

Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **140,800** With **23** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Health Ministry Is Warning That the Number of Cities Declared As Coronavirus Red Zones With Very High Risk of Transmission of The Disease Is Going Up

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30 Iranians in Prisons Abroad on Charges of Skirting Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A high-ranking Iranian Judiciary official says a total of 30 Iranian nationals are being held behind bars abroad on charges of circumventing Washington's anti-Iran sanctions, adding that the Judiciary, Foreign Ministry, and Iranian diplomatic missions are following up on their cases.

"Due to the dual approach of the West on the issue of human rights, the number of Iranians who need human rights protections abroad is not small," Kazem Gharibabadi, the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the country's High Council for Human Rights, said on Friday.

"There are many examples in this regard, like the sham trial of [former Iranian judicial official] Hamid Nouri in Sweden, the violent mistreatment of a female Iranian asylum seeker by the Danish police in front of her child, and even Iranians being prosecuted under the pretext of circumventing US sanctions against Iran," he said.

He noted that the Iranian detainees will undoubtedly need the support offered by Iran's Human Rights Headquarters.

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Iran Oil Export To China Surges

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran has exported 337 million barrels of oil to China since the start of 2021 and the price of each barrel increased from 56 dollars to 97 dollars during this period, so the average oil price shows Tehran has not sold oil in cheap price.

An American media published a report in recent days on the amount of Iran's oil export to China as well as Tehran's income of the trade since the beginning of 2021 up to now.

According to the American media outlet, the Islamic Republic has earning 22 billion dollars through export of more than 337 million barrels of oil to China since the end of the Trump administration.

The report added that Iran exported an average of 829,360 bpd of oil to China in the first three months of 2022, indicating that Iran's export stands at 74,633 million barrels until end of March 2022, while this number stood at 263 million barrels in the whole year of 2021.

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Iran Trade Rises 3-Fold in Q1 of 2022



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Customs Administration says the country's foreign trade registered a more than three-fold increase in the first quarter of 2022 year on year.

"In the last three months of the Persian Year 1400 (December 22, 2021 - March 20, 2022), the country's trade stood at 41 million 522 thousand tons of commodities worth \$29,549,000,000, showing a rise of 14 percent in terms of weight and 37 percent in terms of value compared to the similar period the previous year," said Customs Spokesman Rouhollah Latifi.

"Last winter, some 11 million 80 thousand tons of goods worth \$16,71,000,000 were cleared from the country's Customs, registering a 29-percent increase in terms of weight and 35-percent rise in terms of value year on year," he added.

He said the nation's exports during the three-month period were up 40% in terms of value compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile Farzad Piltan, director-general of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries, said yesterday that the value of Iran's exports to its African and Arab trade partners increased by \$2.6 billion or 20 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

According to Piltan, Iranian exports to Arab and African countries reached \$16.293 billion in the previous year, while the figure stood at \$13.595 in the preceding year, the TPO portal reported.

Iraq with \$8.9 billion of imports, United Arab Emirates (UAE) with \$4.9 billion, Oman with \$716 million, Ghana with \$353 million, and South Africa with \$254 million were the top export destinations for Iranian products in the year 1400, the official said.

Syria, Kuwait, Qatar, Nigeria, and Mozambique with \$218 million, \$158 million, \$134 million, \$125 million, and \$98 million of imports from Iran, respectively, were ranked sixth to tenth among the Islamic Republic's Arab and African trade partners in the mentioned year.

Also, official data show that Iran's imports from its Arab and African trade partners also increased by 76 percent in 1400 compared to 1399 to stand at \$18.479 billion. Iran had imported \$10.470 billion worth of commodities from the mentioned counties in 1399, Piltan stated.

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Zionist Forces Crack Down on al-Aqsa Solidarity Protests

AL-QUDS (Dispatches) - Israeli regime forces violently cracked down on demonstrations held by Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Friday in solidarity with worshippers assaulted inside the al-Aqsa Mosque, leaving at least 344 injured.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), a national humanitarian organization, said in a statement that its medics attended to 344 injured people following Israeli forces' attacks in several cities on Friday.

It added that the Israeli army also targeted PRCS personnel and hindered their work in providing medical aid to the wounded Palestinians.

Israeli forces fired live bullets at an ambulance and damaged its exterior in the northern West Bank town of Beita, located 13 kilometers (8.1 miles) southeast of Nablus, on Friday.

Journalist Wahaj Bani Mufleh was quoted as saying that dozens of residents in Beita held Friday prayers on their land that is at the risk of confiscation to construct illegal settlements in Jabal Sabih.

After the prayers, the occupying forces brutally assaulted local residents and tried to banish them from the area, Bani Mufleh said.

He added that the confrontations took place in Jabal Sabih and extended to the main entrance of the town, where Israeli forces have maintained a constant vigil.

The army used a barrage of tear gas canisters as well as live bullets to suppress the demonstrators, Bani Mufleh further noted.

The restive village witnessed violent confrontations on Wednesday, leading to the injury of several Palestinians. One of them, Fawaz Dwaikat, succumbed to his wounds the following day. His death led to an escalation of tensions and fierce clashes that continued till Friday.

The media staff of two satellite television networks said they were also attacked by an Israeli settler while covering the Israeli aggression in Beita. Their equipment was damaged in the attack.

Journalist Khaled Badir was quoted as saying that one of the settlers tried to attack media personnel as they attempted to take shelter in a safe place, and threw cameras on the ground, damaging them.

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

No Return to the Past

The Islamic Republic of Iran is progressing with full speed in all spheres especially in the scientific, nuclear and Nano technologies and the knowledge-based companies are playing a great role in such achievements especially in the nuclear and Nano fields.

On April 14, it was announced that, based on new planning at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), the special machinery used for manufacturing rotors and bellows had been transferred from the industrial TESA Karaj Complex to the Shahid Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan nuclear facility in the city of Natanz. The machinery began manufacturing centrifuge parts at the new workshops after having the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s seals removed from it.

It was not the first time in recent decades that the Islamic Republic has announced such report of its progresses and these progresses will continue in order that the country would become a great model for the Muslim states and even for the world and for the nations who seek independence with great achievements and dignity.

Although the country is involved in the talks for revival of the JCPOA but it is not to tie all its progresses to the talks and Tehran is determined to continue its peaceful nuclear peaceful no matter what the big powers want because the Islamic Republic wants to cut all of its dependence to the other states and nuclear issue is one of them and it once again reiterates that it does not seek A-Bomb and its goal is to use it peaceful purposes like medical or electricity sectors.

This important and strategic measure, which was taken by the Islamic Republic amid negotiations aimed at the removal of oppressive sanctions, should be judged as a decisive step towards increasing the safety and security factor of Iran's nuclear facilities and their related industries.

Over the past years and amid lack of sensitivity and proper attention on the part of the IAEA towards performing a responsible role in the area of protection of various countries' peaceful nuclear activities, some malign activities, for which the Zionist regime has implicitly accepted responsibility, have afflicted some damage to our country's nuclear facilities.

Although these activities have never managed to have a decisive effect on the progress of Iran's peaceful nuclear program, given the sensitivity that is inherent to the nature of nuclear work, adoption of new strategies in the structural, hardware, and software aspects have found a place on the AEOI authorities' agenda so the nuclear facilities' security can be completely ensured.

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Emirates Want to Resolve Differences With Iran

TEHRAN (IFP) - A senior diplomatic advisor to the United Arab Emirates president says the Persian Gulf sheikhdom wants to resolve its differences with Iran.

Anwar Qarash noted that the UAE continues efforts to settle its disputes with the Islamic Republic of Iran through diplomatic and political efforts.

He added that the UAE wants relations with Iran, Turkey and all Arab countries and it is making efforts to forge ties with all neighbors.

Qarash noted that the UAE will not be a source of threat to any country including Iran.

The senior diplomatic advisor to the UAE's leader stressed given the changes in the international arena, all countries have a joint responsibility regarding regional stability and prosperity and "we need more regional gatherings for cooperation and dialog between regional countries including Turkey and Iran".

Earlier, the UAE's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan held talks with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on the phone and called for a look into opportunities for joint cooperation with the Islamic Republic.

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Gov't Urged to Direct Resources Allocated To Knowledge-Based Movement

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafei has said the government must ensure the appropriate use of the financial resources allocated for the development of the knowledge-based companies in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), the ICCIMA portal reported.

Referring to the current year's motto, which has been named the year of "Production: Knowledge-Based and Job-Creation" by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali

Khamenei, Shafei considered the knowledge-based movement an excellent step in the direction of industrial development and stressed the need to prevent possible deviations regarding the financial supports allocated in this field.

"This movement is very valuable because today our industries need to move in the direction of technology and knowledge-based development more than ever, but there are also concerns that need to be addressed," he said in a meeting with the members of the Mashhad Chamber of Commerce.

President Calls for a Committee to Address Artists' Issues

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Referring to the need to support artists, especially veterans, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said, "Artists are facing a lot of neglected problems that need to be overcome by forming a joint committee with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance".

Speaking in a meeting with a group of artists, President Raisi called the rich works of art throughout the country a sign of the great Iranian-Islamic civilization and said, "These civilization-building works are manifestations of creativity and innovation of men and women who have lived in this land throughout history and today we have a duty to introduce them in the best way to future generations".

