yuan and that the West was putting pressure on Beijing to restrict trade with Moscow.

However, the minister expressed confidence that relations with China would be maintained while reiterating that debts to "hostile states," such as the U.S. and EU countries, would be paid only in rubles.

Russia's coffers are still relatively full despite the war and resulting sanctions thanks to billions in revenue from the sales of gas, oil and coal.

Malaysia, Japan to Step Up Joint Efforts To Tackle Global Supply Chain Issues



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia and Japan have reaffirmed their commitment to redouble their efforts to meet the challenges of the new era, particularly issues related to global supply chain disruption.

Senior Minister and International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, during a courtesy call on former Japan prime minister and special envoy of Japan's prime minister to Malaysia Shinzo Abe yesterday, took the opportunity to deliberate on various issues of mutual interest.

These included enhancement of bilateral trade and investment relations, the 40th anniversary of the Look East Policy, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and Japan's hosting of the Expo 2025 Osaka, the International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) said in a statement.

"They acknowledged that in recent years, both countries have been expanding the horizon of cooperation including in measures against Covid-19, smart cities development, communication infrastructure as well as energy transition to achieve net zero carbon.

Iran to Set Out Constructing First Ever Petrorefinery

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran is going to start construction of its first ever petrorefinery next Persian year (later in 2022), Oil Minister Javad Owji said on Tuesday.

Speaking in the unveiling ceremony of documents on Mazut value chain completion by domestic technical knowledge, Owji said that the Research Institute of

Petroleum Industry has completed the value chain of Mazut and the related project would soon start off, with valuable side products like sponge coke.

He promised that the oil ministry would start construction of the first 300k-barrel petrorefinery next year in southern Iranian Hormozgan Province.



"The Power of the Dog", "Dune" Triumph at BAFTA Awards

LONDON (Dispatches) - Dark Western "The Power of the Dog" scooped the top two honours at the British Academy Film Awards on Sunday, winning best film and director for Jane Campion, while sci-fi epic "Dune" picked up the most prizes.

New Zealand filmmaker Campion wrapped up a successful weekend for her comeback feature film, after winning the top honours at the Directors Guild of America awards in Beverly Hills the day before.

Based on the 1967 novel by Thomas Savage, the critically-acclaimed movie set on a 1920s Montana ranch marks the return of Oscar winner Campion to feature films since 2009's "Bright Star".

"Jane ... you are a visionary whose trail blazed through the last 30 years of cinema with stories about the silenced, the under-represented and the misunderstood," producer Tanya Seghatchian said as she accepted the award on behalf of Campion, who was absent.

"You've inspired legions of women to find their voices. We're here because of you."

Hosted by Australian actress and comedian Rebel Wilson, this year's ceremony, known as the BAFTAs (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) returned as a usual glitzy red carpet event at London's Royal Albert Hall, following a virtual event last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were references to the war in Ukraine, with some nominees wearing ribbons and badges in the blue and yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag or speaking about the crisis on the red carpet and on stage.

"Dune", a mammoth adaptation of Frank Herbert's 1965 novel, had lead nominations with 11 nods, mainly in the creative and technical categories. It won five awards.

"Belfast", Kenneth Branagh's semi-autobiographical black and white comedy drama set at the onset of Northern Ireland's three decades of conflict, won outstanding British film.

Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story" remake won two awards, including the best supporting actress for Ariana DeBose.

Fresh from his win at the Screen Actors Guild awards, Troy Katsur, who is deaf, won supporting actor for "CODA", a coming-of-age story about the only hearing



member of a deaf family.

"This is a historic moment because it's been an extremely long time for folks to really accept a different perspective of the deaf community and deaf actors," Katsur told Reuters on the red carpet via an interpreter.

"Finally they look at me not as a deaf person, but as an artist and an actor who happens to be deaf."

An absent Will Smith won the leading actor award for playing the father of tennis champions Venus and Serena Williams in "King Richard", while Joanna Scanlan won leading actress for portraying a widow who discovers her late husband's devastating secret in "After Love".

New Year...

FROM PAGE 1

And recently the country could send a satellite into orbit which was the second one of this type and this achievement put the Islamic Republic among the major countries with capability of sending satellite into the orbit.

Of course, the country has faced some lows that earthquakes and floods have been among the main of them which led to the death of hundreds of Iranians.

