

Health Ministry Announced on Friday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic In Iran Increased to **140,528** With **36** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Ambassador to Qatar Hamid Reza Dehghani Said in a Tweet That Qatar Government Agreed to Annul the Issuance of Special and Diplomatic Visa Between Tehran and Doha


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Iran Warns Against Politicization of UNHRC Membership

NEW YORK (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said in the UN General Assembly's Thursday session to vote on suspending Russia from Human Rights Council that the membership in the body should not be politicized.

Takht Ravanchi said that Iran sees the draft resolution to suspend Russia's membership in the UNHRC as politically-motivated and damaging the UN's impartiality.

Iran attaches considerable importance to improving and safeguarding human rights, the Iranian diplomat said, adding that using the UN's human rights mechanism for political goals contrasted with the principle of universality and non-selective addressing of human rights issues.

Human rights should not be victimized for short-sighted political considerations, he noted.

UNHRC membership should not be based on politics, he underlined, adding that sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be fully respected and security of civilians should be ensured. He also voiced deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Ukraine which has drawn international attention.

Tehran, Moscow Hold Major Economic Forum To Expand Ties

MOSCOW (PressTV) - Russia has hosted a major economic forum attended by a large Iranian delegation as the two countries seek to expand their trade and economic cooperation.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said in a Thursday report that representatives from more than 300 Russian businesses and companies had attended the gathering held earlier in the day at the conference hall of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation (TPPRF) in Moscow. An Iranian economic delegation attended the meeting which authorities said was aimed at studying new capacities for economic and trade cooperation between Iran and Russia, said the report.

It said that more than 53 Iranian private businesses were represented in the forum where TPPRF President Sergey Katyrin highlighted the importance of the close cooperation between Iran and Russia in light of the current political and economic circumstances in the region.

Russia has been facing a raft of economic sanctions from the US and European countries since it started a military operation in Ukraine in February.

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Gov't Top Priority Is to Create Hope for Future



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi says the discourse of the Popular Government is to create change and try to bring the current situation as close as possible to the desired situation, stating that the document of the government's desired change is based on the Declaration of the Second Step of the Islamic Revolution.

Speaking in a meeting with elites, clerics, martyrs' families, war veterans and people of Alborz Province on Thursday afternoon, Raisi said: "In the last 40 years, many steps have been taken for the development of this region, but there is a longer way to go".

He further stated, "The main strategy of today is the system of creating hope for the future, and whoever moves in this direction, moves in the direction of achieving the goal of the system".

Pointing out that today there is a very heavy responsibility on all officials in the Islamic Republic, the President stated, "Today, we must all realize that although the enemy does not want Iran to progress and become strong, but our duty is to redouble our efforts".

Raisi then added that the main focus of our efforts should be to strengthen the components of power of the Islamic Republic, noting, "Today, science, economics and the support and presence of the people are the most important components of power". The President described one of the most important factors in strengthening the people's trust in the system to improve the efficiency of the administrative system.

In another part of his speech, Raisi said, "The discourse of the Popular Government is to create change and try to bring the current situation as close as possible to the desired situation".

"It's not a difficult task to describe and explain justice, but it is important that people feel in practice that justice has been done," he said.

He went on to say, "The government will focus on the will of the people in the path of justice, and wherever the will and interests of the people are in conflict with the will of some special group, the public will take precedence".

Emphasizing that the people are dissatisfied with corruption and discrimination, and therefore the government should base its work on eliminating corruption and discrimination in the country's administrative system, the president said, "The government should act according to justice and the people should closely monitor the government's performance".

In another part of his speech, the President mentioned paying attention to the dignity and improving the quality of teachers' work, paying attention to providing appropriate education for students in the education system and paying attention to the education provided in kindergartens, among other government concerns in the education system.

Raisi went on to describe the government's plan for economic reform, saying, "The day we took over the government, the \$8 billion in the 1400 budget for the payment of the preferred currency was almost gone, but the government did its best to manage the supply of basic goods without shock to the market, in which the Supreme Leader also helped the government a lot".

The President added, "There was no lack of coordination in this regard in different parts of the government and the government's position in this regard was quite clear from the beginning. The economic team of the 13th government is working in high coordination to implement government policies and strengthen the national economy".

Raisi also talked about the document of the transformation of the Popular Government, saying, "16 think tanks and more than 500 experts in various fields gave expert opinions about this document".

The President also clarified about the government's plan to regulate the automobile industry, saying, "During my visit to Iran Khodro, I emphasized that the monopoly of the automobile industry in the country should be reformed as soon as possible".

In the last part of his speech, Raisi emphasized the need for consensus and participation of all members of society to bring about change in the country.

The President stated, "We expect the university, as the think tank of the government, to formulate the system of the country's problems and the seminars to offer a solution to solve the country's problems by relying on dynamic and civilization-building jurisprudence".

Foreign Media Claims on IAEA Report Inaccurate, Biased

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat says some foreign media claims about the latest report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the verification of the implementation of the 2015 Iran deal are "inaccurate, incorrect and biased".

Speaking to reporters, Iran's acting ambassador to the IAEA Mohammad Reza Ghaebi said the report was only a technical update presented by the agency's director-general on monitoring the implementation of the multilateral deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which endorses it.

He said the report was drawn up to inform the agency's members about the latest developments and new technical information on Iran's nuclear activities.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

Nuclear Day, Day of "Pride"

Iranians every year marks the National Nuclear Technology Day on April 9 as one of the greatest achievements of the country and the Islamic Revolution and they are proud of this achievement which was attained by its scientists.

In April 2006, the then Iranian government declared April 9 as the National Nuclear Technology Day, after Iran produced its first batch of low enriched uranium required for the production of fuel for nuclear reactors at the Natanz nuclear facility.

This year on April 9, the country is to mark the 16th anniversary of National Nuclear Technology Day and it is supposed new nuclear achievements to be unveiled by President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and the Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami. Eslami on April 6 announced that the country is to unveil new nuclear technology achievements.

He said that trouble-making, unwillingness, and lack of cooperation by other countries have led the AEOI to develop technologies by employing the Iranian youth's knowledge and efforts.

Eslami noted that as in the previous years, this year's commemoration of the National Nuclear Technology Day would see announcement of the new 20-year comprehensive document for nuclear energy development and various achievements, including in radiopharmaceuticals, nonthermal plasma, laser, and control and photographing technologies.

He underlined that the nuclear fuel cycle in Iran, from the mine to the produced disks, was totally domestic and Iran has broken the monopoly in this industry.

On the eve of this great historic day in the country, once again Western media with some controversial and fake reports have tried to overshadow this day through creating Iranophobia.

Iranians rejected some foreign media claims about the latest report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the verification of the implementation of the 2015 Iran deal are "inaccurate, incorrect and biased".

Summarizing a confidential report to the IAEA member states, Reuters said on Wednesday that Iran has moved all its machines that make centrifuge parts from its mothballed workshop at Karaj to its sprawling Natanz site, just six weeks after it set up another site at Isfahan to make the same parts.

The report added that on April 4, "agency inspectors verified that these machines remained under agency seal at this location in Natanz and, therefore, were not operating."

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Iran Posts \$4.4b of Trade Deficit for Year to March

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian customs administration (IRICA) has updated figures related to the country's annual foreign trade as it posts a trade deficit of \$4.4 billion for the calendar year to March 20.

IRICA figures published on Thursday showed that Iranian trade, excluding oil and gas, reached a total of \$101.6 billion over the last calendar year, an increase of 38% compared to the year to March 2021. Shipments rose 12.4% year on year in volume terms to 163.9 million metric tons (mt), showed the figures.

IRICA spokesman Rouhollah Latifi said that Iranian non-oil exports had increased 40% year on year in the year to March to reach a total value of \$48.6 billion.

Overseas shipments had increased by 9% in volume terms to 122.7 million mt, Latifi told the semi-official ISNA news agency. Imports into Iran reached over \$53 billion in the year to late March, an increase of 36% compared to the previous year, said the IRICA official, adding that imports had risen by 22% in volume terms over the same period to stand at 41.1 million mt. The figures come as economic experts have hailed the unprecedented surge in Iranian non-oil exports over the past calendar year, saying it is a sign of the country's growing resilience to the impacts of the US sanctions.

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SMA Medicine Being Developed in Iran for First Time

TEHRAN (IP) - Head of the Food and Drug Administration of Iran said that the medicine for the treatment of patients with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) will be developed in Iran for the first time this year.

SMA is an inherited disease that affects nerves and muscles, causing muscles to become increasingly weak. SMA is a genetic condition that causes muscle weakness and atrophy (when muscles get smaller).