Raisi said, "Art can transmit the best and most complex concepts to generations and eras, and with art, common understanding can be achieved in many subjects".

In honor of the great artists in the field, including Martyr Avini and others who have been concerned with the promotion of art in this land, the President referred to the issue of justice in the field of art and said, "Justice after monotheism is the broadest concept that covers all aspects of human life".

Raisi described fair support in the field of art important and stated, "The allocation of credits, capacities and loans to the art sector should be commensurate with the importance of this field".

He Raisi stressed the need to pay attention to the affairs of veterans in the field of art and said, "Veterans are a beacon and should always be supported".

The president welcomed the proposal of one of the cinema artists to build multi-purpose cultural halls next to the residential complexes under construction and said,



"Cultural spaces along with the development of residential spaces should be on the agenda and the government supports such ideas".

Appreciating the activities of the Academy of Arts, the President instructed the officials of the Academy to investigate the concerns and problems of the artists and to provide suggestions in this regard so that the government would pay attention to it in the decision-making centers.

Raisi further referred to the proposal of one of the artists regarding the world registration of Nasta'liq calligraphy and while welcoming this proposal, he instructed the relevant officials to follow this issue seriously.

He considered the eight years of Holy Defense and the Islamic Revolution to have great artistic capacities and said, "Undoubtedly, in the field of art, these great movements have not been paid enough attention".

In another part of his speech, the President referred to the instructions of the Supreme Leader in the field of jihad of enlightenment and said, "Today, everyone has a great duty in the field of jihad of enlightenment especially artists".

Raisi further mentioned the proposal regarding paying attention to the private sector in the art sector, saying, "We strongly believe that the economy of art should be left to the private sector".

FM Described Al-Aqsa Incidents as Zionists' Helplessness

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian paid tribute to all Palestinian martyrs, saying what happened in Al-Aqsa Mosque indicated Palestinians' resistance and the Zionists' helplessness.

Speaking in a phone call with Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh, Amirabdollahian slammed desecration of the holy places by the Zionist regime.

Undoubtedly, the Zionist regime has become too weak to tolerate the Palestinians' movements and the Resistance that created "Saif al-Quds" (Sword of al-Quds') epic.

Today, the Resistance is in its best position, while the Zionist terrorist regime is in its weakest conditions, he added.

Iran supports formation of an integrated Palestinian government throughout the historic land with Holy Quds as its capital, he stated.

He stressed the importance of diplomatic consultations with foreign ministers of Islamic countries to condemn and stop the Zionist regime's aggressive actions.

Amirabdollahian described the Zionist regime's aggression against worshipers and desecrating Al-Aqsa Mosque as inappropriate effects of normalizing relations with fake Israeli regime by some Arab-Islamic countries.

Meanwhile, Haniyeh elaborated on the recent crimes in Al-Aqsa Mosque, saying that Palestine is facing with two options: accepting the Judaization of Al-Aqsa Mosque or standing against the Zionist regime.

Palestinian people and the resistance groups have chosen the path of resistance with power, Haniyeh said during the conversation. He appreciated Iran's support for the Palestinian cause, Holy Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque.

He also called for increasing diplomatic consultations at the level of Islamic countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the United Nations Security Council to condemn and stop the Zionist regime's aggression.

In the wake of escalation of tension and aggression by the Zionist regime, dozens of Palestinians have been martyred and hundreds injured since the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

Tehran Slams UK Plan to Transfer Asylum Seekers to Rwanda

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has censured the UK's plan to forcefully transfer asylum seekers to the East African nation of Rwanda, calling it a breach of international commitments and responsibilities.

London's decision is contrary to the spirit and text of the convention on asylum seekers, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said, noting the move "entirely neglects human and ethical considerations."

He dismissed as "contrary to human honor" the treatment of refugees like commodities, violently or contemptuously, and while pointing to the Islamic Republic's hosting of millions of refugees, he further underlined that British government plan to expel refugees come at a time that the country, along with other Western nations have persistently ignored Iran's efforts in managing and caring for millions of migrants and asylum seekers.

The Iranian diplomat also emphasized that Tehran has been hosting millions of refugees - particularly from neighboring Afghanistan - humanely and with minimum foreign assistance, which has repeatedly been commended and recognized by international organizations on refugee affairs.

He made the remarks after Britain came under harsh criticism - locally and internationally over its plan to send refugees and asylum-seekers thousands of miles away to Rwanda.

London announced on Thursday a deal with Rwanda to send asylum-seekers to the African country, claiming the measure would stop human-smugglers from sending desperate migrants on treacherous journeys across the English Channel.

"From today... anyone entering the UK illegally as well as those who have arrived illegally since January 1 may now be relocated to Rwanda," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a speech near Dover in southeastern England.

He further described the East African nation with a sketchy human rights record as "one of the safest countries in the world, globally recognized for its record of welcoming and integrating migrants."

Vienna Talks in Line With Iran's Policies

TEHRAN (IFP) - A member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee says negotiations between Iran and the P4+1 group have been held in accordance with the establishment's policies, national interests and guidelines of the Supreme National Security Council.

"The negotiating team observes the red lines of the system and moves based on national interests, and the parliament is comfortable with President Raisi's team in the negotiations... they are following a good path," Mahdi Sa'adati stated on Saturday.

He added that the negotiations are being carefully monitored by lawmakers and that the parliament is satisfied with the performance of the negotiating team.

The MP stressed the need to observe the establishment's red lines in the negotiations, saying the United States should know that the regional resistance movements and increasing defense and missile capabilities are Iran's red lines in the talks that cannot be negotiated.

Sa'adati noted that before the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015, the United States had illegally included about 200 Iranians on its sanctions list but after the JCPOA, this number reached 1,850.

He said the increase in U.S. sanctions against Iran after the signing of the nuclear deal showed that the United States is not committed to negotiations and its promises.

"National interests are a principle for the country. We cannot ignore national interests, and that's why lifting sanctions is on the agenda, and the lifting of sanctions should solve the problems in the field of shipping and the country's banking system," the member of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee added.

After many months of intense negotiations, Iran and the P4+1 group namely Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany are very close to an agreement with Tehran saying that the United States needs to make necessary political decisions to allow the JCPOA to be revived.

However, added the statement, the convict, while expressing repentance, went to the prison's clinic as he was dizzy and listless. After being visited by the physician, Karimi was transferred to a city hospital for treatment.

Then he was hospitalized at the ICU and remained there until the time of his death. An investigation is underway into the cause of his death, and the result of the probe will be announced after the Coroner's Office issues its report in that regard.

This comes as some foreign media claim Karimi died because of taking the wrong medicines. They also claim he was one of the dissidents of Iran's Islamic Establishment who was arrested during anti-government protests a few years ago.

Iran to Provide Iranians Abroad With Further Access to Legal System

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Secretary of High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi has announced that Iranians living abroad will be provided with further legal services.

Iran's Judiciary is ready to give further services and legal consultation in coordination with embassies and consulate generals to the Iranian nationals, Gharibabadi told IRNA.

The services will be given to countries where population density of Iranians is higher, he noted.

Gharibabadi, who is also deputy chief of Islamic Republic of Iran's Judiciary for international affairs, went on to say that possibility of in-person legal consultations for the Iranians abroad is under expert review.

Meanwhile, the measure is taken to remove legal and judicial problems of the Iranian nationals, he underlined.

In December, 2021, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian announced that near five million Iranians are abroad and the government is after approval of a comprehensive law to support them.

Start of a New Intifada Is nightmare of Zionists

TEHRAN (IP) - The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in a statement, strongly condemned the Zionist regime's brutal and criminal attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Israeli regime's troops attacked the Palestinian worshipers gathered in al-Aqsa Mosque, firing rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas, and stun grenades at them during the assault in the early morning. The regime's troops have also stormed into the mosque and attacked the worshipers, injuring and arresting people.

In a statement strongly condemning the Zionist regime's brutal and criminal attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps called the emergence of the new intifada a nightmare for the Zionists and their supporters in the regional and world.

"The Zionist regime's new aggression and crimes against Al-Aqsa Mosque, which have intensified in recent days after a martyrdom operations, show the Zionists' fear of the formation of a new intifada," the statement reads.

The clashes on Friday occurred just hours after the regime's forces killed another Palestinian in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

Palestine's official Wafa news agency said 17-year-old Palestinian, Shawkat Kamal Abed, succumbed to his wounds a day after being shot during an attack conducted by Israeli forces in Kafr Dan village, northwest of Jenin.

IRGC Seizes Ship Smuggling Fuel in PG

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has seized a vessel carrying thousands of liters of smuggled fuel in the Persian Gulf.

The head of the public relations department of the second naval zone of the IRGC Colonel Gholam Hossein Hosseini announced on Friday that the ship, smuggling 250,000 liters of fuel, had been confiscated by the IRGC personnel of the naval zone.

"During the seizure, seven of the ship's crew members were detained and would remain in custody until the completion of investigation and the legal proceedings," Hosseini said, adding that the ship and its crew would be handed over to competent authorities during the legal process.

The IRGC's official referred to countering fuel smuggling as one of the important missions of the IRGC's Navy and said, "This is our top priority." He said the IRGC force keeps streamlined monitoring of movements in the region.