The Vienna talks have been the dominant topic in the society and even in the world and the talks still continue and nobody can predict the fate of it. Of course, the revolutionary government has announced clearly its conditions and red lines and now it is up to the West whether to accept or not. Mr. Raisi has repeatedly said that the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes any dialogue with any country based on the mutual respect and Tehran will not accept any bully because the country is in a condition that no one dares to threaten it as we recently witnessed the IRGC's retaliatory action against Israeli's intelligence forces in Erbil, Iraq. This response showed that the era of hit-and-run has ended and Iran has enough power to give due response to any hostile act no matter who commits this act.

Now that the New Year is approaching, the government is mainly focused on economic issues to reduce hardship on the people who have been suffering because of mismanagement of the former government. The statistics and figures bespeak this fact that the economic grows has been accelerated and even the IMF and World Bank have predicted better economic growth for the New Year.

Of course, to have a prosperous life one needs hard working and if the nation wants the government to resolve problems, then they also need to cooperate with the government as the proverb says two heads are better than one.

So as the statistics say, we can expect a better and prosperous year ahead regardless of what is the result of the Vienna talks. The government measures for improving the livelihood of the people are something which has enlivened hope among the people especially middle and lower classes.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has set sight on all-out progresses in all fields and improving the livelihood of the people will ignite the engine of the nation and the country to move faster towards success and becoming an economic power beside military power that today it is definitely. Horizon is bright for the Islamic Republic of Iran and it will become brighter if we remain united against enemies.



India Hopes for...

FROM PAGE 1

Indian oil companies will enter into agreements with Venezuela and "equally (with) Iran" no sooner their oil comes into the market, he said.

Stating that there are reports that the nuclear issue, which had led to sanctions on Iran, is likely to be resolved, the minister said "that will also bring more oil into the market." He hoped that "apart from oil which will become available by countries who, hitherto, were not supplying on account of sanction, existing OPEC plus will increase their production" to cool oil prices.

International oil prices had hit a 14-year high of USD 130 per barrel earlier this month before retracting. It was trading at over USD 108 on Monday.

But retail petrol and diesel prices have remained unchanged for a record 130 days in a row. Rates were last revised on November 4, 2021, when international oil prices were at USD 81-82 per barrel.

Asked about the reported Russian offer to sell its crude oil and other raw materials at discounted prices with payment through a rupees-rubles transaction, Puri said the government will explore all options which are available.

"Let me again reiterate that in a situation like the one characterised by the pandemic in the last two years and in the last few weeks by a war or a military action taking place between Russia and Ukraine, the government will explore all options which are available," he said.

The minister said he has had discussions with the Russian government officials. "Discussions are currently underway. There are several issues which are required to be gone into like how much oil is available either in Russia or in new markets or with new suppliers which may be coming in the market. Also, there are issues relating to insurance, freight and a host of other issues including the payment arrangements," he noted.

He promised to report any arrangement that is worked out between Indian oil companies and their counterparts in the Russian Federation or with Iran or any other countries where more oil is coming up.

"It is a dynamic evolving situation characterized by military warfare," he added. Puri was repeatedly interrupted by Opposition members who alleged that he was skirting the questions they had put to him.

"I would be happy if some of the 'military quotient' is less here, and, I will get a chance to explain things to my distinguished colleague in greater detail," he said.

Puri said the price of petrol and diesel at the retail point or at the bunk is determined by international price, cost of insurance, freight, exchange rate, refining margins and a number of other factors.

Iran Trade Value...

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He went on to say that Iran exported 70,259,636 tons of products, valued at \$23,528,428,257, to neighboring states, showing a 13 and 28 percent growth in terms of weight and value respectively as compared to the same period of last year.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Latifi pointed to the volume of products imported into the country in this period and stated that 21,996,583 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$22,717,287,806, were imported into the country, showing a 65 and 62 percent increase in terms of weight and value respectively as compared to the same period of last year.

Companies Face Asset Freeze Threat as They Leave Russia

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The "Evropeisky" mall in Moscow was once a symbol of a Russia integrated into the global consumer economy, with atriums named after cities like London, Paris and Rome.

But now large parts of the seven-story shopping center have gone quiet after Western brands from Apple to Victoria's Secret closed their Russian operations in the two weeks since the country invaded Ukraine.

Hundreds of companies have similarly announced plans to curtail ties to Russia, with the pace accelerating over the past week as the deadly violence and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine worsens, and as Western governments ratchet up economic sanctions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin responded Thursday by saying that if foreign companies shut down production in Russia, he favored a plan to "bring in outside management and then transfer these companies to those who want to work."