SMA can affect children's ability to crawl, walk, sit up, and control head movements.

All Roots of Terror Knife Attack in Mashhad To Be Identified

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi says the Takfiri terror groups behind the "heinous terrorist attack" at the holy shrine of Imam Reza have been tracked down and will surely be identified.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Vahidi described the stabbing attack as a "heinous terrorist operation" against three clerics at one of the holiest sites in Iran and strongly condemned it.

The minister said all the roots of the "indiscriminate" terror attack, along with the currents that gave directions, have been tracked down and the perpetrators will definitely be identified.

Two Iranian cleric lost their lives and one other was wounded in the stabbing attack at the courtyard of the holy shrine of the eighth Shia Imam in Khorasan Razavi Province on Tuesday, the third day of the fasting month of Ramadan. The assailant was arrested immediately.

The injured clerics were transferred to the hospital.

Vahidi also rejected speculation about the existence of a link between the attack and Afghan nationals in Iran.

He added that Daesh and other Takfiri currents have been created by the US and some Western countries, warning that those spreading such an ideology will certainly be dealt with.

An official investigation is still underway into the case.

The assailant was, however, identified in media reports as Abdollatif Moradi, a 21-year-old Uzbek who illegally entered Iran through Pakistan last year and resided in Mashhad. He was arrested at the scene of the attack.

Videos circulated in the media show that he was influenced by Takfiri and Wahhabi ideology.



Vahidi further praised the common civilization and deep-rooted ties between Iran and Afghanistan.

"The enemy is trying to exploit the religious and ethnic differences among friendly nations but this act will lead nowhere. The best youths of Afghanistan have lost their lives in confronting the Takfiri groups," he said.

"The Afghan people expelled the United States from their country with humiliation. The recent act will not create any doubt on the status of the Afghan nation," Vahidi said.

The Iranian minister further appreciated those who condemned the terrorist attack and said, "We expect all those whose voices are heard to condemn this act. We do not expect the West and the United States to do so because they themselves have created this mentality and their refusal to condemn [the incident] shows that they support these ideas."

Tehran, Baghdad Stress Implementation Of Bilateral Agreements

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq discussed bilateral relations, Ukraine conflict as well as regional developments in a phone call on Friday.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein held a telephone conversation on Friday morning.

The two sides exchanged congratulations on Nowruz as well as the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan while the two also discussed some topics of mutual interest, including bilateral relations, regional developments and Vienna talks between Iran and the P4+1.

Presenting a report on the latest developments in Iraq, the Iraqi Foreign Minister referred to his recent visit to Moscow and his talks with the Russian Foreign Minister, and reviewed the developments in Ukraine.

While congratulating the holy month of Ramadan, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran stressed the need to focus on dialogue and a diplomatic solution to resolve the Ukraine crisis and considered addressing the origins of the current crisis as key to lasting peace and stability in the Eurasian region.

The two sides also reviewed the latest steps taken in the framework of bilateral relations and stressed the need to speed up the implementation of all previous agreements.

Amir-Abdollahian further invited Fuad Hussein to visit Iran, which was welcomed by his Iraqi counterpart.

FM Calls for Concerted Efforts to Reach Political Solution in Ukraine Crisis

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister has called for concerted efforts to reach a political solution to end the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, reiterating Tehran's stance of rejecting wars and sanctions.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a telephone conversation with his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjarto, the Iranian Foreign Ministry reported.

During the conversation, Amir-Abdollahian referred to the war between Russia and Ukraine and the Western-led sanctions on Moscow, saying the Islamic Republic rejects both wars and sanctions.

He also thanked Hungary for its humanitarian role in facilitating the transfer of Iranians living in Ukraine to Iran.

The two foreign ministers also discussed bilateral relations and the latest developments over the Vienna talks on the revival of the Iran deal of 2015.

Amir-Abdollahian offered his congratulations on the victory of the ruling Fidesz party in the Hungarian parliamentary elections.

He said Tehran is ready to expand its relations with Budapest and implement the agreements inked during the two countries' joint economic commission meeting in December.



Szjijarto, for his part, invited Amir-Abdollahian to visit Hungary.

He underscored his country's commitment to expanding cooperation with Iran and stressed the need to implement the agreements reached

between the two countries.

At the head of an economic delegation, Szijjarto visited Tehran last December, when the two sides signed several cooperation agreements.

Elsewhere, Amir-Abdollahian restated Iran's determination on reaching a "good and sustainable agreement" through the Vienna talks if "the American side is realistic."

Pointing to Iran's initiatives, he said important progress has been made at the talks, but certain issues remain unresolved between Tehran and Washington.

Szjijarto expressed hope that an agreement would be struck through a constructive approach by all sides.

Iran's constructive approach with the aim of reaching a final deal is very valuable, he added.

China, Russia, E3 Have Constructive Stances on Vienna Talks

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that China, Russia and three European participants of the nuclear deal had constructive stances, but the US should adopt a realistic approach.

In phone conversation on Thursday, Amir-Abdollahian and his Serbian counterpart Nikola Selakovic discussed bilateral, regional and global issues, including Ukraine crisis and the talks in Vienna to revive the Iran nuclear deal.

The Iranian top diplomat expressed hope that the ties between Iran and Serbia would further improve and expand by holding joint economic commission.

He highlighted the presence of Iranian students in Serbia and called on more attention to tourism between the two countries.

On the war in Ukraine and NATO provocation, he said that the real way out of this situation is only diplomatic path and dialogue and preventing the continuation and spillover of the war.

He also expressed objection to war and unilateral sanctions.

The Serbian foreign minister promised that his country would do its best to expand ties with Iran, including on agriculture and student exchange.

He also underscored protection of Ukraine's territorial integrity and leveraging diplomacy to safeguard peace.

On the talks in Vienna to remove sanctions against Iran, Amir-Abdollahian said that the Islamic Republic of Iran wanted a good, strong and sustainable deal, but the American side should adopt a realistic approach instead of excessive demands and obstruction.

He also hailed the role of EU and its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora in the talks.

Development of Chabahar Port To Reinforce Regional Link

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Director General of Ports and Maritime Organization of Sistan and Baluchestan believes development of Chabahar Port will reinforce the regional link and it can connect trade relations with the countries in the region especially with Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries.



Behrouz Aqaei said that the goal behind the Islamic Republic of Iran's determination for developing Chabahar Port and Makran coast and also eastern axis is to improve the trade links with the countries in the region especially with Afghanistan and the Central Asian states and Chabahar Port can function as an important and strategic point in a multidimensional goods and passenger transfer between Iran, India, Afghanistan, countries in the region and the Central Asian states.

He stated that success of Iran and India in their joint cooperation for developing Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar Port as a project can turn into a successful model for more cooperation between the two states.

Aqaei added that Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran and Indian state-run company India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) which is active under Indian Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways have had short and long term cohesive cooperation in developing the role of Chabahar Port in the international trade.

He noted that during former President Hassan Rouhani's visit to India in February 2018, the contract for short term lease was signed between PMOI and IPGL and following the agreement the port operation started by the Indian company in February 2019 which still continues.

Aqaei went on to say that the Indian side is to have \$85m investment for providing strategic installations in equipping the wharf of the phase one of development project of Shahid Beheshti Port of Chabahar. He added that \$24m budget for heavy strategic equipment has been provided including for 6 mobile harbor cranes.

He then pointed to the first shipment of India's wheat to Afghanistan in 2017 via Chabahar and said Chabahar will turn into a key transit corridor for transportation which can connect India to Afghanistan and other Central Asian states via Iran.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

شناسه آگهی: ۱۲۹۴۳۹۸

TENDER NO.:

48-32-0025001

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participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their " [Intention To Participate](#)" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 35,511 EURO or 9,728,475,829 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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Dr. Maroufkhani, CEO of Hormozgan Steel Co.:

Developmental Projects a Bridge Towards Job Creation and Production Rise

Dr. Ataollah Maroufkhani, the CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company, in an interview with Public Relations reporter while congratulating Nowruz, said: "Under the leadership of Mobarakeh Steel Company, the required infrastructures for materializing the increase in production and use of knowledge-based companies and job creation has been provided at Hormozgan Steel Company and We are ready to play a double role in fulfilling the slogan of the year and following the recommendations of the Supreme Leader." During the interview, he highlighted major performances of HOSCO in the past Iranian calendar year (1400). Maroufkhani described 1400 as a good year with high added value for Hormozgan Steel Company and said that sanctions and coronavirus were two obstacles in way of production, which were largely removed by the formation of specialized working groups, but the supply of electricity and gas in 1400 were major and unprecedented obstacles for production. And if these obstacles were removed by the related authorities and foresight during former governments, the annual production record would have been materialized as schedule.



the same period last year

Production of 1,713,348 tons of sponge iron in 1400

The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company further pointed to the very good performance of this company in the production of sponge iron and the achievements of the company in the direct reduction sector and said: "In 1400, despite all halts and problems, we saw 3.8% growth in production of this product and we produced 1,713,348 tons of sponge iron." He noted: "The damages of energy shortage also affected the direct reduction unit and the company missed production of 38,000 tons in this unit but despite this problem, the company could improve its annual record of production and which had been set in 1397 with 1.691m tons."