On April 9, Mojtaba Ghahramani, head of the Justice Department of Iran's southern province of Hormozgan, said the IRGC Navy forces had seized a foreign vessel carrying 220,000 liters of smuggled fuel in Parsian County, south of Hormozgan.

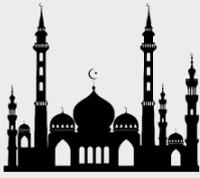
Ghahramani said 11 foreign crew members were detained, but he provided no details on the nationality of the confiscated vessel. The incidents came after a series of seizures of smuggler vessels by Iranian Navy forces in the sea lanes serving the Persian Gulf, where a large portion of the world's oil is produced and shipped.

Tehran Rejects Foreign Media Hype Over Inmate's Death

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iranian authorities have dismissed propaganda campaigns launched by some foreign media regarding the death of Iranian prisoner Mehdi Karimi.

In a statement, Iran's State Prisons and Security and Corrective Measures Organization reiterated that death row inmate Mehdi Karimi had been at the ICU for three months before he died a few days ago.

According to the statement, he had been sentenced to death after being convicted of Muharabah (waging war against God), firing shots in public in order to create fear, and spreading "corruption on earth," a term used in the Iranian law to refer to a chain of gross offenses punishable by death.



PRAYER TIME

| | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| ■ Noon (Zohr) | 13:03 |
| ■ Evening (Maghreb) | 19:57 |
| ■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr) | 04:58 |
| ■ Tomorrow's Sunrise | 06:27 |

74. Yet they take (for worship) gods other than Allah, (hoping) that they might be helped!
75. They have not the power to help them: but they will be brought up (before Our Judgment-seat) as a troop (to be condemned).
Surah 36. Ya-sin (74 - 75)

Home Appliances Market in Recession

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Chairman of the Iranian Home Appliances Trade Union Mr. Akbar Pazouki says despite slump in the price of the home appliances in the country, this market is struggling with recession.

Speaking to ILNA and touching upon the current condition of the home appliances market, he said currently this market is in recession like the days before the Nowruz (New Year), adding that some factories have not started production this year yet and it seems they want to increase the price of their products but they have not received any authorization for increasing the prices.

He added that in the month of Ramadhan, people are mostly busy with praying and worship than purchasing goods and the first month of the year, Farvardin, is like the first day of the week, Saturday, that people do not show any will for purchase. He expressed hope that with the end of month of Ramadhan, curbing the coronavirus and beginning of weddings as well as the government support, home appliances market would pick up.

He blamed weak purchase power of the people for this recession, adding that this recession has been seen in some other markets like apparel, gold and cars in recent months.

Pazouki noted that the production association says 70% of the products are home-made and five major home appliances enjoy domestic potentials and therefore the fluctuation in the price of forex will not affect their prices. He also urged the government to support this industry in order that production would pick up with good quality. He reiterated that if the government does not help, all parties, either vendors, producers and customers, will be losers because when producer and consumer



do not have shares of the product, the result will be recession that now we are witnessing it in the market.

He went on to say that one month later it will be the time of the tax payment by the businesses and it had been decided during the pandemic the government to support the businesses but it did not happen and businesses paid their taxes but now they expect support from the government.

On the effect of removal of sanction on the home appliances prices, he said that now for the production, the manufacturers have to import their required parts through middlemen and it increases the prices and if sanctions are removed, it will decrease the price of the home appliances by at least 30%.

He also criticized the smuggling of the home appliances and their sales in the virtual space, adding that related organs should take necessary measures.

Pazouki went on to say that sales of the home appliances are to be organized in the virtual spaces to avoid fraud or sales of the smuggled products which harm both manufacturers and purchasers.

New Record Registered in Iran-Oman Trade Exchanges

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's ambassador to Oman said on Friday that a new record is registered in volume of Iran-Oman trade, which has for the first time reached 1.3 billion dollars.

Ali Najafi said that during the past Iranian year 1400 (which ended on March 20, 2022) Iran's exports to Oman was worth 716 million dollars, while our country's imports from Oman was worth 619 million dollars, which was the highest record in the two countries trade exchanges.

The Iranian diplomat said that despite the brutal US sanctions and the limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, "we are now witnesses to a 100% increase in our bilateral trade volume with Oman, while both countries' officials still hope to use the existing potentials in both sides to further boost the bilateral trade."

"Friendly and neighborly ties between Iran and Oman have paved the path for evermore expansion of economic and business transactions," he added.

Ambassador Najafi further noted that among Iran's neighboring countries Oman ranks 6th in importing goods from Iran and among the Persian Gulf littoral countries it is currently the 2nd country.

Iran Ready to Export Corona Vaccine to China

TEHRAN (IP) - A spokesman for Iran's National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus announced its readiness to export vaccines and medical supplies to China upon request.

Abbas Shirovjan, Spokesman for the National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus, tweeted on Saturday: "Given the ability of vaccine manufacturers and the current need, it is possible to export the vaccine in excess of the need and send medical personnel to China."

Spokesman for Iran's National Task Force for Fighting Coronavirus added: "Iran is ranked 12th in studies and research on the subject of corona."

Shirovjan said: "Iran has been more successful in managing the recent wave of coronary heart disease compared to developed countries in terms of fewer deaths and shorter periods of time."

Number of Industrial Enterprises Launched in Industrial Parks Disclosed

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - A total of 2,880 new industrial enterprises were put into operation in Iran's industrial parks, over the last Iranian year (March 21, 2021 through March 20, 2022), Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade of Iran and Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), Ali Rasoulia said in a press conference.

According to Rasoulia, this is an increase of 13 percent compared to the preceding Iranian year (March 20, 2020 through March 20, 2021).

The official said that of these, 760 industrial enterprises were put into operation in the country during the current Iranian government's term (which has been power since August 2021).

The deputy minister also added that currently, 4,168 industrial enterprises in the country are being supplied with necessary equipment.

"In addition, 70 small workshops were put into operation in Iran's industrial parks within last Iranian year. Thus, there are currently 1,430 small workshops operating in country's industrial parks," he noted. At the same time, there are 3,300 low-production enterprises in the country, which can be increased, Rasoulia said.

Housing Rental rises 28% in a Quarter yr/yr

TEHRAN (MNA)- The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) has announced that the rental price has increased 28.1 percent in the country during the last quarter of the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), from the same quarter in its preceding year.

The SCI said that in the last quarter, Yazd province, in the center of Iran, with 8.6 percent had the highest and Sistan-Baluchestan province, in the southeast of the country, with 1.5 percent had the lowest rental inflation rate among the provinces of the country.

Iran Falling Behind in Power Generation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran added only 1.2 gigawatt (GW) to its power generation capacity last fiscal year despite a projected 3.5-GW growth plan, Energy Ministry reported April 13.

This is the third consecutive year that Iran fails to realize its annual electricity growth plan, falling behind consumption that is quickly increasing because of extremely low prices. The government in control of the energy sector provides up to \$60 billion a year in this indirect subsidy to people and businesses.

Last summer - during peak demand season- Iran faced a huge electricity deficit and long-lasting power outages throughout the country.

It needs at least 5 to 7 percent electricity generation growth annually to address the increase in domestic demand.

Energy Ministry's report indicates that Iran's electricity exports declined by around 40% last year and its imports rose 5%.

Lack of investment in expanding power generation capacity and natural gas production are the main reasons behind the power shortage. Only the gas sector needs \$40 billion to increase production and keep up with demand.

Meanwhile Iran's thermal power plants generated 324 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20) to register an eight-percent rise compared to the preceding year, an official with the Thermal Power Plants Holding (TPPH) announced.

According to Omid Abdolmaleki, the director of TPPH's Production Planning and Operation Office, of the mentioned figure, 181 billion kWh was the share of combined cycle units, 84 billion kWh was the share of steam units, and 59 billion kWh was generated by gas units, IRNA reported.

The official noted that a total of 359 billion kWh of electricity was generated by all the power plants across the country (thermal, hydro, nuclear, and renewable) in the previous year, of which the share of thermal power plants (steam, gas, combined cycle) was more than 324 billion kWh.

Thermal power plants accounted for over 91 percent of the country's total power generation in the previous year, according to Abdolmaleki.

He mentioned the inauguration of several steam units in the country's thermal power plants in the previous year, saying: "With the inauguration of the steam units of Jahrom, Harris, Urmia, and Chabahar power plants, we witnessed an output increase in combined cycle power plants which are environmentally friendly power generating units."

According to Abdolmaleki, turning gas power plants into combined cycle ones is one of the most efficient ways to improve the efficiency of the country's electricity network, which is very effective not only for the electricity industry but also for preserving the environment and saving fuel.

Weekly Trade on IME Exceeds 2,008,000 Tons

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,008,424 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$687m on its physical market.

According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange traded on its metals and minerals trading floor 1,523,000 tons of commodities valued at more than \$380m.

On this floor, the IME's customers purchased 1,042,886 tons of cement, 217,582 tons of steel, 142,000 tons of iron ore, 88,500 tons of sponge iron, 14,720 tons of zinc, 11,200 tons of copper, 6,325 tons of aluminum, 450 tons of coke, 250 tons of lead, 150 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 24 tons of precious metals concentrate and 22 kg of gold bars.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade 427,496 tons of commodities on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor valued at more than \$300m.

