

Iran's Representative to the United Nations, Stating That Iran Is Deeply Concerned About the Tragic Events in Afghanistan, Said the Presence of ISIS in Afghanistan Has Intensified Terrorist Activities in the Region

IRAN NEWS

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh in a Statement Condemned on Friday the Mosque Attack in Kunduz, Afghanistan, Where More Than 30 People Were Killed and 50 Wounded

VOL. XXVIII, No. 7480 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

SUNDAY APRIL 24, 2022 - ORDIBEHESHT 4, 1401

2 DOMESTIC

IRGC Must Be Removed From Sanctions List



> SEE PAGE 2

3 DOMESTIC

Cargo Transit Through Iran Up by 68%



> SEE PAGE 3

4 INTERNATIONAL

Moscow Aims to Capture Southern Ukraine



> SEE PAGE 4

8 SPORTS

Grizzlies Rally to Shock Timberwolves, Warriors Defeat Nuggets



> SEE PAGE 8

Inflation Rate Drops Below 40% After a Year

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian government's statistics agency has reported a first annual inflation rate of below 40% in 12 months as authorities insist policies adopted by an administration that came to office last year has helped tame price rises in the country.

The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) said in a report that consumer prices index (CPI) had dropped one percentage point over the month to April 20 to stand at 39.2%.

The SCI said inflation rate for urban households had dropped to 38.7% while the rural families had seen price rises of 41.6% over the year to late April.

The month-on-month inflation rate in Iran rose 2% to stand at 3.3%, said the SCI, adding that food prices had increased by 4.9% in April.

The point-to-point CPI, which reflects price increases compared to the single month to late April 2021, reached 35.6%, an increase of 0.9% against the same figure reported in late March.

Iran has been reporting a downward trend in inflation since September when the annual CPI peaked to 46%, a figure not seen in 26 years.

See Page 7

Tehran Resolved to Avenge U.S. Assassination of Gen. Soleimani



TEHRAN (PressTV) - A top commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has reaffirmed his country's resolve to avenge the assassination of Lt. General Qasem Soleimani, calling it a certainty.

Speaking at an event in the southwestern city of Shiraz on Wednesday, Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the naval unit of the IRGC, said Americans have been sending messages to Iran, asking it to abandon its vow to avenge the assassination of the celebrated anti-terror commander.

In return, they have offered to lift cruel sanctions on Iran, he said, calling it "wishful thinking".

"They constantly send messages saying they will offer rewards and remove certain sanctions if we give up seeking revenge for Soleimani," he said. "But this is wishful thinking. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution insists on taking revenge, and the IRGC commander has said that revenge is inevitable."

He, however, said that "the time and place for it" will be determined by Iran.

Tangsiri said all those involved in the assassination of Gen. Soleimani's "will be brought to justice," quoting the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei: "God-willing, they will surely be punished for their filthy act in this world."

Gen. Soleimani, who headed the IRGC's Quds Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy head of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were assassinated along with their associates in a US drone strike near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

The midnight strike led to dramatic developments in the region and brought the two countries to the brink of direct military confrontation.

The U.S. terrorist attack drew a wave of condemnation from officials and resistance movements across the region and sparked massive protests throughout the world.

Less than a week later, IRGC fired a volley of missiles on the US-run Ain al-Assad airbase in Iraq's western province of Anbar, which resulted in severe brain injuries to American forces stationed there.

The leader of the Islamic Revolution termed it a "slap" on the face of Americans while insisting that actual revenge was to come later, which will be determined by Iran.

Tangsiri said the enemy had thought they succeeded in eliminating Gen. Soleimani, "but you can see how Haj Ghassem has gained popularity all over the world", she asserted.

Both anti-terror commanders were admired across the world for playing a key role in decimating the US-sponsored Daesh Takfiri terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

The remarks by IRGC's navy commander came days after Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh asserted that "perpetrators, officials, accomplices and advisers" in the dastardly act "will not go unpunished", insisting that "these people must be brought to justice."

Tehran says no agreement will be struck in Vienna until there is total consensus on the main points of discussion.

No Country Dares Approach Iran's Territorial Waters

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani says the country's naval fleet are roaming free waters of the world without any problem, adding that no foreign country would ever dare approach the Islamic Republic's territorial waters.

The senior Iranian commander made the remarks in an interview with the Arabic-language al-Alam TV on Thursday as he was elaborating on the latest developments and defense achievements of the country in addition to Islamic Republic's maritime capabilities.