Materialization of Production of 1.442m Tons of Slab

Touching upon the amount of slab production and significance of electricity provision in the steel industries, the CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company said: "Last year, we had 1,442,000 tons of slab production which is considered a very good number for the production of this product due to the number of halts and power blackouts. We had to do some shutdowns in the summer due to power outages, and we lost 80,000 tons of production due to shutdowns, and if it were not for these halts, we would have reached 1,700,000 tons of slab production. Production due to power outages indicates the need for sustainable energy supply for steel industries as parent industries. He then added: "We seek to provide sustainable electricity supply as the main requirement of production by launching a dedicated power plant for Hormozgan Steel Company. Of course, this will take 2 to 3 years, so we ask the officials to provide their utmost assistance in energy supply in 1401 to materialize production and assistance to the country's economy. Maroufkhani termed the quality of Hormozgan Steel Company's slab production rival-less, adding: "Hormozgan steel slab with 98.75% quality is one of the best slabs produced in the country which can compete with global brands."

Various annual, monthly and daily records in Slab and sponge iron productions

The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company called the year 1400 a year for various records in this company and stated these records as follows:

- Annual record for sponge iron in Module A, 85,894 tons
- Annual record of sponge iron in Module B, 854854 tons
- Annual production of sponge iron in a total of two modules amounting to 1,713,348 tons
- Daily record of sponge iron in Module A, on 12/26/1400 amounting to 2968 tons
- Daily record of sponge iron in Module B, on 12/17/1400 amounting to 2952 tons
- Daily production record of sponge iron total of two modules on 12/17/1400 amounting to 5841 tons
- Monthly decrease record in refractory consumption in December with consumption of 5.38 kg per ton of melt
- The daily record of slab production on 11/10/1400 in the amount of 6597 tons
- Monthly production record of slabs in December amounting to 147591 tons
- Monthly production Record of slabs in October amounting to 146,106 tons
- Monthly record number of melts discharged from furnace No. 2 to * 629 * melts in October
- Monthly record of the number of melts discharged from electric arc furnaces at the rate of * 1235 * melts in October
- Monthly record of the number of melts cast in the amount of * 1240 * melts in October
- Monthly record of slab production of 146,106 tons in October
- Record monthly production of sponge iron in May at 163,523 tons
- 0.22% increase in slab production in the spring of 1400 compared to

Developmental Projects a Bridge to job creation and increase in production

The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company further referred to the beginning of the development projects of Hormozgan Steel Company and said:

Hormozgan province has a high capacity for investment and implementation of developmental projects in the field of steel industry and HOSCO with the support of Mobarakeh Steel Company was able to start some of its developmental projects in 1400. Referring to four major developmental projects, including the construction of the third direct resuscitation module, the construction of the second industrial gas production unit, the construction of sponge iron storage silos and the construction of the mega direct resuscitation mega module of Simin Hormoz, which was announced in February, he said: "Development in Hormozgan Steel Company has not happened since its inception and by exploiting these development projects, which has started with an investment of 100,000 billion rials, a new life has been given to the body of this company and by exploiting development projects to eliminate Deprivation will help in Hormozgan Province."

He pointed to the need to pay attention to the issue of staff treatment and said: "With the help of God Almighty, we were able to implement supplementary health insurance for all staff and all employees and their families can benefit from it." Dr. Maroufkhani pointed to the establishment of a special treatment fund for contract workers in Hormozgan Steel Company and said: "It was necessary to address this issue among our colleagues in contracting companies, and because this fund did not exist in the past, so our colleagues have many problems in treatment." They were and we thank God that we were able to implement this issue in Hormozgan Steel. The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company stated: "In 1400, we improved the salaries and benefits of the contractor's colleagues and by distributing livelihood and opportunity packages, we were able to define and implement measures for employee satisfaction and attachment."

Record of 61% Annual Revenues at HOSCO



The CEO of the company then pointed to the records set by the company in the sales and said in 1400, the company could sell 1.42m tons of slab and increased its revenues to 215876 tomans which shows 61% growth comparing to the preceding year.

Indigenizing Strategic Parts

Maroufkhani reiterated that indigenization is one of the important goals of HOSCO and said the company could act coherently in 1400 and now 68% of its required parts,

equipment and raw materials are home-made. He added that the policy of the company is to trust the domestic part and equipment manufacturers as well as cooperation with universities and knowledge-based companies and will provide required support.

Winning Silver Statue of Organizational Excellence

He went on to say that the most important achievement of the company last year was winning the silver statue during the 19th National Conference on Organizational Excellence and said this achievement showed that the company is on the right track.

Supporting sports in the province

Maroufkhani further pointed out the importance of employees' health and society from the perspective of Hormozgan Steel Company and said: "Supporting workers' sports is of great importance to us." Hormozgan Steel in 1400 by expanding its support for workers' sports from 35 teams in different sports and different age categories with more than 1000 athletes participated in various events and competitions and won various honors in the province and country.

He also referred to the honors achieved in the field of sports and described these honors as follows:

- The championship of the beach soccer team in the competitions of the youth beach soccer premier league of the country
- The pistol team wins the first division league of the country
- The championship of the liver team in the championship of the workers of the country
- Omid football team ascends to the league of one country
- Winning the third title of the first division futsal league of the country
- Winning the third title of the first division league of the country's youth futsal
- Winning the third title of the first division league of the country's men's air rifle
- Won the third title in a men's wheelchair basketball league
- Adult football team advances to the second stage of the three-nation league
- Under-21 football team qualifying for a national league
- Under-14 football team championship in Bandar Abbas city competitions
- The championship of the youth football team in the league competitions of Hormozgan province
- The championship of the youth futsal team in the competitions of Hormozgan province
- Sending the workers' futsal team to the World Workers' Championship in Athens, Greece

Social Responsibility Task of HOSCO in 1400

Dr. Ataollah Maroufkhani pointed to the fulfillment of social responsibility of Hormozgan Steel Company in a recent year and said: in addition to sports, which is one of the social responsibilities of the company, the company pays attention to other social responsibilities and feels the duty of citizenship to the surrounding community as one It is considered as one of the strategic goals in Hormozgan Steel Company.

He said: Hormozgan Steel Company in order to play the role of its social responsibilities in the province as one of the main partners in the Persian Gulf Development and Infrastructure Development Company for the treatment and transfer of municipal wastewater from Bandar Abbas to the Persian Gulf Mineral and Metal Industries Special Zone.

In order to address the concerns of the honorable and noble people of Bandar Abbas for many years.

The CEO of Hormozgan Steel stated the most important measures taken in this field as follows:

- Donation of 111780 tons of liquid oxygen to hospitals in Bandar Abbas for the use of coronary patients
- Donation of 5,000 health packages to the victims of the Hormozgan earthquake
- Donation of 1,200 relief tents for the earthquake-stricken areas of Hormozgan province
- Donation of nitrogen to hospitals in Bandar Abbas for the use of transplant patients

Assistance to Ghadir International

Foundation to prepare and distribute ten thousand food packages Memorandum of Understanding on the Mehraban Iran Scanning Project with the aim of honoring and supporting 5,000 orphans under the auspices of the Hormozgan Province Relief Committee Assist the Ministry of Health in launching a national anti-coronation information campaign

Participation in the release of involuntary crime prisoners Distribution of 10 million masks to mourning delegations in the Muharram decade, hospitals and medical staff as a vow of Hormozgan steel masks

U.S. Senate Votes to End Normal Trade Ties With Russia

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. Senate voted unanimously Thursday to end normal trade relations with Moscow and codify the ban on Russian oil, as the White House ratcheted up pressure on President Vladimir Putin over his invasion of Ukraine.

The legislation, which would enable Western nations to inflict steep tariff hikes on Russian goods, now heads back to the House, which is expected to take it up later in the day.

President Joe Biden announced the step in a speech last month arguing that Russia must "pay the price" for the bloodshed in its ex-Soviet neighbor, where it has denied accusations of committing atrocities.