The exchange's customers purchased on this floor 124,800 tons of vacuum bottom, 111,910 tons of bitumen, 88,262 tons of polymeric products, 51,000 tons of lube cut, 37,021 tons of chemicals, 10,450 tons of sulfur, 4,139 tons of base oil and 90 tons of argon.

Last but not least was the IME's side market with 56,966 tons of commodities traded on it.

شماره ۵۵/۱۳۰۸ تاریخ ۱۴۰۱/۱/۲۸

INVITATION TO ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER

وزارت جهاد کشاورزی

نوبت اول

شناسه آگهی ۱۳۰۳۳۳

AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY

Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of 2x40000±5% MTS of Granular Potassium Sulphate (GSOP) through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from Monday dated 2022/4/18 until Wednesday dated 2022/4/27 (7 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

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

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on Monday dated 2022/5/30 (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on Tuesday dated 2022/5/31 at 14:00 with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

- The bid bond value should be at € 669050 or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on Telegraphic Transfer rate in Sana rate website, www.sanarate.ir. It should be noted that this site lists the Currency Transactions, executed in Integrate Currency Transactions System [Nima website] on 10/4/2022 for each lot of 40000 MTS ± 5% in bank guarantee.
- The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 40000 MTS ± 5% will be IR 179423000000 which must be only submitted by the bidders.
- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

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

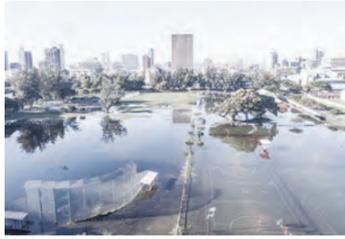
PR&intel affairs.dept of Agricultural Support Services COMPANY (ASSC)

م.الف ۲۲۹

S. Africa Flood Toll Nears 400

DURBAN (Dispatches) - Police, army and volunteer rescuers widened the search for dozens still missing five days after the deadliest storm to strike South Africa's coastal city of Durban in living memory as the death toll rose to nearly 400.

The "unprecedented" floods, which affected nearly 41,000, left a trail of destruction and at least 395 people dead. "Sadly the number of fatalities continues to increase with the latest figure standing at 395," regional head of the disaster managing ministry Siphon Hlomuka said in a statement. With the government coordinating the search-and-rescue operation, the official number of people missing in KwaZulu-Natal province stood at 55.



U.S. Approves Arms Sale to Nigeria

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States has approved a nearly \$1bn weapons sale to Nigeria after legislators had put a hold on the deal over concerns about possible human rights abuses by the Nigerian government.

In July, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee put a hold on the sale of 12 AH-1Z Cobra attack helicopters made by Bell.

On Thursday, the U.S. Department of State made the determination that it would approve the sale of the attack helicopters worth \$997m.



Russia Hits Kyiv Missile Factory After Moskva Flagship Sinks



KYIV (Dispatches) - Russian strikes pounded a military factory near Kyiv that makes the missiles Ukraine claims it used to sink the Moskva naval flagship, with Moscow vowing renewed attacks on the capital.

A workshop and an administrative building at the Vizar plant, which lies near Kyiv's international Zhuliany airport, were seriously damaged in the overnight strikes, an AFP journalist saw.

Russia had earlier announced it had used Kalibr sea-based long-range missiles to hit the factory, which Ukraine's state weapons manufacturer Ukroboronprom says produced Neptune missiles.

"There were five hits. My employee was in the office and got thrown off his feet by the blast," Andrei Sizov, a 47-year-old owner of a nearby wood workshop, told AFP.

"They are making us pay for destroying the Moskva," he said. It was the first major Russian strike around the Ukrainian capital in over two weeks.

The governor of Ukraine's southern Odessa region, Maxim Marchenko, said the 186-metre-long Russian missile cruiser was hit by Ukrainian Neptune missiles on Wednesday.

The Moskva had been leading Russia's naval effort in the seven-week conflict, and the circumstances around its sinking and the fate of its crew of over 500 remain murky.

Russia's defense ministry said a blast on the vessel was the result of exploding ammunition and that the resulting damage had caused it to "lose its balance" as it was being towed to port yesterday.

The fleet has been blockading the besieged southern port city of Mariupol, where Russian officials say they are in full control although Ukrainian fighters are still holed up in the city's fortress-like steelworks.

Moscow, which invaded Ukraine partly because of deepening ties between Kyiv and NATO, on Friday warned of unspecified "consequences" should Finland and Sweden join the US-led defense alliance.

The two countries are considering joining NATO after Russia's devastating invasion of neighboring Ukraine.

"They will automatically find themselves on the NATO frontline," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

Shortly afterwards, Finland's European Affairs Minister Tytti Tuppurainen said it was "highly likely" that her country would apply for NATO membership.

"The people of Finland, they seem to have already made up their mind and there is a huge majority for the NATO membership," she told Britain's Sky News.

Unlike Sweden, Finland neighbors Russia, from which it declared independence in 1917 after 150 years of Russian rule.

China Holds Drills Around Taiwan as U.S. Lawmakers Visit

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China said it conducted military drills around Taiwan on Friday as a U.S. Congressional delegation visited the island in a show of support to a fellow democracy, with Beijing blaming the lawmakers for raising tensions with their "provocative" trip.

China's military sent frigates, bombers and fighter planes to the East China Sea and the area around Taiwan, the People's Liberation Army Eastern Theatre Command said, in a statement released as the lawmakers were holding a news conference in Taipei.

"This operation is in response to the recent frequent release of wrong signals by the United States on the Taiwan issue," it said, without mentioning the visiting U.S. delegation.



North Korea Celebrates Founding Leader's Birthday

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea celebrated the birthday of its founding leader, state media reported, but mystery surrounded when a military parade — at which the regime may unveil new weapons — might happen.

Known as the Day of the Sun in the nuclear-armed North, the April 15 birthday of the late Kim Il Sung — grandfather of current leader Kim Jong Un — is one of the most important dates in Pyongyang's political calendar.

There has been a steady drumbeat of celebratory coverage in state media leading up to the day itself, including commemorative stamps, light festivals, dance parties and floral tributes.

The anniversary comes three weeks after North Korea staged its largest intercontinental ballistic missile test ever — the first time Kim's most powerful weapons had been fired at full range since 2017.

That test was the culmination of a record-breaking blitz of sanctions-busting launches so far this year and signalled an end to a self-imposed moratorium on long-range and nuclear tests.

Analysts and South Korean and U.S. officials had widely expected Pyongyang to mark April 15 with a military parade to unveil new weaponry, or even a test of the country's banned nuclear weapons.

But there was no mention Friday in state media of any such event.

Seoul-based specialist site NK News said its sources in the North heard helicopters and jets flying low over Pyongyang shortly after midnight Thursday — indicating a night-time military parade may have already taken place.

But another expert said it now seemed likely Pyongyang's main military parade could now be held on April 25 — the anniversary of the founding of the North Korean army.

"Since the two anniversaries are just 10 days apart, it seems a bit difficult to hold a parade on both occasions," Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, told AFP.

"The U.S. bad actions and tricks are completely futile and very dangerous. Those who play with fire will burn themselves," it said.

China's Defence Ministry, in a separate statement, said the U.S. visit was "deliberately provocative" and had "led to further escalation of tension in the Taiwan Strait".

Taiwan is a frequent source of tension between Beijing and Washington.

Republican U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham told Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen during the delegation's meeting with her that the war in Ukraine and provocative behavior by China have united U.S. opinion in a way not seen before.

"To abandon Taiwan would be to abandon democracy and freedom," he said. "There's a backlash growing in the world to thuggery - to the bad guys."

Senator Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the technology hub is a "country of global significance" and its security has implications for the world.

Macron Backs EU-Wide Pay Cap for CEOs in Nod to Left-Wing Voters

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron and his far-right challenger Marine Le Pen on Friday waded into a heated row about a 19-million-euro pay package given to the head of carmaker Stellantis as top corporate salaries bounced to the forefront of the French election campaign.

Macron, who faces Le Pen in the second round of France's presidential election on April 24, told Franceinfo radio that he was in favour of an EU-wide ceiling for top executives' pay, describing the Stellantis payout as "shocking and excessive".

"We need to fight at a European level so that remuneration can't be excessive," he said. "We need to set ceilings and have governance for Europe that make these things acceptable. If not, society will explode at any given moment."

Macron, a former investment banker, has been struggling to shake off the "president of the rich" tag that has dogged him throughout his five years in office. He is now scrambling to reach out to left-wing voters as he heads into a tight run-off with Le Pen.

The far-right candidate still trails the incumbent in the polls, though she has significantly narrowed the gap since she lost a lopsided contest by more than 20 percentage points five years ago.

In particular, Le Pen's focus on purchasing power

during the campaign has given her an edge over Macron in courting low-income workers and households struggling with the rise in food and energy costs.

Debate is currently raging over the 19-million-euro payout for Stellantis chief executive Carlos Tavares for last year, when French carmaker PSA merged with Italian-US rival Fiat Chrysler to form Stellantis, the world's fourth-biggest carmaker.