A draft law could allow Russian courts to appoint external administrators for companies that cease operations and are at least 25% foreign-owned. If the owners refuse to resume operations or to sell, the company's shares could be auctioned off, the ruling United Russia party has said, calling it "the first step toward nationalization."

Chris Weafer of Macro-Advisory, a consultancy specializing in Russia, said the Russian government "is adopting a carrot-and-stick approach to foreign business," with talk of nationalization balanced out with government help for those who stay. A key reason, Weafer said, is the Kremlin's desire to avoid mass unemployment.

"When it comes to social pressures or potential public backlash, what they understand, I guess, is that people will not take to the streets because they cannot buy a Big Mac," Weafer said. "But they might take to the streets if they have no job and no income."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki criticized "any lawless decision by Russia to seize the assets of these companies," saying that it "will ultimately result in even more economic pain for Russia."

"It will compound the clear message to the global business community that Russia is not a safe place to invest and do business," she said in a tweet, adding that "Russia may also invite legal claims from companies whose property is seized."

Even before its latest invasion of Ukraine, Russia was already trying to domesticate its food supply following sanctions it had placed on the European Union in 2014. With little to no fresh food imported from those trading partners, Russia put greater focus on domestic food and importing from friendlier countries like Turkey.

Sanctions Disrupt Iran's Relentless Campaign Against Int'l Drug Cartels

LONDON (IRNA) - Secretary General of Iran Headquarters for Campaign against Drug Trafficking said that unjust anti-Iran sanctions, politicizing atmosphere of international cooperation, and disrupting Iran's incessant campaign against international narcotic drug networks equal breaching international laws, human rights, and UN resolutions.

Brigadier General Eskandar Momeni who is in Vienna to attend the 66th Annual Meeting of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and consultations with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Austrian officials made the comment in and address for the representatives of the UNODC member countries.

Momeni began his address saying that since the last meeting of commission a lot of important and new developments have occurred in the world, especially in West Asia, which can affect the comprehensive campaign against narcotic drugs trafficking. "Surveying those developments and their effect on narcotic drugs trafficking is in need or serious attention of the international community," he added.

The Secretary General of Iran Headquarters for Campaign against Narcotic Drugs Trafficking then elaborated on Iran's moves and achievements in its comprehensive campaign against narcotic drugs trafficking, arguing: The Islamic Republic of Iran managed to launch about 5,000 operations, many of which included armed engagements with over 2,300 active local, regional and international drug networks. "We have also inflicted heavy losses on them by launching a campaign against money laundering by resorting to related laws and appropriate monetary apparatus," added the general.

He said that in those operations some 1,100 tons of various types of narcotics and mind distorting drugs, inclusive of 62 tons of heroin and morphine, 835 tons of opium, 125 tons of hashish, and 25 tons of methamphetamine, were confiscated and deleted from the international drug networks, in which 14 of the best officers of Iran were martyred, while 26 other officers, too, were martyred in clashes with armed bandits and terrorists.

Shadow of Iran Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

The exit from Azadegan had painful consequences. At the time, the U.S. had warned METI to make sure China did not end up acquiring the concessions Japan was giving up. Japan initially sold its stake to the National Iranian Oil Company, but the rights were ultimately purchased by the China National Petroleum Corporation.

Sakhalin could turn out the same. Speaking on national broadcaster NHK on March 6, upper house lawmaker Hiroshige Seko, who promoted economic cooperation with Russia as METI minister under former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, said, "If we leave now, there are countries like China who desperately want liquified natural gas. Those countries will take the gas for cheap." METI Minister Koichi Hagiuda agrees. "If a third country immediately takes [the concessions] and Russia does not feel any pain, it's

meaningless," he told an upper house committee on March 8.

Russia accounts for 8.8% of Japan's liquefied natural gas imports and 3.6% of its crude oil imports. "When standing up to Russia, it would be a mistake to give up stable procurement and weaken oneself," a Japanese official said.

But as was the case in 2010, the criticism METI faced when it withdrew from Azadegan is relevant today: Procurement from countries that are under international sanctions is not a formula for energy security. Regardless of any immediate decisions, it is becoming clear that Russia cannot serve as a viable alternative for Middle East energy. And as long as Japan is dependent on fossil fuel, it will have difficulty finding a sustainable path forward.