Turkish Court Halts Khashoggi Trial

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - A Turkish court on Thursday halted the trial of Saudi suspects over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and transferred it to Saudi Arabia, a ruling that drew condemnation from rights groups and comes as Ankara mends ties with Riyadh.

The decision was expected after the prosecutor called last week for the trial in absentia of 26 Saudi suspects to be transferred from Istanbul to Riyadh. The justice minister later endorsed the request, which was initially sought by Riyadh.

Khashoggi's killing at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul four years ago raised a global outcry and put pressure on Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.



UN General Assembly Suspends Russia From Human Rights Council



UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The UN General Assembly voted Thursday to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council as punishment for the invasion of Ukraine.

Of the 193 members of the assembly, 93 voted in favor of suspension as proposed by the United States while 24 voted against and 58 abstained, suggesting weakening international unity against Russia at the United Nations.

It was the second ever suspension of a country from the council. Libya was the first, in 2011.

Suspension required two-thirds of the votes for and against; the abstentions did not count.

The countries voting against included China, a Moscow ally which has steadfastly abstained from criticizing the invasion. Others were Iran, the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan and communist Cuba, as well as Russia itself, Belarus and Syria.

Despite pressure from Moscow for a no vote, several African countries only abstained, such as South Africa and Senegal. Also abstaining were Brazil, Mexico and India.

The U.S. argues that this punishment -- suspending Russia from the Geneva-based organization that is the UN's main human rights monitor -- is more than symbolic and in fact intensifies Russia's isolation after the assault on Ukraine that began February 24.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has also called for Russia to be expelled from the UN Security Council "so it cannot block decisions about its own aggression, its own war."

But Washington has admitted there is little anyone can do about Russia's position on the Security Council, where it has a veto.

More than 11 million people have been displaced since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24.

The world has been outraged by images of scores of civilians apparently executed and left in mass graves in areas formerly controlled by Russian troops. This carnage has led to new rounds of sanctions against Russia.

Journalists including from AFP last weekend found corpses in civilian clothes, some with their hands bound in the town of Bucha outside Kyiv.

"The images out of Bucha and devastation across Ukraine require us to now match our words with action," U.S. ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Monday as she pressed for Russia's suspension from the rights council.

"We cannot let a member state that is subverting every principle we hold dear to continue to participate" in the council, she said.

The Kremlin has denied Russian forces killed civilians, and alleged that the images of dead bodies in Bucha were "fakes."

The UN Human Rights Council was founded in 2006 and is composed of 47 member states chosen by the General Assembly.

Pakistan Top Court Rules Against PM Over Dissolving Parliament

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled on Thursday that Prime Minister Imran Khan's move to dissolve parliament was unconstitutional and called for lawmakers to return in two days, a decision that could spell the end of his premiership.

The former cricket star had moved to dissolve the lower chamber ahead of a no-confidence vote against him that he had looked destined to lose. The court said in its judgment that the vote would now go ahead.

The constitutional crisis has threatened economic and social stability in the nuclear-armed nation of 220 million people, with the rupee currency hitting all-time lows earlier on Thursday and foreign exchange reserves tumbling.

When opposition parties united against Khan last week to push for the no-confidence motion, the deputy speaker of parliament, a member of Khan's party, threw out the motion, ruling it was part of a foreign conspiracy and unconstitutional.

Thursday's ruling could spell the premature end of Khan's tenure in a country where no elected leader has finished their full term in office.

Yemen President Cedes Powers to Council

ADEN (Dispatches) - Yemen's president delegated power to a presidential council and dismissed his deputy on Thursday as Saudi Arabia moved to strengthen an anti-Houthi alliance amid U.N.-led efforts to revive negotiations to end a bitter seven-year war.

Riyadh announced \$3 billion in financial aid to the Saudi-backed government after the announcement by President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. It called for talks with the Houthi group that controls the north and has been battling the Saudi-led coalition.

Yemen's warring sides, in a major breakthrough, agreed last week on a two-month truce that began Saturday, the first since 2016. The deal eased a coalition blockade on areas held by the Houthis, who ousted Hadi's government from the capital, Sanaa, in late 2014.

"I irrevocably delegate to the Presidential Leadership Council my full powers in accordance with the constitution and the Gulf Initiative and its executive mechanism," Hadi, who is based in Riyadh, said on state television.

Hadi took the helm of a crumbling state a decade ago in a Persian Gulf-backed transition plan after protests that brought down President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was later killed.

Analysts say the new council aims to unify anti-Houthi ranks by giving more parties a seat at the table. With Hadi effectively out of the equation and his controversial deputy dismissed, the hope is the Houthis may also be more amenable.

Houthi chief negotiator Mohammed Abdulsalam criticized the move as a farce and a "desperate attempt to restructure the ranks of mercenaries to push them towards further escalation".

Riyadh, which has struggled to exit the war in Yemen, urged the new council to negotiate with the Houthis under U.N. auspices "for a final and comprehensive solution".

The 69-year-old, who steered Pakistan to cricket World Cup victory in 1992, came to power in 2018 after rallying the country behind his vision of a corruption-free, prosperous nation respected on the world stage.

But it appears that the firebrand nationalist's fame and charisma may not be enough to keep him in power.

If Khan were to lose the no-confidence vote, the opposition could nominate its own prime minister and hold power until August 2023, by which date fresh elections have to be held.

The opposition has said it wants early elections, but only after delivering a political defeat to Khan and passing legislation it says is required to ensure the next polls are free and fair.

Pakistan's election commission said on Thursday that the earliest it could hold the ballot was October.

The crisis is a worry for economic policymakers in Pakistan, that is in the middle of an International Monetary Fund bailout.

Russia Facing Most Difficult Situation in Three Decades

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia is facing its most difficult situation in three decades due to unprecedented Western sanctions, but foreign attempts to isolate it from the global economy will fail, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said.

Western countries are progressively broadening an array of economic sanctions imposed to try to force Russia to end its military operation in Ukraine and withdraw its forces.

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

"No doubt, the current situation could be called the most difficult in three decades for Russia," Mishustin told the Duma, or lower house of parliament. "Such sanctions were not used even in the darkest times of the Cold War."

Western sanctions have already cut Russia off from the global financial network and left a number of its top banks with no access to the international SWIFT banking messaging system, while some traders have started to refuse Russian oil cargoes, intensifying pressure on Moscow's finances.

Before the recent sanctions, Russia planned to run a budget surplus of 1.3 trillion roubles (\$17 billion) this

year, equal to 1% of gross domestic product. On Thursday, Mishustin said Russia would spend all it will earn this year on state aid.

The government has so far pledged over 1 trillion roubles in anti-crisis support to businesses, on social payments and to families with children, of which 250 billion roubles are to be spent on state aid for the Russian Railways.

Russia has introduced capital controls in retaliation for the sanctions, making it nearly impossible for foreign investors to sell their assets, both industrial and financial, if they decide to pull out of the country.

"If you have to leave, production should continue working as it provides jobs. Our citizens work there," Mishustin said.

The Kremlin has suggested that it may nationalise assets held by Western investors who decide to depart.

As some of the companies leaving are transferring their holdings to Russian companies, Mishustin said, the situation offered scope for new business opportunities.

"Our financial system, the lifeblood of the entire economy, has held up," Mishustin said. "The stock market and the rouble are stabilising. I doubt that any other country would have withstood this. We did."



Le Pen Shrugs Off Doom-Mongering by Markets Over Sunday's Election



PARIS (Dispatches) - French far-right candidate Marine Le Pen shrugged off market jitters triggered by her good ratings ahead of Sunday's first round of the presidential election, saying her "serious" program was meant to work for voters, rather than markets.

Long unfazed by what looked like an easy path to re-election for President Emmanuel Macron, markets woke up this week as Le Pen narrowed the gap enough in opinion polls for victory to be within the margin of error.

Le Pen scoffed at what she called "doom-mongering", telling RTL radio on Thursday that her program was solid and would aim to support business and "give money back to the French" by lowering VAT as well as France's contribution to the EU budget. "The policies I want to implement are not meant for the stock markets, which will be a change from Emmanuel Macron," she said. "It's not the markets that create jobs, it's not international finance."

Macron is still ahead in all opinion polls. But his late start with a lackluster campaign has pushed even some in his camp to say a win for Le Pen could be possible.

A probable high level of abstention adds uncertainty. "There is a dynamic in favor of Marine Le Pen," said Ifop pollsters' Frederic Dabi, adding that there was a possibility that she could overtake Macron to lead the first round, though he was still ahead for now.