"Nowadays, the northern Indian Ocean is a main waterway to connect the continents. If we do not have an effective presence, governments without a right will come [to the region] and approach our territorial waters. However, owing to the authority and presence of our fleet in high seas and constant monitoring, we do not have any problems and no country dares approach our country's waters," Irani said.

"The geometry of power in the world is changing ... and various players are at work," the top Iranian Navy commander said.

See Page 7

U.S. Should Have Courage To Correct Past Mistakes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the United States' current administration should have the courage to correct its predecessor's mistakes concerning re-imposition of oppressive sanctions against Iran.

"The United States' current administration should have the audacity to rectify the White House's past mistakes," the minister told European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrel during a phone call on Friday.

In 2018, the incumbent U.S. President Joe Biden's predecessor Donald Trump took Washington out of a 2015 deal between the Islamic Republic and others. Trump also reimposed the illegal sanctions that the accord had lifted.

The Austrian capital of Vienna has, since last year, been holding many rounds of talks between Tehran and the remaining participants in the agreement—that is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—aimed at exploring the potential of the deal's revival and fresh removal of the sanctions.

"There are no doubts about the Iranian government's will to reach a good, strong, and sustainable agreement [in Vienna]," Amir-Abdollahian said.

See Page 7

Major Surge Reported in Exports to Africa, Oman

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has reported a major surge in non-oil exports to Africa and to Oman as the country continues to benefit from a boom in trade revenues that has offset the impact of American sanctions on oil exports.

A senior trade ministry official said on Thursday that Iranian exports to Africa had increased by 107% to reach \$1.195 billion over the year to late March.

Farzad Piltan, from Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, said that shipments of raw iron, steel, fertilizers and liquefied gas had accounted for a bulk of Iranian exports to Africa over the past calendar year.

The surge in Iranian trade with Africa comes as normal trade with countries in the continent faced restriction last year because of closures related to the coronavirus pandemic, said Piltan.

He added that Ghana, South Africa and Nigeria were the largest importers of Iranian goods in Africa over the year to late March.

See Page 7

UK Favors to Improve Economic Ties With Iran

LONDON (IRNA) - An aide to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that London is seeking constructive relations with Tehran and wants to expand economic cooperation with it.

The aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, made the comment at a press briefing in response to a question by IRNA.

The question was this: What is the prospect of Britain's normalizing trade ties with Iran after it paid its long-running debt, worth nearly 400 million pounds, to the Islamic Republic last month?

London "is seeking constructive relations" with Tehran, the British official responded, adding that Britain wants a final agreement to be reached in Vienna "so that we are able to enhance our economic ties with Iran".

The agreement in Vienna refers to the accord to revive the Iranian 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the JCPOA.

The JCPOA was thrown into disarray in May 2018 when the US unilaterally pulled out of it and reinstated sanctions on Iran, making it difficult for countries to do business with the Islamic Republic.

See Page 7

Barter Trade Bypassing U.S. Sanctions Gains Momentum

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's campaign to bypass US-led sanctions is moving into higher gear as more countries, especially in Asia and Latin America, soften up to barter trade with the Islamic Republic.

Multiple sanctions by the US and Europeans choking Iran's access to global banking channels with the aim of damaging its economy and disrupting the country's key trade activities have prompted Tehran to explore new modes of trade and barter has emerged as the most viable conduit.

Last week, CNN speculated that Russia may have to turn to a trusted ally with more than four decades of experience with Western embargoes, meaning Iran, as Moscow faces unprecedented sanctions on virtually all sectors of its economy.

Until the Ukraine war, Iran was the most sanctioned country in the world, according to Castellum.Ai, which tracks sanctions. Russia now holds that record and the two countries are in what analysts call "a marriage of convenience" that is likely to grow stronger as the war in Ukraine escalates, the American broadcaster said.

"Common interests in helping the other evade sanctions are important to these dynamics in Russia-Iran relations," it cited Giorgio Cafiero, CEO of Persian Gulf State Analytics in Washington DC, as saying.

Last month, Russian Transport Minister Vitaly Savelyev said his country was "studying the case of Iran" to help it deal with sanctions on maintenance and spare parts. Iran still operates some planes purchased before the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled a West-friendly regime in the country.