Beyond his base salary of two million euros, Tavares is to receive 7.5 million euros in performance-based pay, 2.4 million euros in retirement contributions and a 1.7-million-euro bonus related to the success of the merger. He will also receive 5.6 million euros' worth of company shares, according to Stellantis.

"These sums are astronomical," Macron told Franceinfo. "People can't be facing purchasing power problems (...) and then see these sorts of sums."

"We need to do what we've done with minimum tax rates and the fight against tax evasion. We need to convince our European partners to bring about a reform that will provide a framework for executive pay," he added.

Wading into the debate, Le Pen also described the Stellantis payout as "shocking", though she ruled out a pay cap. In an interview with BFMTV, she suggested one way to offset such remuneration was to develop staff shareholdings.



Jordanians Divided and Angry After Prince Hamzah Renounces Title

AMMAN (Dispatches) - When Jordan's Prince Hamzah bin Al Hussein relinquished his title on April 3, official media outlets remained silent, wary of stepping out of line with the country's authorities.

King Abdullah II's half brother was the first royal in the kingdom's history to make such a move, which came a year after he was accused of plotting against the king.

Since the announcement, in which Hamzah said his "personal convictions" were "not in line" with Jordan's current institutions, confusion has lingered among the Jordanian public, with rumours that he was forced to sign an apology letter that was published by the Royal Court a month ago.

Hamzah's announcement came as Jordan experiences a wave of public dissatisfaction, a crackdown on dissenting voices, and censorship of media outlets, the majority of which have still not been reported by the media.

"Our silence proved again that we are controlled, we work within a certain agenda, that we are not independent nor partial," Khalid Qudah, an Amman-based political commentator, told Al Jazeera.

Hamzah's criticisms of the Jordanian authorities hit a raw nerve, particularly as many of those opposed to King Abdullah II, but supportive of the institution of the monarchy, saw him as an alternative.

The sensitivity of the topic is therefore clear, and in a media landscape where the security services frequently pressure journalists not to publish articles on certain topics, few have dared to touch the subject.

"The Jordanian authorities want to silence opposition voices and this is terrifying," said Mohammad Ersan, the editor-in-chief of two Jordanian media outlets. "Especially if you are an independent journalist - you worry every day that someone will knock on your door to arrest you."

The Jordanian government has recently cracked down on activists, journalists, and union members, carrying out "preemptive" arrests. While silencing political dissent has become routine practice, arrests based solely on intent are seldom seen in the kingdom.



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Velenjak Apt (\$3000)
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S/pool, S, J
L.balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Darrrous Villa (\$4500)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p, S
J, yard, pkg
Fully Furn

Elahieh (\$3000)
300sq.m, 4bdrs
S/p, S, J, & F.F

Jordan (\$1400)
2bdrs, 140sq.m
balcony, pkg, F.F

Fereshteh bldg
4storey, 12bdrs
yard, & pkg lots

Darrous (\$2600)
300sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, balcony, & F.F

Niavaran (\$2000)
180sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, & F.F

Velenjak bldg
5storey, 20bdrs
S/p, yard, & pkgs

Farmanieh (\$2200) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, pkg, & F.F
Zaferanieh (\$2800) 240sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, pkg, & F.F



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Turkey's Exports to Israel Hit All-Time Q1 High

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's exports to Israel jumped by more than a third to leave behind the best first quarter yet, as the recent rapprochement has seen the two countries working to mend their long-strained ties.

Propelled by the steel industry, sales to Israel jumped 37.2% year-over-year from January through March to \$1.8 billion, data compiled from the Turkish Exporters' Assembly (TIM) showed.

Of that, the steel sector was responsible for around \$470.8 million, according to the data.



Summit on the financing

Ukraine War Hits Growth, Threatens To Fragment Global Economy

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The war in Ukraine is prompting the International Monetary Fund to cut global growth estimates for both 2022 and 2023 as higher food and energy prices pressure fragile economies, the IMF's managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, said.

Georgieva said in a "curtain raiser" speech for next week's IMF and World Bank spring meetings that the fund would downgrade its growth outlooks for 143 economies representing 86 per cent of global economic output, but said most countries will maintain positive growth.

Georgieva, who previously warned that the war would drag on growth this year, said Russia's invasion of Ukraine was "sending shockwaves throughout the globe" and dealing a massive setback to countries struggling to recover from the still-raging Covid-19 pandemic.

"To put it simply, we are facing a crisis on top of a crisis," Georgieva said in remarks to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. "In economic terms, growth is down and inflation is up. In human terms, people's income are down and hardship is up."

The IMF, which is set to release new economic forecasts on Tuesday, anticipates that inflation, now a "clear and present danger" for many economies, will remain elevated for longer than previously expected. Georgieva did not provide a specific target for global growth, but has said previously it would be lower than the 4.4 per cent the IMF forecast in January, a figure already reduced by half a percentage point due to lingering supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic.

"Since then, the outlook has deteriorated substantially, largely because of the war and its repercussions," she said. "Inflation, financial tightening and frequent, wide-ranging lockdowns in China—causing new bottlenecks in global supply chains — are also weighing on activity."

Georgieva also warned of a major new complication, the fragmentation of the global economy into geopolitical blocs, with differing trade and technology standards, payment systems and reserve currencies. Similarly, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen raised concerns on Wednesday about a "bipolar" global economy with the United States and democratic allies on one side, and China and other state-led economies on the other.

Georgieva said such a fragmentation was the biggest threat to the post-World War Two, US-led economic order governed by the IMF, the World Bank, and other institutions created at the end of that conflict.

"Such a tectonic shift would incur painful adjustment costs. Supply chains, R&D, and production networks would be broken and need to be rebuilt," she said. "Poor countries and poor people will bear the brunt of these dislocations."

The shift is already impairing the world's ability to work together to resolve the Ukraine war and Covid-19 crises and threatens to derail cooperation on climate change and other challenges, she said.

Georgieva said food insecurity is a "grave concern" because of disruption to grain and fertilizer supplies from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, pressuring the weakest countries. Without action on a multilateral plan to bolster food supplies, many countries face more hunger, poverty and social unrest.

Turkey to Hike Citizenship-for-Homes Threshold as Sales Soar

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Foreigners looking to buy homes in Turkey to become Turkish citizens will now have to pay more, reports said Wednesday, in a move that comes as sales to foreign buyers, particularly Russians and Ukrainians, are soaring.

The amount that foreigners have to pay for a property and commit to keeping it for at least three years to get a Turkish passport is about to be increased to \$400,000 (TL 5.84 million), local media reported, citing a decision discussed at the Cabinet meeting Tuesday. Ankara adopted the citizenship-for-homes scheme in 2017. A year later it cut the minimum price to \$250,000, from \$1 million, to attract foreign buyers.

The revised regulation is due to be announced in the Official Gazette soon, reports said.

Some 7,000 foreigners received citizenship via home purchases between 2017 and 2020, the government said last year.

In addition to the real estate, those eligible for citizenship include foreigners who are determined to have made at least a \$500,000 investment in the country.

It also includes foreigners determined to employ at least 50 people, those who have deposited at least \$500,000 into Turkish banks and kept it there for at least three years, those who have purchased and kept for three years at least \$500,000 in government debt, or those who have made a venture capital or property fund purchase of at least \$500,000.

Foreign home sales — mainly to Iranians, Iraqis, Russians and Afghans — hit a record 58,576 units in 2021, according to official data, a 43.5% year-over-year increase. The previous annual record was set in 2019 with 45,483 units sold to foreign buyers.

Sales climbed 54.9% in February year-over-year to 4,591 properties, according to official data. Iranians topped the list as they purchased 711 houses, followed by Iraqis with 633 and Russians with 509.

The real estate market has mobilized recently as Russians and Ukrainians fleeing the war have flown to join their relatives residing in Turkey, while others opted for renting or real estate purchases. Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, triggering stifling Western sanctions.

The January-February house sales jumped 55.5% on an annual basis to 8,843, the data showed.

Sales had accelerated as a depreciation in the Turkish lira made Turkish property more attractive to foreign buyers, with the authorities pursuing the new economic policy of low interest rates to boost credit, exports and investments, saying it would help the country weather inflation.



China's GDP Growth Seen Slowing to 5.0% In 2022 On COVID Hit

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economic growth is likely to slow to 5.0% in 2022 amid renewed COVID-19 outbreaks and a weakening global recovery, a Reuters poll showed, raising pressure on the central bank to ease policy further.

The forecast growth for 2022 would be lower than the 5.2% analysts tipped in a Reuters poll in January, suggesting the government faces an uphill battle in hitting this year's target of around 5.5%. Growth is then forecast to pick up to 5.2% in 2023.

Gross domestic product (GDP) likely grew 4.4% in the first quarter from a year earlier, according to the median forecasts of 41 economists polled by Reuters, outpacing the fourth-quarter's 4.0% due to a solid start in the first two months.

Analysts believe March activity could take a blow from China's efforts to contain its biggest COVID outbreak since the coronavirus was first discovered in the city of Wuhan in late 2019.

"March activity data is likely to have seen a notable deterioration, but that would just be the tip of the iceberg as the economically damaging lockdowns only started in mid-March," analysts at Societe Generale said in a note.

"However, real GDP growth might avoid falling below 4%, thanks to the infrastructure push, the reporting methods and the surprisingly strong data seen in January and February."