"The second round will be very tight," he said, adding that Macron was still the most likely winner but all would depend on which camp is better at getting the vote out. This, in turn, has pushed France's borrowing costs up as investors grow jittery over a closer-than-expected race. The premium investors demand to own French bonds instead of euro zone benchmark Germany surged in recent days to the highest level since early 2020.

France saw firm investor demand at a monthly long-term bond auction on Thursday, but the public debt management agency had to more than double the interest rate on its 10-year benchmark bond to 1.17% from only 0.52% the previous month.

Macron's campaign fought back on Thursday on the economic front.

"I want people to realise what France would be like under Marine Le Pen," Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told broadcaster Franceinfo. "There would be more inflation," he said, and more taxes to fund her plan to nationalise toll roads.

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J, balcony
marble fl
fireplace
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

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1400sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, Jacuzzi
L.balcony
yard, pkg
Fully Furn

Parsian

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Airbus Q1 Deliveries Climb 13%

PARIS (Dispatches) - European planemaker Airbus delivered between 140 and 142 aircraft in the first quarter, up almost 13% from the same period last year, industry sources said. Airbus declined comment ahead of monthly orders and deliveries data due today. The figures imply March deliveries of some 62 jets, at least some of which came from long-term storage, the sources said. Airbus is in the midst of planned production increases of single-aisle jets, but faces growing concern over manufacturing supply chains.



ADB Trims Asia Growth Forecast As Price Pressures Rise

MANILA (Dispatches) - The Asian Development Bank trimmed its 2022 growth forecast for developing Asia Wednesday as "increasing" price pressures after Russia's invasion of Ukraine threaten a recovery from Omicron surges.

Inflation across the vast region stretching from the Cook Islands in the Pacific to Kazakhstan in Central Asia was expected to gather pace as countries bounced back from the pandemic, and energy and food costs rose, it said.

In the wake of the Omicron-driven surge in coronavirus infections and the conflict in Ukraine, the Philippines-based lender lowered its 2022 economic growth forecast to 5.2 per cent.

That compares with its previous prediction in December of 5.3 per cent and the 6.9 per cent growth chalked up last year.

While the bank was optimistic the region would continue to rebound from Covid-19, chief economist Albert Park said the recovery would be "uneven" and there were "significant downside risks".

"What is certain is that the fallout from the war is an additional hurdle for economies in developing Asia which are still contending with the pandemic," Park said.

While the Caucasus and Central Asia would take a direct hit from the Ukraine crisis due to their close trade and financial links to Russia, the rest of the region would be affected indirectly through higher food and energy prices.

"Energy bills will rise for energy importers, pushing inflation up and weighing on demand," the bank said in its flagship Asian Development Outlook report.

Inflation was expected to reach 3.7 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent in 2021, which Park noted was "still well below" other parts of the world, which he partly attributed to relatively lower consumption of wheat and fewer supply chain disruptions.

But he warned that in developing Asia "price pressures are increasing and monetary authorities need to remain vigilant."

Also clouding the outlook was the U.S. Federal Reserve, which has started to raise interest rates in a bid to rein in a surge in inflation that has threatened to derail the economic recovery.

A recent solid U.S. jobs report increased expectations of an aggressive rate hike. The Asian Development Bank warned that could ignite "financial market volatility, rapid capital outflows and sharp currency depreciations".

Covid-19 still casts a shadow over developing Asia, with the risk of more deadly variants emerging and the Omicron outbreak in China threatening regional growth and supply chains, the bank said.

Countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia were expected to record the slowest growth, with 3.6 per cent in 2022, down from 5.6 per cent in 2021.

East Asia was tipped to grow 4.7 per cent, compared with last year's cracking pace of 7.6 per cent, as a slowing China grapples with a growing Covid-19 outbreak.

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka was tipped to grow 2.4 per cent — the worst performer in South Asia where the economy is expected to expand by 7.0 per cent.

Airlines Forecast Higher Fares After Energy Price Spike

PARIS (Dispatches) - Airlines will pass on rising oil prices to passengers through higher fares relatively quickly, but the spike in energy costs will worsen the industry's overall outlook in 2022, the head of the International Air Transport Association said.

Speaking after JetBlue launched a counter-bid for US budget carrier Spirit Airlines, Director General Willie Walsh also said he saw further scope for consolidation among airlines in the United States.

"It clearly took the market by surprise," Walsh told a regular industry news briefing.

"It is evidence that the financial strength of US airlines does stand out from the rest of the world," he said, adding that consumers had benefited from major investments in new products.

IATA said global passenger traffic rebounded in February as the impact of the Omicron variant retreated outside Asia. The war in Ukraine has yet to feed through into monthly data.

In February, passenger traffic stood at 54.5 per cent of levels seen in the same month of 2019, up from 50.6 per cent in January but below the 55.1 per cent seen in December. Cargo volumes were at 111.9 per cent.

Airlines are grappling with a rise in oil prices which accelerated after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a move Moscow describes as a "special military operation".

The rise has worsened an outlook already expected to include an industry-wide loss in 2022, although some airlines will make a profit as the world stages an uneven recovery, Walsh said.

In the past, the rule of thumb was that oil prices would take six months to feed through to airfares, he added.

But that could happen more quickly because of the market's dramatic volatility as well as lower-than-usual levels of forward bookings already in the system following the pandemic.

Walsh also said airlines and airports were moving to tackle staff shortages after a spike in demand, but some factors were outside their control.

Thousands of holidaymakers have seen getaways disrupted or cancelled because airlines and airports do not have enough staff to meet the recovery in demand as pandemic restrictions are eased in Europe.

"The challenge the industry faces is bringing back front line staff where they require background security checks," Walsh said, adding that a process which used to take five to six weeks is taking "much longer now".



Russia Paid Foreign Dollar Debt in Rubles Amid Default Fears

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia said it had been forced to make foreign debt payments on dollar-denominated bonds in rubles, in a new blow to its efforts to avoid a sovereign default amid unprecedented Western sanctions over the Ukraine conflict.

The announcement came on the 42nd day of Russia's military campaign in pro-Western Ukraine, with thousands killed and more than 11 million displaced as refugees or within the country in the worst refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.

The West has pummeled Russia with debilitating sanctions since President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine on February 24.

On Wednesday, the United States and EU were readying new sanctions after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky showed the UN Security Council harrowing images of violence.

The Russian finance ministry said today that it had been forced to repay US\$649.2 million to foreign debt-holders in rubles after a correspondent bank refused to execute payment instructions.

"A foreign correspondent bank refused to execute instructions for the payment" of debt on two bonds on April 4, the ministry said in a statement.

"In order to fulfil the state debt obligations of the Russian Federation," the finance ministry said it "was forced to attract a Russian financial institution to make the necessary payments."

The finance ministry did not specify if the ruble payment had been accepted.

The United States from yesterday barred Russia from making debt payments using funds held at American banks, ramping up the economic pain in Moscow. Analysts say the risk of a debt default is rising, and major ratings agencies have downgraded the country.

The Kremlin denied suggestions that Russia could default on foreign debt payments.

"Russia has all the necessary resources to service its debts," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"There are no grounds for a real default."

Timothy Ash, an emerging markets strategist at BlueBay Asset Management, said, however, that it was hard to see Russia avoiding a sovereign default.

"Putin is impoverishing Russia for years to come," he said in a note to clients.

"Default might not crash Russian markets and the economy immediately but will have devastating longer term consequences," he said, adding that investment, growth and living standards will be affected.

Some Indian Refiners Set to Cut May Saudi Oil



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - At least two Indian refiners plan to buy less Saudi oil than usual in May, after the kingdom raised the official selling price (OSP) to record highs for Asia, two sources said on Wednesday, as India increases purchases of cheap Russian crude.

India, the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer, has been hit hard by rising crude values, with pump prices in some states touching record highs.

State oil producer Saudi Aramco, the world's top oil exporter, has raised crude prices for all regions, with those to Asia hitting all-time highs.

The Middle East accounts for the bulk of India's oil imports, with Iraq and Saudi Arabia the top two suppliers to Asia's third largest economy.

The sources at the two Indian refiners declined to be named, citing confidentiality.

They did not disclose the volumes refiners would buy, and said the reductions in May would be marginal because they have to lift the amount they have committed to under annual contracts.

To mitigate the rising cost of oil imports, India has turned to Russian barrels that are available at a deep discount to the dated Brent benchmark, citing "national interests".

Some companies and countries have shunned Russian crude after the country began its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. Moscow refers to the conflict as a "special military operation".

Indian refiners have bought at least 16 million barrels of cheaper Russian oil for May loading on a delivered basis, similar to purchases for the whole of 2021, according to Reuters calculations.