"This bilateral relationship will likely grow stronger as the war in Ukraine rages on, especially if the Vienna talks fail to revive the JCPOA," Cafiero added, referring to the 2015 deal the former Trump regime abandoned.

Cafiero noted that the West's hostility will bring Russia closer to Iran and make Tehran useful to Moscow. According to CNN, after decades of Western economic constraints, the Islamic Republic has become a master of circumventing the most draconian sanctions ever imposed on a country. Today, Russia is living a similar experience as the West clamps down on Moscow in an effort to cripple its economy.

See Page 7

Sokhan Gostar Institute

IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

Leader Offers Condolences to Families of Afghan Martyrs

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iranian Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan met with the wounded and the families of the recent martyrs from the terrorist attack in Kabul and conveyed the Iranian leader's message of condolences to them.

Hassan Mortazavi, Iran's Deputy Ambassador to Kabul, met with the wounded and the families of the recent terrorist martyrs in Kabul on Friday and announced Iran's readiness to help the injured and transfer them to Tehran for treatment. He conveyed the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's message of condolences to them.

IRGC Must Be Removed From Sanctions List

TEHRAN (IP) - The interim leader of Friday Prayers in the Iranian capital of Tehran says the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) should definitely be removed from the list of sanctions.

"If someone says in unison with the United States and Israel that the IRGC should not be removed from the list of sanctions, it is anti-national and alignment with the enemies," Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said during Friday's sermons.

Referring to the Vienna talks, Ayatollah Khatami said: "Serious guarantees must be taken from the West."

He continued: "Definitely, the IRGC should be removed from the list of sanctions." He further stressed that the Iranian nuclear program is peaceful, adding that all the sanctions must be lifted.

The interim leader of Friday Prayers in the Iranian capital of Tehran also said that it is the duty of the rulers of Afghanistan to ensure the security of the people, adding that the perpetrators of the recent terrorist attacks in Mazar-i Sharif and other cities in Afghanistan must be identified and punished for their crimes.

He further pointed to the approaching international Quds Day and said that the rallies on that day in the Islamic world anger the enemies.

The Tehran Friday Prayers leader also pointed to the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, saying that the European country cannot stop the spread of Islam.



"Freedom in Sweden means enjoying freedom to insult the prophets, freedom in Sweden means to provide a platform for racism, their freedom is a slogan," he underlined.

Elsewhere, Khatami referred to the anniversary of the defeat of the US military operation in the Tabas region in northeast Iran in the early days after the revolution due to a sandstorm and reminded us that since the beginning of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Washington has not stopped conspiring against the Iranian nation for a single day.

Diplomatic Path in Vienna Working Well

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian says the diplomatic path regarding the Vienna talks over the revival of the Iran nuclear deal is working properly.

Amir Abdollahian said Iran and the P4+1 countries "have not gone far from a good and lasting deal" in the Austrian capital. He made the remark in a phone conversation with his Syrian counterpart Faisal Meqdad.

Amir Abdollahian added the exchange of messages between Iran and the US is done through the European Union.

The Iranian foreign minister added, "We have time and again reiterated that the Islamic Republic of Iran does not pay attention to excessive demands nor will it retreat from its red lines".

Elsewhere, Amir Abdollahian strongly condemned the desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque by Israel, saying, "We witness crimes at the hands of Zionists on a daily basis at al-Aqsa Mosque".

The top Syrian diplomat also expressed pleasure about the excellent bilateral ties between Tehran and Damascus. Meqdad strongly condemned the Zionist regime's desecration of al-Aqsa, appreciating Iran's role in support of the Palestinian resistance.

Tehran, Damascus Discuss Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in a phone talk with his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mikdad exchanged views on issues of mutual interest and some regional and international developments.

Amirabdollahian and his Syrian counterpart held a telephone conversation on Thursday evening.

Expressing satisfaction with the continuation of cooperation at various levels and the special efforts of the two states on the development of relations, Amirabdollahian welcomed the holding of the joint high commission with the aim of speeding up economic relations, especially in the private sector.

While strongly condemning the Zionist regime's military forces' raid on Al Aqsa Mosque, he noted that every day they witness the crimes of Zionists in al-Aqsa Mosque.

Amirabdollahian expressed hope that on the threshold of

World Quds Day, a strong message would be expressed by the governments, parliaments of the Muslim world, and Muslim nations in defense of Palestine and Holy Quds plus condemnation of Zionist aggression.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amirabdollahian stated that the exchange of messages between Iran and the US through the European Union is ongoing and the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly emphasized that it is neither paying attention to the excessive demands nor willing to back down from its red lines.