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Brady Will Return To NFL's Bucs

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady said Sunday he has changed his mind about retirement and will return to the NFL next season with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.
Brady won six titles in 20 seasons with the New England Patriots then moved the Bucs in 2020 and led them to a championship.
But Tampa Bay lost to the eventual champion Los Angeles Rams in January in the playoffs and Brady announced his retirement last month.

Immobile Breaks Lazio's Serie A Scoring Record

MILAN (Dispatches) - Ciro Immobile broke Lazio's all-time Serie A scoring record on Monday with the only goal in his team's 1-0 win over struggling Venezia which moved them fifth.
Immobile, who also had a goal ruled out for offside just after the break, smashed home a 58th-minute penalty to take his top-flight tally with Lazio to 144, one more than Italian goalscorer icon Silvio Piola.
Piola is Serie A's all-time leading scorer with 274 goals over a 25-year career in which his biggest honour was the 1938 World Cup for his national team.

Durant Pours 53 Points as Nets Edge Knicks

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Kevin Durant erupted for 53 points to lead the Brooklyn Nets to a 110-107 victory over the New York Knicks on Sunday under the eye of teammate Kyrie Irving -- who couldn't play but attended as a spectator.

New York City's private sector vaccine mandates mean Irving still can't play NBA games in New York, at either the Nets' Barclays Center or the Knicks' Madison Square Garden.

But relaxed rules for the unvaccinated in public spaces meant he could attend the game as a fan -- an anomaly that prompted frustrated comment from NBA rival LeBron James. "It literally makes ABSOLUTELY ZERO SENSE!!!" James tweeted as pictures of Irving courtside made the social media rounds. "They say if common sense was common then we'd all have it. Ain't that the truth?"

Without Irving, who so far this season has been limited to playing away games, and with new acquisition Ben Simmons yet to make his Nets debut, it was again up to Durant to carry Brooklyn.

Despite defensive pressure from the Knicks Durant scored 53 points with six rebounds and nine assists.

He drilled a three-pointer with 56.3sec remaining that pulled Irving out of his seat and put the Nets up for good 106-103.

Durant posted the eighth 50-plus point game of his career and his second this season.

Only two other players, Irving and James, have reached the half-century mark in at least two games this season.

As good as Durant was on the floor, many Nets fans were just as vocal in their appreciation of Irving amid hopes that changes in New York regulations will allow him to play full time by the time the playoffs roll around on April 16.

NBA commissioner Adam Silver is among those who have ventured to say the



regulations that bar Irving from competing in New York -- while unvaccinated players from visiting teams can take the court there -- "doesn't quite make sense."

New York City mayor Eric Adams removed the public sector vaccine and mask mandates in February so that the unvaccinated were allowed in public spaces such as bars and venues like the Barclays Center.

But he said at the time that while the private sector mandate requiring employees of New York-based businesses to be vaccinated remains in place, no exception will be made for Irving no matter how illogical that appears.

Adams, who sacked more than 1,000 city workers who refused to get the vaccine, said such an exception would "send the wrong message."

At a public appearance on Sunday the mayor was heckled by a fan asking why Irving can't play.

"Listen, you're right," Adams shot back. "Kyrie can play tomorrow. Get vaccinated."

Zverev Crashes Out of ATP Indian Wells Masters

INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - World Number three Alexander Zverev crashed out of the ATP Indian Wells Masters on Sunday, beaten in his opening match 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2) by 39th-ranked American Tommy Paul.

The 24-year-old Olympic gold medallist from Germany was playing his first tournament since he was disqualified from the Mexico Open in Acapulco after losing his temper and repeatedly smashing his racquet against the umpire's chair.

Zverev was fined US\$40,000 for verbal abuse and unsportsmanlike conduct. A further \$25,000 fine and an eight-week ban followed, but both were suspended provided he does not incur a further code violation for 12 months.

After dropping a first set, in which Paul mercifully punished his second serve, Zverev leveled the match with the only break of the second set in the 10th game.

After holding his serve to love three times and breaking Paul in the sixth game of the third set, Zverev appeared to on his way to victory.

But the German immediately gave the break back with a disastrous game that featured four double faults.

Paul took the set to a tiebreak that he dominated with the same aggression he showed in the opening set.

Man City Drop Points at Palace

LONDON (Dispatches) - Leaders Manchester City were held to a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace on Monday as the Premier League title race took yet another dramatic twist.

With nearest challengers Liverpool having cut the gap to three points with their victory at Brighton & Hove Albion on Saturday, the champions dominated in the first half at Selhurst Park, but could not find a breakthrough.