The companies have mostly bought Russian Urals, a grade similar in quality to medium sour crude produced in the Middle East and West Africa, mainly Angola.

Ehsan Ul Haq, an analyst from Refinitiv, said rising purchases of Russian crude meant India would likely buy less from Middle Eastern suppliers, including spot purchases of grades such as Iraq's Basra oil.

Germany Warns Against Over-Reliance on China Trade

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - German Finance Minister Christian Lindner voiced concern over his country's heavy reliance on trade with China, saying Europe's top economy needed to "diversify" its export destinations.

"My concern is that... we have a strong economic inter-connectedness with China," Lindner said in an interview with Die Zeit weekly.

"We need to diversify international relations, including when it comes to our exports," he said.

Tensions between China and the West are on the rise following Beijing's refusal to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, whereas the European Union and the United States have imposed sweeping sanctions on Moscow.

Germany's centre-left-led government came to power in December vowing "dialogue and toughness" in its dealings with China, with a focus on human rights after the commerce-driven pragmatism of previous administrations.

"Perhaps the time has come when we should preferentially do business with those who are not only trading partners, but also want to be partners in values," Lindner said.

China was again Germany's largest trading partner in 2021, with the countries exchanging goods worth €245 billion.

A survey by the Ifo economic institute published late last month found that 46 per cent of German manufacturers source "key inputs" from China. Of those companies, "almost one in two" plans to reduce these imports in the future, it said.

Malaysia to Record 6.0% Economic Growth in 2022

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia's economy is likely to grow 6.0 per cent this year, driven by the reopening of international borders, high vaccination rates, and as the country enters the transition to the endemic phase.

Moody's Investors Service assistant vice-president/analyst Nishad Majmudar said the reopening of international borders would bolster the tourism-related services sector.

"(As for the transition into the endemic phase) over time, we expect that would support greater economic

activity and private consumption in the country. Another factor is that we do expect weaker growth in key export markets like the European Union, which accounts for about 10 per cent of exports.

"Nevertheless, Malaysia is exporting quite a diverse basket of goods whereby demand remains in the strong part of the cycle, such as electronics and oil and gas sector, which should perform well with the high prices," he told reporters at Moody's virtual media roundtable titled "Inside ASEAN: Malaysia".

However, he added there were several downside risks, including the Ukraine-Russia conflict, as well as the potential of a surge in inflation to prompt Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to react more quickly in terms of policy rate normalization.

"The Ukraine-Russia conflict is the biggest downside risk for growth. In fact, we have already marked down the forecast for a number of G20 economies, mostly in Europe but also in Asia Pacific," said Nishad, adding that BNM is expected to raise its policy rate in the second half of 2022.

He said another round of border closures due to a new variant threat would be another potential risk but the Malaysian government had indicated its interest to keep the economy open and treat Covid-19 as an endemic.

Additionally, a volatile political environment would undermine Malaysia's credibility and effectiveness of institutions, as well as threaten the stability of capital flows and investment, which could be another potential downside risk for Malaysia, he noted.

"In our assessment over the last few years, some of the political noises that we have heard, in our view, have not affected the functioning of key economic institutions such as the Finance Ministry, Bank Negara, and securities regulators.

"However, the uncertainties around the election timing and the relatively thin majority in Parliament, we think, have constrained the fiscal reform process most notably and made it difficult for any of the governments that we have seen, over the last three years, to focus on some of these reforms," said Nishad.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	18:50
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:11
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:38

60. "Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?"
61. "And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way?"
Surah 36. Ya-sin (60 - 61)

China State Refiners Shun New Russian Oil Trades

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - China's state refiners are honoring existing Russian oil contracts but avoiding new ones despite steep discounts, heeding Beijing's call for caution as western sanctions mount against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, six people told Reuters.

State-run Sinopec, Asia's largest refiner, CNOOC, PetroChina and Sinochem have stayed on the sidelines in trading fresh Russian cargoes for May loadings, said the people, who all have knowledge of the matter but spoke on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the subject.

Chinese state-owned firms do not wish to be seen as openly supporting Moscow by buying extra volumes of oil, said two of the people, after Washington banned Russian oil last month and the European Union slapped sanctions on top Russian exporter Rosneft (ROSN.MM) and Gazprom Neft.

"SOEs are cautious as their actions could be seen as representing the Chinese government and none of them wants to be singled out as a buyer of Russian oil," said one of the people.

Sinopec and PetroChina declined comment. CNOOC and Sinochem did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China and Russia have developed increasingly close ties in recent years, and as recently as February announced a "no limits" partnership, and China has refused to condemn Russia's action in Ukraine or call it an invasion.

China has repeatedly criticized western sanctions against Russia, although a senior diplomat said on Saturday that Beijing is not deliberately circumventing sanctions on Russia.

China, the world's largest oil importer, is the top buyer of Russian crude at 1.6 million barrels per day, half of which is supplied via pipelines under government-to-government contracts.

Sources expect China's state firms to honor its long-term and existing contracts for Russian oil but steer clear of new spot deals.

A drop in China's imports of Russian oil could prompt its giant state refiners to turn to alternative sources, adding to global supply concerns that had driven benchmark Brent oil prices to 14-year highs near \$140 per barrel in early March after Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Brent futures have since eased, to below \$110, after the United States and allies announced plans to release stocks from strategic reserves.

Before the Ukraine crisis, Russia supplied 15% of China's oil imports - half of that via the East Siberian and Atasu-Alashankou pipelines and the rest by tankers from its Black Sea, Baltic Sea and Far East ports.

Unipek, the trading arm of Sinopec and a leading Russian oil buyer, has warned its global teams at regular internal meetings in recent weeks against the risks of dealing with Russian oil.

"The message and tone are clear - risk control and compliance comes before profits," said one of the sources who was briefed on the meetings.

"Although Russian oil is hugely discounted, there are many issues like securing shipping insurance and payment snags."

Another of the sources, with a refinery that regularly processes Russian crude, said his plant was told by Unipek to find replacement to maintain normal operations.

"Beyond shipments that have arrived in March and due to arrive in April, there will be no more Russian oil going forward," said this source.



Unipek loaded 500,000 tons of Urals from Russia's Baltic ports in March, the highest volume in months, supplied by Surgutneftegaz on spot and under a Rosneft export tender that Unipek won for loadings between September 2021 and March 2022, according to traders and shipping data.

Its latest Urals deals will be two April-loading shipments totalling 200,000 tons from Russian producer Surgutneftegaz, said two traders with knowledge of the deals.

In contrast, India has so far booked at least 14 million barrels, or about 2 million tons, of Russian oil since Feb. 24, versus nearly 16 million barrels in all of 2021, according to Reuters calculations.

Other state buyers - PetroChina, CNOOC and Sinochem - have shunned Russia's ESPO blend for May loading, sources said.

Sinopec is facing payment problems even for deals agreed earlier as risk-averse state banks look to scale down financing Russian oil-related deals, the second source said.

Sanction worries have driven some independent refiners known as teapots, once a dynamic group of customers consuming about a third of China's Russian oil imports, to fly under the radar.

"ESPO trading was really slow and secretive. Some deals are being done, but details are kept under wraps. No one wants to be seen buying Russian oil in public," a regular ESPO dealer said.

To keep oil flowing, these nimble refiners are deploying alternative payment mechanisms such as cash transfer, paying after cargo is delivered and using Chinese currency.

Russian suppliers - Rosneft, Surgutneftegaz and Gazprom Neft, and independent producers represented by Swiss trader Paramount Energy - are expected to ship a record 3.3 million tons of ESPO from Kozmino port in May.

Nuclear Day...

FROM PAGE 1

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been honest in its report to the IAEA but unfortunately this agency has always been used by the Western powers as a tool to increase pressure on Iran's peaceful nuclear program and each time this agency tries to create some problem for Iran's nuclear problem either directly or indirectly through the mouth of the Western media.

But Iranians have shown the world that they are determined to continue their peaceful nuclear programs no matter what the West wants, and the country is not seeking nuclear bomb as its Supreme Leader has repeatedly called it in a fatwa haram.

Any progress by the Islamic Republic faces a backlash from the West and accusations are funneled towards Tehran to undermine the achievements or magnify them to create Iranophobia.

This year the country is to mark the day in a stronger position under a revolutionary government which is determined to defend the country's rights for continuing its peaceful nuclear rights. Nuclear energy is becoming a major source of power in the world and is used in many industries and technologies and especially for producing electricity, and Iran wants to be independent in providing nuclear energy because history has shown us that it cannot trust on the vendors of this energy in the time when the country needs it.