He added that the path to diplomacy works well and they have not moved away from reaching a good and lasting agreement.

Faisal Mikdad, for his part, voiced satisfaction with the excellent bilateral relationship and expressed Damascus' readiness to hold a joint high commissioner for the

development of cooperation as quickly as possible.

While strongly condemning the Zionist atrocities and its military forces' raid against Al Aqsa Mosque, he thanked the role and principled stance of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran in support of the Palestinian Resistance.

Sattari in Russia to Promote Iran's Knowledge-Based Products

TEHRAN (IFP) - Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari is in Russia at the head of a delegation of knowledge-based companies to promote their products.

Sattari, along with the Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali and a group of Russian and Iranian officials took part in a forum on Thursday aimed at enhancing Iran-Russia cooperation in the field of knowledge-based goods.

Directors of Iranian knowledge-based companies and technologists talked to Russian officials about ways to quickly remove barriers and significantly increase the exchange of such products.

Sattari noted that during this trip, he is following up on exports by creative companies, adding that cooperation between the two countries should be increased to develop the market for the products of these firms.

Both countries have high scientific and technological capacities and we must make good use of this opportunity, Iran's vice president for science and technology added.

"A new generation of entrepreneurship has been created in Iran over the past 10 years and knowledge-based companies have reached the stage of full growth and maturity. These companies operate in the field of technology and are a new generation for the development of exports to Russia and the transfer of technology between the two countries," Sattari explained.

During the conference, the parties agreed to hold reciprocal visits of experts and companies in the near future to get acquainted with the production and rules of conducting clinical trials and registration of medicines in Iran and the Russian Federation.

Sattari was accompanied by directors of firms active in the fields of communications and information, biotechnology, medicine and medical equipment, creative industries, digital economy and agriculture.

Intelligence Forces Arrest 3 Mossad Spies

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Intelligence Ministry has arrested three agents working for the Israeli Mossad spy agency in the country's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

The ministry said in a statement late on Wednesday that the spies were involved in disseminating classified information and documents.

The statement said the trio had been arrested upon a judicial order, without specifying their nationalities.

Iran's Intelligence Ministry in July arrested a network of Mossad agents at the Western borders, confiscating a large cache of weapons and ammunition that they were planning to use to provoke riots and terror inside the country.

The ministry's director-general for counterintelligence said that the Mossad agents had been arrested upon sneaking into Iran from the Western border posts on the back of an extensive surveillance and intelligence operation.

Iranian security forces also in March dismantled two foreign-backed terrorist teams, which were plotting to assassinate several foreign nationals working on infrastructure projects in the country's Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Iran Ready to Medically Assist Injured in Afghanistan Blasts

TEHRAN (MNA) - Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said Friday that all Afghan refugees residing in Iran have benefited from the free vaccination program.

Bahram Einollahi condemned the recent deadly terrorist attacks in Mazar-e-Sharif's mosque and the students of Shahid Abdul Rahim School in Kabul in Afghanistan, and said the enemies of both Iranian and Afghan nations seek to divide the two nations by committing such heinous crimes during the holy month of Ramadan.

He said that the health ministry is ready for any humanitarian health care assistance to the people of friendly and brotherly country of Afghanistan.

The minister added that the Iranian health ministry based on humanitarian grounds and within the framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran's policies spared no efforts to help the Afghan refugees residing in Iran.

He also said a significant number of Afghan refugees were treated in medical centers and hospitals for free or at a minimum cost, and all Afghan refugees residing in Iran have benefited from the free vaccination program in the Islamic Republic of Iran against Covid 19.

India Releases Seized Iranian Ship, Its 11 Crew Members

TEHRAN (IFP) - India has released an Iranian ship seized earlier this month on suspicion of drug trafficking and all of its 11 crew members.

The vessel had been seized on April 9 in the waters of the Andaman Sea and placed in the charge of India's coast guards for further legal proceedings.

With the follow-up efforts by Iran's Embassy in India and Consulate in Heyderabad, the ship was freed and escorted to the Islamic Republic's territorial waters by the Indian coastguard on Thursday night.

The crew members did not have their ID information with them at the time of the arrest, making it difficult for Indian officials to identify them.

New Delhi has adopted stricter laws for facilitating detection and confiscation of illicit drugs in the wake of the seizure of a number of narcotics cargos being transferred to the country from Afghanistan.