The post was rattled in the first half by Joao Cancelo and again after the break by Kevin De Bruyne as City continued to be frustrated.

Pep Guardiola's men threw everything at Palace late on, but could not find a winner as they dropped two valuable points in their quest to make it four league titles in the last five seasons.

The stalemate means Liverpool can close to within one point of City if they win their game in hand against Arsenal on Wednesday, raising expectations the title race will go right to the wire.

Palace stretched their unbeaten run to five games in all competitions to stay 11th.

Raducanu Exits Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS (Dispatches) - Seventh-seeded Andrey Rublev pushed his ATP winning streak to 10 matches on Sunday, shaking off a slow start to beat Dominik Koepfer 7-5, 6-4 in his second-round opener at the Indian Wells WTA and ATP Masters.

Rublev fell 4-2 down before breaking 51st-ranked Koepfer twice to pocket the first set.

He finished with 32 winners against the German and won 11 of 15 points at the net to put the match away.

But the second set was also close. After breaking for a 4-3 lead, Rublev promptly surrendered his serve, but he broke Koepfer to lead 5-4 and then survived three break points to close it out with a service winner.

Nadal Becomes Latest to Pull out of Miami Open



MIAAMI GARDENS (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal has become the latest big draw to pull out of the Miami Open.

Nadal is a five-time finalist at the event but hasn't played in Miami since 2017. His absence means that neither of the winners of this year's first Grand Slam event will be in the tournament; he won the Australian Open for his record-setting 21st major title, and women's champion Ashleigh

Barty also withdrew earlier this month.

Nadal's decision came three days after Novak Djokovic announced that he wouldn't be playing at Indian Wells or Miami because he is unvaccinated and can't travel to the United States.

"Rafa will certainly be missed. He has so many fans here in South Florida, and we hope to see him back in Miami next year," Miami tournament director James Blake said.

Nadal, who is playing Indian Wells, is currently ranked No. 4 in the world. He was a Miami finalist in 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2007 -- with all those events taking place at the tournament's former South Florida home on Key Biscayne.

The Miami Open starts March 21.

Suarez and Fabregas Support Messi and Neymar After PSG Jeers

MADRID (Dispatches) - Luis Suarez and Cesc Fabregas defended their friends and former Barcelona teammates Lionel Messi and Neymar after the pair were jeered by Paris Saint-Germain fans on Sunday.

Messi and Neymar were both whistled during PSG's 3-0 win over Bordeaux at Parc des Princes as supporters vented their frustration following the team's Champions League collapse at the hands of Real Madrid last week.

Suarez, who used to live next to Messi and was part of the deadly 'MSN' front three with Messi and Neymar at Barca, posted a picture of the three of them on Instagram. He wrote: "As always football has no memory. Always with you @LeoMessi @Neymarjr. Love you both so much."

Fabregas also played with Messi and Neymar at Barcelona and wrote on Twitter: "Football has no memory whatsoever... it's a shame. Always with you brothers".

Despite their Champions League disappointment, PSG sit 15 points clear at the top of Ligue 1. "This was a sad afternoon," said coach Mauricio Pochettino. "Nobody who loves PSG and the club colours can like what happened."

"After the frustration of going out in the Champions League, there's sadness. There's no other way to describe it."



Benzema Scores Twice But Hurts Calf

PALMA (Dispatches) - Karim Benzema grabbed an assist and two late goals but also hurt his calf as Real Madrid defeated Mallorca 3-0 on Monday for their fourth consecutive La Liga win.

Carlo Ancelotti's side moved on to 66 points from 28 games, extending their lead at the top to ten points over second-placed Sevilla, who were held to a 1-1 stalemate at Rayo Vallecano on Sunday, a sixth draw in their last eight league matches.

Never has a team that led the La Liga standings with ten or more points failed to win the title at the end of the season.

Vinicius Jr opened the scoring in the 55th minute after a defender lost the ball on the edge of the box and Benzema set up the Brazilian to strike.

Vinicius was then pushed inside the area 22 minutes later and Benzema converted the resulting penalty.

The French striker scored again in the 82nd minute with a header from a Marcelo cross, but got hurt in the process and asked to be substituted, pointing to his left leg.

Real Madrid also lost Rodrygo to an injury after a studs up challenge from defender Antonio Raimon on the right foot of the young Brazilian winger.

The player was carried off the pitch by Real Madrid's doctors, unable to put his foot on the floor. Raimon was shown a yellow card.