So the countdown has started for announcement of new nuclear achievements which will definitely enrage the West which is currently pursuing a deal with Tehran on curbing its nuclear programs. But they should know this fact that this time "redlines" means "redlines" and the government will not retreat any inch from its demands and redlines, and it will not give in the excessive demands of the West who has always since the establishment of the Islamic Revolution been trying to undermine or curb Iran's progresses in any field.

Iranian scientists have shown their capability by enriching uranium with higher percentage and they have strengthened Iran's capability although some of them have lost their lives through assassinations in order to safeguard this strategic science which is a deterrent force against the West's bully. Of course as it has been reiterated, this science is used for peaceful purposes in the country and neighbor states should trust Tehran and not to be fooled by the Western media which seek Iranophobia among the neighbor states to increase pressure on Tehran by creating rift between Tehran and countries in the region.

Tehran, Moscow...

FROM PAGE 1

The sanctions are much similar to a series of bans imposed on Iran by the United States since 2018 when Washington pulled out of an international deal on Iran's nuclear program and started a campaign of maximum economic pressure on Tehran.

Iran decided to increase its trade ties with Russia since US sanctions were imposed through signing an agreement with the Russia-led EAEU bloc of Eurasian economies.

Trade ties between Iran and Russia exceeded \$4 billion in value terms over the Iranian calendar year to March. However, the two countries have insisted the figure could more than double because of new geopolitical situation in the region.

"The goal of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to increase our trade turnover to at least \$10 billion in the short-term," Iranian deputy trade minister Alireza Peymanpak said on Wednesday while addressing Iranian and Russian delegates in Moscow.

Iran Posts...

FROM PAGE 1

The United States imposed an extensive regime of economic sanctions on Iran in 2018 seeking to stifle the country's trade with the rest of the world.

Boosting bilateral trade with China has been a pillar of Iran's efforts to neutralize the impacts of American sanctions as government figures show that trade with Beijing accounted for more than a fifth of Iran's total foreign trade in the year to late March.

Good Times: Luxury Watchmakers Face Soaring Demand



ZURICH (Dispatches) - Times have been so good for luxury watchmakers that they are running behind demand, forcing some to delay the release of new collections and others to invest more in production capacity.

After the pandemic severely hit the global economy in 2020, the sector enjoyed a spectacular recovery last year and started 2022 with a bang, though Russia's war in Ukraine created new uncertainties. Watches were the best performing business for French luxury group Hermes, with sales soaring by 73 percent last year.

"We had an extraordinary year in the watches business," Hermes vice president Guillaume de Seynes told AFP at Watches and Wonders in Geneva this week, one of the industry's biggest annual showcases.

"We can feel a very strong dynamic for watchmaking everywhere in the world," he said, adding that there was hot demand for a men's watch model last year.

"We could have even sold more if we had been able to make more," de Seynes said, noting that watchmakers face a "demand phenomenon that exceeds production capacity."

His priority for 2022 is to invest in production.

The Oris brand also had "a very strong year", said its chief executive, Rolf Studer. The luxury watch sector is now bracing for the fallout from the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia, which has a sizeable rich client base.

Oris watches range between 1,800 and 7,200 Swiss francs (\$1,928 and \$7,710 or 1,767 euros and 7,064 euros). The company had to delay the launch of a new collection in the higher price range because it did not produce enough watch movements -- their internal mechanisms -- in its workshops.

The watch was supposed to come out last summer but it is only launching now.

"We planned too conservatively," Studer said.

"So we decided to keep the movements for the watches that were already out instead of launching new models and not be able to supply existing models already on the market," he added.

Lamerd Zone Determined to Materialize Slogan of the Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Managing Director of Lamerd Special Economic Zone says the zone is determined to materialize the slogan of the year of Production, Knowledge-Based and Job Creation.

Ehsan Ansari pointed to the slogan of the year and said the biggest problem and challenge of the country is economy and public livelihood, and double and jihadi effort as well as activating the knowledge-based jobs is the only way for saving the national economy.

Speaking in the first meeting of the administrative council of the Lamerd Special Economic Zone, Ansari said nobody should hurt the society and himself by injecting disappointment, adding that naming this year indicates the significance of the issue of production and it seems emphasis on this issue is because of the important nature of production because production is the only economic item that with its development, all economic indicators are affected.

He then pointed to the potential of the special region for



the presence of the knowledge-based companies and stipulated that Lamerd Zone supports all innovative and technological projects and urged his colleagues to focus on the knowledge-based jobs. He emphasized that the zone is determined to materialize the slogan of the year.

He then pointed to the performance of the zone in the past year and pointed to the future plans. He said one of the vital projects was the project for transfer of water from the Persian Gulf to Lamerd Zone in order that the zone can have sustainable water, adding that the project faced some halts but resumed due to efforts of IMIDRO.

Ansari said that the 913-Megawatt Ghadir Power Station was another project in the zone last year for providing sustainable electricity for the aluminum industry of the zone.

He said last year the zone held tenders worth of over 12,000b rials which are currently underway and tenders worth of 8,000b rials is currently underway and the zone is to hold more tenders worth over 19,000b rials which is in the early and preparation stage.

Foreign Media Claims...

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Summarizing a confidential report to the IAEA member states, Reuters said on Wednesday that Iran has moved all its machines that make centrifuge parts from its mothballed workshop at Karaj to its sprawling Natanz site, just six weeks after it set up another site at Isfahan to make the same parts.

The report added that on April 4, "agency inspectors verified that these machines remained under agency seal at this location in Natanz and, therefore, were not operating."

"Without access to the data and recordings collected by these cameras, the agency is unable to confirm whether the production of centrifuge components at the workshop in Esfahan has begun," the report to IAEA member states said.

Ghaebi clarified that the IAEA would have no access to the data recorded on the memory of the cameras installed at the Isfahan facility only until the Iran deal was back on track. "That is why the agency has announced that it was unable to confirm whether or not the manufacturing of spare parts for centrifuges has begun in Isfahan," the official added.

Ghaebi said Iran informed the IAEA on April 4 that all the machines for production had been transferred from Karaj to Natanz, letting the inspectors verify, on the same day, that the machines were not operating.

In a statement on January 31, the IAEA said Iran has informed the world body that it will move the production of centrifuge rotor tubes and bellows from TESA Karaj Complex to the central city of Isfahan. The IAEA confirmed that Iran has informed the agency that it can adjust its surveillance and monitoring measures accordingly, noting that the production of centrifuge rotor tubes and bellows at TESA Karaj Complex has been ceased.

The IAEA inspectors had installed surveillance cameras in a new workshop in Isfahan on January 24 to ensure the machines intended for the production of centrifuge rotor tubes and bellows were under monitoring but the production of the parts there had not started then. Under a law passed by the Iranian Parliament in December 2020, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEIOI) was tasked with restricting the IAEA's inspections and accelerating the development of the country's nuclear program beyond the limits set by the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement.

The law, dubbed the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, halted all inspections of Iran nuclear facilities beyond the Safeguards Agreement, in a move -- as the name suggests -- to push the US to remove its sanctions.

Florenzi Undergoes Knee Surgery

ROME (Dispatches) - AC Milan full-back Alessandro Florenzi underwent surgery on his left knee today, the Serie A leaders said, with media reports saying he would be out for at least a month.

The Italian giants said the operation on his meniscus was "successful".

Milan did not say when they expect Florenzi to return, but Italian media said he may be back for the closing stages of the season.

Le Tissier Quits as Southampton Ambassador

LONDON (Dispatches) - Southampton great Matt Le Tissier quit as an ambassador for the Premier League club after deleting a link to a social media post that questioned reports Russian forces executed civilians in Ukraine.

The former England international midfielder, who scored 161 goals in 443 league appearances for Southampton between 1986 and 2002, said on Twitter he had "decided to step aside".

Real Madrid Win at Chelsea; Villareal Stun Bayern

LONDON (Dispatches) - A hat-trick by veteran striker Karim Benzema, including two fine headed goals in the space of three first-half minutes, earned Real Madrid a 3-1 win at reigning European champions Chelsea in their Champions League quarter-final first leg on Wednesday.

Benzema, 34, claimed his hat-trick when he pounced on an error by Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy just after halftime to put the Spaniards in control of the tie before Tuesday's second leg in Madrid.

Kai Havertz had restored some hope to the Blues when he headed in an angled pass from Jorginho in the 40th minute to make it 2-1.

But Chelsea's chances of a comeback were undone by Mendy's mistake in the 46th minute when, outside his box, he tried to pass to Antonio Rudiger only for Benzema to intercept and steer the ball into an empty net for his 37th goal of the season.