On a quarterly basis, growth is forecast to fall to 0.6% in the first quarter from 1.6% in October-December, the poll showed.

GDP expanded 8.1% in 2021, its best showing in a decade, but momentum cooled markedly over the course of last year, weighed by debt problems in the property market and anti-virus measures that hit consumer confidence and spending.

Last year, policymakers focused on curbing property and debt risks, which exacerbated the economic slowdown.

The government has unveiled more fiscal stimulus this year, including stepping up local bond issuance to fund infrastructure projects, and cutting taxes for businesses.

China will use timely cuts in banks' reserve requirement ratios (RRR) and other policy tools to support the economy, the cabinet said on Wednesday, as headwinds increase amid outbreaks of COVID-19.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) is likely to cut the RRR - the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves - by 50 basis points (bps) in the second quarter of 2022, according to the poll.

Citi economists expect a 50-basis point cut to be announced as early as Friday, releasing over 1.2 trillion yuan (\$188.52 billion) in liquidity, they said in a note, adding the move could reduce the chance for an imminent medium-term lending facility rate cut, but the loan prime rate (LPR) could still be trimmed on April 20.

ECB Confirms Plans to End Bonds Buys in Q3



FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank kept its policy stance broadly unchanged today, sticking to plans to slowly unwind extraordinary stimulus as worries over record-high inflation trump concerns about a war-related recession.

The ECB has been reducing the pace of money-printing for months but has only outlined a loose schedule to roll back support, emphasizing flexibility as the conflict in Ukraine and sky-high energy prices could suddenly change the outlook.

Confirming its earlier guidance, the ECB said it plans to cut bond purchases, commonly known as quantitative easing, this quarter, then end them at some point in the third quarter.

Interest rates will, however, only go up "some time" after the end of bond buys and they will be gradual, the ECB added.

"The Governing Council judged that the incoming data since its last meeting reinforce its expectation that net asset purchases under the APP should be concluded in the third quarter," the ECB said in a statement.

The volume of bond buys in the third quarter, will be determined later.

Among the most cautious central banks in the world, the ECB is lagging far behind nearly all its major peers, many of which started raising rates last year. In the past two days alone, the central banks of Canada, South Korea and New Zealand have all increased the cost of borrowing.

The US Federal Reserve is meanwhile expected to raise rates eight times or more over the next two years, leading the world in policy tightening.

"Any adjustments to the key ECB interest rates will take place some time after the end of the Governing Council's net purchases under the APP and will be gradual," the ECB added.

EU Payment in Roubles for Russian Gas Would Violate Sanctions Regime

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Payment for Russian gas in roubles by European Union buyers as demanded by President Vladimir Putin would break the EU's sanctions regime against Moscow, an internal European Commission note said.

Putin has warned Europe it risks having gas supplies cut unless it pays in the Russian currency as he seeks retaliation over Western sanctions for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The European Commission's note, making clear it is technical, preliminary, and based on an unofficial translation of the Russian Presidential Decree of March 31, said the law added several new layers of obligations on EU gas buyers, taking the effective completion of the purchase out of their hands.

"This mechanism would lead to a breach of the existing EU restrictive measures adopted in respect of Russia, its government, the Central Bank of Russia, and their proxies," the internal note, seen by Reuters, said.

The government of the Netherlands will instruct companies not to pay for Russian gas in roubles, a Ministry of Economic Affairs spokesperson said today, citing the decision by the European Commission.

Putin's decree imposed an obligation on EU gas buyers to open at least two special accounts — one for euros or dollars and one for roubles — with Gazprombank and channel all gas payments through the bank.

The EU buyer would still pay Gazprombank in the contract currency — euros or dollars — but the purchase would only be complete once Gazprombank exchanges the currency into roubles in a deal with the Russian central bank, and deposits the roubles in the second account, the note said.

Jobless Rate in Australia Down to Lowest Since 1974

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - As the rebound from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic continues, Australia has posted its lowest jobless rate in 48 years, data showed Thursday, setting the record by a sliver of a percentage point.

Many employers say they are struggling to find workers as the economy powers ahead on a diet of low interest rates, large public stimulus measures and a high savings rate.

The unemployment rate in March was unchanged from the previous month at a

seasonally adjusted 4%, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported.

But that number is rounded up.

When crunching the numbers more precisely, the March jobless rate comes in at 3.954%, the lowest since 1974 — squeezing just a few hundredths of a percentage point below the rate set in February 2022 and other lows from 2008.

By a hair's breadth, it is therefore the lowest unemployment rate since Labor's Gough Whitlam was still prime minister of Australia and U.S. President Richard Nixon was toppled by the Watergate scandal.

The jobless queue shrank by 12,000 people in March, the Australian statistics bureau said, while the economy created an extra 18,000 jobs.

The news was welcomed by Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government, which is trailing in opinion polls ahead of May 21 elections.

"Our economic plan is working — an economic plan that has helped steer Australia through the biggest economic shock since the great depression," Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said.

Opposition Labor Party leader Anthony Albanese's economic credentials have been questioned since he forgot the unemployment rate this week when talking to reporters.

John Bayssari, co-owner of Edes Restaurant and Bar, which has two outlets in Sydney's business district, said the job market was "extremely tight."

"We would be looking at another shop if it was not for the labor market," he said.

"It is definitely challenging," said Matt Jenkins, human relations manager for Sydney restaurant group Applejack Hospitality.

"We are dealing with a lack of candidates but also a lack of skilled candidates," he told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

"Coupled with that, we've got rising salaries, people asking for extraordinary amounts of money."

Australia's labor market has been propelled by a "very strong" economic rebound from COVID-19 restrictions, with many people having built up savings during the pandemic, said Shane Oliver, chief economist at financial services company AMP.

"Bubble" Receives 3 Awards In GIMFA Int'l Festival

RASHT (IRNA) - Iranian short film "Bubble" by Hamed Arib won three awards from the jury in the GIMFA International Monthly Film Awards in Brazil.

The GIMFA (Gralha International Monthly Film Awards) is a monthly film award that aims to promote the best of world cinema, the films are watched internally by qualified judges from the

cinematographic environment.

The short film "Bubble" directed by Hamed Arib won the award for the best documentary, the best documentary director and the best documentary film editing in this international film festival as the representative of Iran.

The closing ceremony of the festival was held online on April 5, 2022.



Hollywood Stars and Cult Directors Announced for Cannes

PARIS (Dispatches) - The Cannes Film Festival announced the line-up for its 75th edition with a mix of cult art house directors and Hollywood glamour heading for the French Riviera in May.

Canadian horror maestro David Cronenberg and France's Claire Denis will compete among 18 films nominated for the top prize Palme d'Or, along with Russia's Kirill Serebrennikov who was recently allowed to leave Russia following a controversial travel ban.

Among the films playing out of competition will be a documentary about rock 'n' roller Jerry Lee Lewis from Ethan Coen (one half of the Coen brothers), and Three Thousand Years of Longing from Mad Max creator George Miller, featuring Idris Elba as a djinn.

A bevy of stars are expected to hit the red carpet, not least for Cronenberg's sci-fi/horror cross-over Crimes of the Future starring Kristen Stewart, Lea Seydoux and Viggo Mortensen.

Denis returns with a thriller set in Central America — Stars at Noon featuring Robert Pattinson, while US filmmaker James Gray is competing with Armageddon Time, a tale based on his New York adolescence featuring Anne Hathaway, Oscar Isaac, Cate Blanchett and Anthony Hopkins.

Two of the biggest spectacles had already been confirmed for the festival, which runs from May 17 to 28.

Tom Cruise will attend the much-delayed world premiere of Top Gun: Maverick, the sequel to his 1986 blockbuster, playing out of competition.

And Tom Hanks will be in town for Elvis, in which he co-stars as the rock 'n' roll star's manager, Colonel Tom Parker, in the latest from Australian director Baz Luhrmann who previously lit up Cannes with Moulin Rouge! and Gatsby.

Women directors have had a strong run at festivals over the past year, winning the top prizes at Venice, Berlin and last year's Cannes — where Julia Ducournau's bold and shocking Titane took the Palme.

But only three women are nominated for Cannes this year — though there are often last-minute entries.

Alongside Denis are US director Kelly Reichardt, who had a sleeper hit with First Cow and returns with Showing Up, and France's Valeria Bruni Tedeschi with Les Amandiers.

Festival director Thierry Fremaux gave a nod to the difficult global situation, saying the announcement came "after two years of crisis that we won't recover from quickly, and at a time of sadness and war in Europe."

A Ukrainian film will play out of competition — The Natural History of Destruction from director Sergei Loznitsa about the destruction of German cities by



Allied bombers in World War II — which Fremaux said the festival was "particularly happy to welcome this year".

The main competition will also mark the third nomination for Serebrennikov, who was unable to attend last year when his film Petrov's Flu was in competition due to an embezzlement conviction that his supporters say was revenge for his anti-authoritarian stance.

He relocated to Germany this year after his travel ban was lifted and returns to Cannes with Tchaikovsky's Wife about the private life of the famous composer.

Four past winners of the Palme d'Or are back in the competition: The Dardenne brothers from Belgium, Sweden's Ruben Ostlund, Japan's Hirokazu Kore-eda and Romania's Cristian Mungiu.