The France striker rocked Chelsea when he converted pinpoint crosses with headers, first from Vinicius Jr from the left in the 21st minute and then from Luka Modric on the right in the 24th, leaving Mendy with no chance on either occasion.

Benzema had looked certain to claim his hat-trick just before halftime but he fired wide with Chelsea's usually rock-solid defense looking ragged.

The Spaniards were seeking revenge after the Londoners eliminated them in last season's semi-finals before the Blues won the trophy in Porto.

There was an early warning sign for the Londoners when Vinicius Jr cracked a shot against the bar in the 10th minute.

Meanwhile Arnaut Danjuma's early goal secured Villarreal a deserved 1-0 win against Bayern Munich in their first leg of their Champions League quarter-final.

The former Bournemouth winger Danjuma gave the Spaniards a slender advantage going into the return leg by scoring the only goal early in the first half at Estadio de la Cerámica.

But it could have been worse for Bayern, who produced a disappointing display, as Villarreal had another effort ruled out for offside before they struck a post through Gerard Moreno.



The home side, backed by a vociferous crowd, made an excellent start and took an eighth-minute lead through Danjuma. The on-loan Tottenham midfielder Giovani Lo Celso cut the ball back into the area before Danjuma diverted Daniel Parejo's shot into the bottom corner.

The Spain defender Raúl Albiol's well-timed challenge on the edge of the box denied Serge Gnabry a scoring chance as Bayern looked to get a foothold in the game.

But the German champions were relieved to see Pau Torres fail to connect with a flick-on from Parejo's free-kick as Villarreal threatened again.

And the stadium erupted just before the break when the Spanish side thought they had taken a deserved two-goal lead. Francis Coquelin's attempted cross flew into the net, but referee Anthony Taylor was told the French midfielder had been offside after a VAR check and Bayern breathed again.

The visitors, who had failed to register a shot on target, had it all to do at half-time. Thomas Müller was inches away from diverting in a cross for an equaliser early in the second period, but there was no respite for Bayern, who were spared by the woodwork when Moreno's shot hit a post in the 53rd minute.

The Bundesliga side pressed in the final 15 minutes, but still found chances hard to come by and Alfonso Pedraza fired a golden chance wide for Villarreal in the 87th minute.

Koeman To Succeed Van Gaal as Netherlands Coach

AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - Ronald Koeman is to return as Netherlands coach when Louis van Gaal leaves the role after the World Cup in Qatar, Dutch daily De Telegraaf reported.

Van Gaal, who has long made it clear he will leave after the global soccer showpiece later this year, said last week he was receiving treatment for an aggressive form of prostate cancer.

Koeman had a successful two-and-a-half-year spell as national team coach before leaving to join Barcelona in 2020 and while the Royal Dutch Football Association have yet to make an announcement Van Gaal gave him his backing.

"They consulted me, I have a say in that," Van Gaal told De Telegraaf. "It's not that difficult. A year ago, I was the only coach available who had experience, that now applies to Koeman. He would be a good successor."

Koeman helped the Netherlands reach the Euro 2020 finals after they had missed the previous tournament and the 2018 World Cup, and also to the final of the Nations League, where they lost 1-0 to Portugal.

Russian, Belarusian Runners Banned From Boston Marathon

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Russian and Belarusian runners will not be allowed to take part in this year's Boston Marathon because of the invasion of Ukraine, organizers said.

Russian and Belarusian athletes living in their respective countries are barred from the April 18 race, the Boston Athletic Association said.

However, Russian and Belarusian citizens not residing in either country would be allowed to take part, but not under the flag of either nation.

"Like so many around the world we are horrified and outraged by what we have seen and learned from the reporting in Ukraine," Boston Athletic Association chief executive Tom Grilk said.

"We believe that running is a global sport, and as such, we must do what we can to show our support to the people of Ukraine," Grilk added in a statement.

The statement did not say how many Russian or Belarusian athletes had entered this year's showpiece.

The Boston Marathon, one of the world's major marathons, is returning to its traditional April slot this year after disruption caused by the pandemic.

The race was cancelled in 2020 and then held in October in 2021 with a smaller-than-usual field.

In 2019, the last Boston Marathon not affected by the pandemic, 59 runners in a field of more than 30,000 were from Russia and Belarus.

Russia has been increasingly isolated by the sporting world following the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Football governing bodies FIFA and UEFA have suspended Russia from all international competitions, including the World Cup, while organizations such as Formula One have cancelled events in Russia.

Haaland Transfer Price Speculation Is Crazy



€75 million release clause attached to any move.

Real Madrid, Paris St Germain and Manchester City are reportedly interested in Haaland, who has scored 16 goals in 18 league games for Dortmund this season

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp said he was not interested in trying to sign Borussia Dortmund striker Erling Haaland because the player's price tag is exorbitant.

The 21-year-old Norway international is set to leave the German club at the end of the season with almost every top European team interested in signing him, and a reported

and provided five assists.

He also scored three goals in three Champions League matches and four in two German Cup games despite missing several weeks due to injury.

"We will not be going near there," Klopp told Sport Bild magazine. "The figures being mentioned out there are crazy. We have nothing to do with them. No chance. That's something I honestly don't want. That's no fun at all," he said.

According to German media, the total cost of buying Haaland in a multi-year deal could exceed €300 million, including his salary, agent fees and competition-linked bonuses over several seasons.

Haaland has made a huge impact in two and a half years at Dortmund, having scored 27 league goals in 28 Bundesliga matches last season and 13 in 15 games after arriving in January, 2020.

Brown Shines as Celtics March on

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Jaylen Brown scored 25 points as the Boston Celtics kept up their push for the number two playoff seed in the Eastern Conference with a 117-94 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

With the identity of the six automatic playoff teams in the East already settled, the only issue remaining is to determine the final playoff seedings.

Boston sits behind leaders Miami with two games remaining in the regular season.

With Miami poised to lock up the top spot, needing just one win from their games against Atlanta and lowly Orlando, all eyes are on the battle for second seed where Boston, the Milwaukee Bucks and the Philadelphia 76ers are in a three-way tussle.

Milwaukee and Philadelphia's wins on Tuesday left all three teams locked on 49 wins apiece, meaning the Celtics' 50th win of the season on Wednesday allowed them to move one game clear of their rivals. Brown spearheaded a dominant performance for the in-form Celtics, who led from start-to-finish and had five players in double figures.

Al Horford weighed in with 17 points and 10 rebounds while Jayson Tatum finished with 16 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists as the Bulls — occupying the sixth and final automatic playoff spot in the East — fell to a third straight defeat.

The Celtics' victory marks the first time since the 2017-2018 campaign that the franchise has posted 50 wins — a source of pride for Boston coach Ime Udoka after his team's sluggish start to the season.

Elsewhere in the East, the Brooklyn Nets overturned a 21-point third quarter deficit to down the New York Knicks 110-98 at Madison Square Garden, outscoring their city rivals by 38-16 in the final quarter to clinch victory.

Kevin Durant led the way back for Brooklyn with a 32-point triple double that included 11 assists and 10 rebounds while Kyrie Irving tallied 24 points with eight rebounds and seven assists.



Mick Schumacher Remembers Dad Ahead of Australia F1 Debut

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Mick Schumacher's legendary father Michael holds the lap record at Albert Park and he fondly remembers travelling to Melbourne as a child to watch his dad in action.

Now a Formula One driver himself, the 23-year-old will follow in his footsteps when he races at the Australian Grand Prix for the first time this weekend.

"I'm quite excited, I'm looking forward to getting to know the track and getting to know the city as well," said the Haas driver.

"I've been here with my dad and have watched him race in Melbourne, that was really cool, and I'm excited to drive here myself and make my own experiences of driving in Formula 1 in Australia."

Schumacher is fortunate to be in Melbourne after escaping uninjured from a horror crash in qualifying for the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix two weeks ago.

He had to be lifted out of his wrecked car after clipping a kerb at high speed and airlifted to hospital for precautionary tests, before being ruled out of the race.

The Swiss-born German said afterwards he was "feeling alright" and his attention is now fully on conquering Albert Park, just like his seven-time world champion father did with four victories in his Ferrari in the early 2000s.

During that dominant run, he set a blistering lap record of 1:24.125 in 2004 which still stands today. It will likely not survive the weekend, with significant changes to the circuit set to shave lap times by as much as five seconds.

"My dad holds the lap record in a 2004 Ferrari. I got the chance to drive that car and it's an amazing car," said Schumacher.

"We'll make our own laps in a similar-looking car, actually. The cars have turned back in time and they're looking a bit more like they used to with the high front wing, so it will be interesting."