One thing that remains uncertain is who will be deciding the winner.

The jury is normally announced ahead of the selection but Fremaux said it would be named "in the coming days", alluding to a challenging task since so many filmmakers were back at work after the pandemic shutdown.

The opening night film — which under a recent rule must also be released nationally on the same day — will be Final Cut, a zombie film from the makers of the Oscar-winning The Artist.

India Likely to Get Average Monsoon Rains in 2022



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - India is likely to receive normal monsoon rains this year, the state-run weather office said on Thursday, raising prospects of higher farm and general growth in Asia's third-biggest economy.

The rains, which usually lash the southern tip of Kerala state around June 1 and retreat by September, are expected to be 99% of the long-term average this year, the India Meteorological Department said in a statement.

New Delhi defines average, or normal, rainfall as ranging between 96% and 104% of a 50-year average of 87 cm (35 inches) for the four-month season beginning in June.

"The encouraging forecast of a normal monsoon in 2022, coupled with healthy reservoir levels in all regions, augurs well for a timely onset of summer crop sowing," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA, the Indian arm of Moody's.

The monsoon is crucial for the \$2.7-trillion economy, as it brings nearly 75% of the rain needed by farms, besides replenishing reservoirs and aquifers.

Nearly half of India's farmland gets no irrigation and is dependent on the annual rains from June to September. Farming accounts for nearly 15% of the economy but sustains more than half of a population of 1.3 billion.

Key cotton, soybean and sugarcane growing regions in northern parts of peninsular India, central India, the foothills of the Himalayas and some northwestern areas are likely to get normal to above normal seasonal rainfall, the IMD said.

Tea, rubber and rice growing regions in northeast India and southern parts of the peninsula could receive rainfall that is below normal, it added.

India is the world's biggest producer of cotton and pulses and the second biggest producer of sugar, wheat and rice. It is also the world's biggest importer of edible oils such as palm and soy.

A normal monsoon will help India maintain rice exports and cut imports of edible oil in the next season, a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm said.

Woes May Be Too Deep for Quick Rebound as China Set to Loosen Credit

LONDON (Dispatches) - Expectations for imminent policy easing have been reinforced as China has made an explicit call to cut the amount of cash banks set aside as reserves and boost lending.

But economists say any credit loosening may not be enough to beat back the prospect of a deep economic downturn. Growth in the world's second-largest economy has slowed since early 2021 as traditional engines of the economy such as real estate and consumption faltered. Exports, the last major growth driver, are also showing signs of fatigue. More recently, widespread disruptions to activity from China's biggest COVID-19 outbreak since 2020 and tough lockdowns have tilted the odds toward a recession, a few economists say.

On Wednesday, the State Council, or cabinet, said after a meeting that monetary policy tools — including cuts in banks' reserve requirement ratios (RRRs) — should be used in a timely way.

In the last two rounds of RRR cuts in 2021, the respective announcements of the easing were made two to three days after they were flagged by the State Council.

"We expect the PBOC (People's Bank of China) to deliver a 50-basis point RRR cut and potentially also an interest rate cut in the next few days," Goldman Sachs wrote in a note on Thursday.

Most private forecasters now expect an RRR cut of 50 basis points (bps), which would free up more than 1 trillion yuan (\$157 billion) in long-term funds that banks can use to boost lending.

A commentary by state-run Securities Times said April 15 would be the window to watch.

China on Monday will report March data for industrial production and retail sales, which are expected to reflect the impact from COVID-19 curbs, as well as first-quarter gross domestic product (GDP).

But some analysts cast doubt on the effectiveness of an RRR cut now, due to a lack of demand for credit, as factories and businesses struggle while consumers remain cautious in a very uncertain economy.

Transmission channels for conventional RRR and rate cuts are severely clogged due to the coronavirus-related lockdowns and logistics disruptions, according to Nomura.

"When households scramble to stockpile food and private corporates prioritize survivorship over expansion, credit demand is weak," Nomura analysts said in a note.

"With so many lockdowns, road barricades and property curbs, the most concerning issues lie mainly on the supply side, and merely adding loanable funds and slightly cutting lending rates are unlikely to effectively boost final demand."

30 Iranians in...

FROM PAGE 1

"We follow up on the problems of our compatriots abroad in several ways, mostly through Iranian embassies and by contacting relevant officials, as was the case in Denmark and the mistreatment of an Iranian asylum by the Danish police. I corresponded with the Danish minister of immigration [Mattias Tesfaye] in this regard. Of course, there are other mechanisms," Gharibabadi stated.

"Our consular section at the Foreign Ministry is following up on the problems. I would also like to emphasize that in some cases the follow-up is lengthy

and does not mean that we are abandoning them. We give various forms of human rights support as well as legal, judicial, political and consular pursuit to those who are in trouble," the senior Iranian Judiciary official highlighted.

Iran has been hit by drastic unilateral U.S. sanctions, imposed by Washington after former president Donald Trump declared an unprovoked withdrawal from the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018.

Zionist Forces...

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Moreover, confrontations broke out between young Palestinian protesters and Israeli forces in the towns of Beit Dajan, Qaryut, and Qasra outside of Nablus; at the northern entrance to Bethlehem; in the village of Kafr Qaddoum, east of Qalqilya; at the northern entrance to the city of al-Bireh; and at Bab al-Zawiya in the center of al-Khalil.

The Islamic Jihad resistance movement has warned Israel of strong and fierce retaliation in case its forces do not halt violent raids in the occupied al-Quds and immediately end acts of aggression on the al-Aqsa Mosque compound during the holy month of Ramadan.

"We have already declared that we are all aware of the deceit and deception of the [Israeli] enemy. We will not exercise self-restraint unless raids in al-Quds and across the West Bank stop," Daoud Shahab, a spokesman for the resistance movement said.

No Return to...

FROM PAGE 1

In recent days some allegations have tried to overshadow Iran's nuclear programs but the country has defiantly continued its work by giving due responses to those claims.

Iran's acting ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said last week the Agency would have no access to data recorded by its surveillance cameras installed in Iranian nuclear facilities until the 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is fully restored.

Mohammad Reza Ghaebi made the remarks while speaking to reporters on Thursday, reacting to the latest IAEA report on the verification of the implementation of the 2015 deal.

Ghaebi said the IAEA report was only a technical update presented by the agency's director general on monitoring the implementation of the JCPOA, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which provides the Agency's members with the latest information on Iran's nuclear activities.

Mentioning a "confidential report" issued by the IAEA, Reuters claimed on Thursday that the report said Iran is starting to operate a new workshop at its nuclear facility in the central city of Natanz, which will make parts for uranium-enriching centrifuges with machines moved there from its Karaj facility.

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

"On April 12, the IAEA finished installing all its cameras at Natanz facility and had then removed the seals from the machines. Also, on April 13, Iran informed the Agency that the machines had started operating at the new workshop the same day," Iran's acting ambassador said.

This valuable step taken by the AEOI communicates a decisive and clear message to the adversaries and those who devise malign measures against Iran's peaceful nuclear activities, and serves to both display the agility and resourcefulness of the country's nuclear experts in reaction to hard and soft threats, and exemplify a clear rendition of the strategy announced by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, who has invariably insisted that the country's activities and plans not be tied to negotiations with foreign parties.

So the Islamic Republic of Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei will continue its all-out progresses in all spheres and no country, mainly its hostile rivals, will be able to stop it. Although the Western media are trying to blame nuclear program as the main factor behind economic problems in the country but nation will not be fooled and Iranians know it well that nuclear is their very right and nobody can deprive them of this right either with the JCPOA and talks or threats and war.

This progress of the Islamic Republic is marching ahead with full speed and unlikely anybody is able to stop it and the country will not return to the past and it just looks to the bright future ahead.

Emirates Want to...

FROM PAGE 1

The top UAE diplomat also said the situation in the region has improved following the Syrian president's visit to the Persian Gulf state and also the truce in Yemen, which have created an opportunity for all sides to think of progress and development and avoid escalation of tensions.

He added that the Emirates will not allow anyone to use its territory as a launching pad for acts of sabotage and provocation against the sheikhdom's neighbors.

He was apparently referring to his country's ties with Israel. Iran has criticized the UAE for its normalization of ties with the Zionist regime, warning that it will give a firm response to any provocation by the regime against Iran.

Iran Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

Thus, around 21% of Iran's oil export to China from the start of 2021 up to now occurred in the first season of 2022.

The oil export surge happened in a situation that some people claim that the growth of export was an outcome of Iranians' discount to Chinese oil purchasers, but a look at OPEC reports shows that Iran's average oil price stood at around 60 dollars per barrel in 2021 while the price jumped to about 97.5 in the first season of 2022.



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DeChambeau Has Surgery on Broken Wrist

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Golfer Bryson DeChambeau had surgery on his broken left wrist on Thursday, saying on Instagram he hoped to return to top-flight competition within two months.

DeChambeau missed the cut at the Masters last week, his third missed cut in his past four starts. The 2020 US Open champion, now ranked 19th in the world, had hoped to avoid surgery to repair the hairline fracture of the hamate bone — which was made worse when he took a tumble while playing ping-pong with fellow pros at the Saudi International earlier this year.

Burnley Sack Manager Dyche

LONDON (Dispatches) - Relegation-threatened Burnley announced they had sacked long-serving manager Sean Dyche with eight games of the Premier League season remaining. The Clarets are 18th in the English top-flight four points adrift of safety after just four league wins all season. "Results this season have been disappointing and, while this was an incredibly difficult decision, with eight crucial games of the campaign remaining, we feel a change is needed to give the squad the best possible chance of retaining its Premier League status," chairman Alan Pace said in a club statement.

Fokina Soars Into First Masters 1000 Semis

LONDON (Dispatches) - Alejandro Davidovich Fokina broke new ground at the Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters, overcoming 10th seed Taylor Fritz 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 to reach his first ATP Masters 1000 semi-final.

The Spaniard upset World No. 1 Novak Djokovic in the second round and he demonstrated high levels of confidence against Fritz on Court Rainier III to further back up that win, after also eliminating Marrakech champion David Goffin in the third round.

The 22-year-old played with great intensity as he struck his groundstrokes with width to pull Fritz around the court. Davidovich Fokina consistently engaged the crowd throughout with his shotmaking and fist-pumping, advancing after two hours and 24 minutes.

"I am so, so happy," Davidovich Fokina said in his on-court interview. "Last year I reached the quarter-finals. The emotions to be in the semi-finals are so high. I am enjoying every point. In the first set I had a lot of chances to break but I didn't do it. But I just stayed focused and believed in myself."

The World No. 46 now leads Fritz 2-0 in their ATP Head2Head series and will next face 2018 semi-finalist Grigor Dimitrov or 11th seed Hubert Hurkacz in the last four.

"When you beat the World No. 1 it gives you a lot of confidence physically, mentally and technically," Davidovich Fokina added. "I am pushing myself every match to play harder and harder."

Davidovich Fokina has a strong record at the clay-court event, having defeated Top 10 star Matteo Berrettini en route to the quarter-finals last season. Earlier this year he enjoyed a run to the quarter-finals in Doha, but arrived in Monte Carlo off the back of three straight defeats.

Despite the scoreline, the first set was a



close affair, with Fritz playing better in the key moments as he fended off all five break points. The American did struggle with a problem with his lower left ab, but it didn't impact his level as he crushed forehands and demonstrated great touch around the net to move ahead.

Davidovich Fokina came roaring back in the second set though, stepping deep behind the baseline to take heavy cuts at the ball as he powered his shots with fierce accuracy. The Spaniard finally broke in the ninth game before he levelled the match on his first set point, letting out a scream in delight.

The Spaniard continued to put his foot down in the second set as he looked the fresher of the two, dominating the longer exchanges to triumph.

Fritz ended Rafael Nadal's unbeaten start to the season to lift his maiden Masters 1000 trophy in Indian Wells in March and transferred his strong hard-court form onto the clay this week at the Monte Carlo Country Club.

The 24-year-old defeated wild card Lucas Catarina, Croatian Marin Cilic and countryman Sebastian Korda to become the first American to reach the last eight in Monte Carlo since Sam Querrey in 2008.

Tuchel Apologizes To Gallagher For FA Cup Block

LONDON (Dispatches) - Thomas Tuchel revealed today he had apologized personally to Conor Gallagher after Chelsea blocked the England midfielder playing for Crystal Palace against the Blues in Sunday's FA Cup semi-final.

Palace made an official request for Chelsea loanee Gallagher to be given permission to play against his parent club in the last-four clash at Wembley.

Chelsea rejected Palace's appeal due to the terms of his Selhurst Park loan and while manager Tuchel said it was the correct decision, he also admitted understanding the 22-year-old's disappointment.

"I had the chance to speak to Conor, and I could also see his frustration," said the German.

"We met some weeks ago. We met after the international break by coincidence, in a restaurant, and we had a chat, and the subject came up. And I apologised.

"Because I know how competitive he is and I know his character. I like him a lot and it was a pleasure to have him here in pre-season."

Laporta Embarrassed After Eintracht Fans Flood Camp Nou

MADRID (Dispatches) - Barcelona President Joan Laporta said he was "embarrassed and ashamed" after a reported 30,000 Eintracht Frankfurt fans made it into the Camp Nou for Thursday's Europa League quarter-final despite away fans only being allocated 5,000 tickets.

Barca were sensationally knocked out of the competition by the Germans after winger Filip Kostic scored twice in a 3-2 victory that saw Eintracht advance 4-3 on aggregate.

While Barca were expecting huge backing at the stadium ESPN reported there were close to 30,000 Eintracht fans among the 79,468 crowd.

"Frankly what happened today makes me feel embarrassed and ashamed. There were many fans of the other team and not many of ours," Laporta told Barca TV.

"I'm very sorry for what has happened. What we can avoid are certain situations but as of now, we will have to be much more strict. We can't allow these situations to happen."

Coach Xavi Hernandez called the situation a "miscalculation" and said it did not help his side, who suffered their first defeat in 16 matches in all competitions.

Pedri out After Sustaining Hamstring Injury

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona midfielder Pedri sustained a hamstring injury in his side's defeat by Eintracht Frankfurt in the Europa League quarter-finals, the Spanish club announced Friday.

"Tests on Friday morning have revealed that Pedri has ruptured the femoral biceps in his left hamstring," Barca said. "It means he will be unavailable for selection until he recovers from the injury."

According to Catalan media, the 19-year-old Spain international will likely be out for at least one month.

Pedri sustained the injury at the end of the first-half of the shock 3-2 defeat to Frankfurt, manager Xavi replacing him with Frenkie de Jong for the second-half.

Juve Confirm Cuadrado's One-Year Extension Until 2023



contract at the end of this campaign, which would keep him at the club until 2024.

MILAN (Dispatches) - Juventus announced a one-year extension to Juan Cuadrado's contract which now runs until the end of next season.

Italian media report that the extension until June 2023 was automatic after Cuadrado played his 40th match of the season at Cagliari last weekend.

Juve are also reportedly in negotiations for a longer deal for Cuadrado, who was out of contract at the end of this campaign, which would keep him at the club until 2024.

That deal would also spread his €5 million (RM22 million) salary across two seasons in an attempt to lower costs.

Juve recently decided to release playmaker Paulo Dybala for free in the summer as part of the same strategy.

Colombia international Cuadrado moved to Juve from Chelsea in 2015 and has won five Serie A titles and four Italian Cups since, playing 262 times for the Turin giants in all competitions.

The 33-year-old has played consistently as both a full-back and winger for Juve and is a key player for coach Massimiliano Allegri, who returned to the Allianz Stadium last summer.

Juve are currently six points behind league leaders AC Milan with six games remaining and should qualify for the Champions League next season.

Bahrain-Based Investcorp in Talks To Buy AC Milan

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Bahrain-domiciled asset manager Investcorp has entered into exclusive talks to purchase Serie A club AC Milan, sources said on Friday, in what would be the first takeover of a top Italian team by Middle East investors.

One source close to the talks told Reuters the deal to buy the seven-times European champions from current owners Elliott Management Corporation was near to completion. A potential valuation for the club would be in the region of 1 billion euros (\$1.08 billion) including debt, the sources said.

Investcorp manages over \$42 billion in assets with business lines including private equity, real estate, absolute return investments, infrastructure, credit management, and strategic capital.

Investcorp and Elliott, which took over Milan in 2018, would not comment when contacted by Reuters.

An AC Milan spokesperson said only that "AC Milan remains focused on improving its performance on the pitch and to develop the club."

A second source briefed with the matter confirmed talks between Elliott and Investcorp over a potential sale.

Milan have won Italy's top flight league title 18 times but not since 2011. The club has struggled to recreate the glory years enjoyed under the ownership of Silvio Berlusconi and his Mediaset group.

The club won Champions League titles in 2003 and 2007 after Berlusconi was able to bring in some of the biggest names globally such as Brazilian Kaka and Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko.

Berlusconi sold the club to Chinese investor Li Yonghong in 2017 for 740 million euros, including debts, before Elliott later took control.



Nagelsmann Gets Death Threats After Bayern's Shock Exit

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich coach Julian Nagelsmann said he had been subjected to online death threats after his team's surprise Champions League exit to Villarreal this week.

"I know I will always get criticism from all sides, that's normal and I can deal with it. But with 450 death threats on Instagram, it's not so easy," said Nagelsmann ahead of Bayern's Bundesliga trip to Arminia Bielefeld on Sunday.

"If people want to kill me that's one thing, but they also attack my own mother, who doesn't even care about football," he added.

"I don't understand it. As soon as they turn off the TV, people forget all decency. And they think they are the ones in the right, that's the crazy thing."

Asked whether he had considered taking legal action, Nagelsmann suggested there were simply too many threats for that to be realistic.

"I would never be done with it. I get them after every single game, regardless of whether we win or lose," he said.

"There are more death threats when we play with a back three than when we play with a back four, and obviously a few more whenever we lose."

Nagelsmann is the second Bayern employee who has been faced with death threats this week.

The wife and son of sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic also revealed on Wednesday and Thursday that they had been subjected to threats in the wake of the Villarreal defeat, posting screenshots of private messages sent on Instagram.

On Friday, Nagelsmann said he did not expect Bayern to increase security measures.

"We are still private individuals. I don't want to provoke anyone, and nobody has turned up at my house yet," he said.