India has also expressed its willingness for an all-out expansion of cooperation with Iran in the fight against drug smuggling.

No Power Capable of Confronting Iran

ISFAHAN (IRNA) - Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, Iranian Supreme Leader's advisor for military affairs said that no power in the world is capable of confronting Iran, because "we have both a brave nation and a brave leader".

"Today the enemy has launched a combination of wars at the economic, political, and cultural fields against the Iranian nation, but meanwhile both our revolution and our nation, have become stronger than ever before," Major General Safavi said.

"Iran was one day a US servant, but today it is on the one side of a power balance on whose other side stands with the United States, while the Zionists are scared of our power and our IRGC Quds Force," he added.

The Supreme Leader's advisor said that by grace of God, "we can move from the current status of having problems and difficulties inside the country and at the diplomatic scene, to the ideal position relying on solidarity between the nation and the government".

He reminded the audience that 50 million of the Iranians living today were born, after the Islamic Revolution, as the population of Iran was 35 million then and 85 million today and the young generation who has seen neither the revolution, nor the Iraqi-imposed war needs to be familiarized with both in such occasions.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

TENDER NO.:

01-31-9646004

N.I.S.O.C.
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH
OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
12	P/F" COOPER-BESSEMER" CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR	NO:115

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,572 EURO or 425,500,250 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN

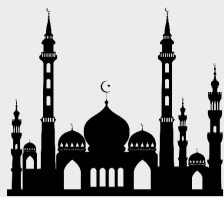
PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL

NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 35 89 Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

Public Relations
www.shana.ir
www.nisoc.ir
<http://iets.mporg.ir>



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:03
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:47
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:19

1. Blessed is He who sent down the criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all creatures;-
2. He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: no son has He begotten, nor has He a partner in His dominion: it is He who created all things, and ordered them in due proportions. Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (1-2)

Cargo Transit Through Iran Up by 68%

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Figures by the Iranian government show cargo transit through the country rose to a record level in the year to late March despite US sanctions that have sought to restrict Iran's ability to engage in international trade.

The figures covered in a Wednesday report by the Tasnim news agency showed that cargo transit through the Iranian territory reached more than 12.6 million metric tons (mt) in the year to March 20, an increase of nearly 68% compared to the previous year.

Transit shipments processed at Shahid Rajaei Port, Iran's largest container port on the Persian Gulf, accounted for nearly a third of all shipments, said the report, adding that cargoes crossing through main borders with Iraq and Afghanistan had also increased significantly over the past calendar year.

The figures showed around 2 million mt of European cargoes had been transited through the Iranian territory in the year to March despite growing US pressure on



transportation companies in Europe to avoid using Iranian road and railway network. Transit through the Iranian roads covered nearly 76% of all shipments recorded in Iranian customs offices last calendar year, said the report by Tasnim, adding that transit via the Iranian railway network had more than doubled over the same period to reach more than 2.6 million mt.

The report did not elaborate on the amount of income generated by record transit through Iran over the last calendar year.

However, it said the figures show that US sanctions on Iran have mostly backfired as the country has been able to benefit from increased trade revenues at a time its crude oil exports had dropped because of the US bans.

Cuba Keen on Boosting Pharmaceutical Cooperation With Iran



TABRIZ (IRNA) - Cuban Ambassador to Iran Alberto González Casals said that his country is interested in expanding cooperation with Iran in medicine production.

González Casals on Wednesday, heading a delegation of Cuban experts and businessmen, toured Shahid Qazi Pharmaceutical Company in Tabriz, the capital city of East Azarbaijan Province, northwestern Iran.

The Cuban envoy referred to Tehran-Havana cooperation on producing a COVID-19 vaccine, and said that the two sides can expand their cooperation to other fields of the pharmaceutical industry.

Managing director of Shahid Qazi Company Saeed Basmanji, for his part, said that the Cuban delegation has expressed its willingness to supply some medicines to their country through his company.

The COVID-19 vaccine jointly produced by Tehran and Havana is called Pasteurcovac in Iran and Soberana-2 in Cuba.

It was developed by Cuba's Finlay Institute of Vaccines and Iran's Pasteur Institute.

The two sides managed to produce the vaccine despite restrictions both face because of US sanctions.

Iran and Cuba are opposed to what they see as U.S. hegemony in the world and have in the past decades stood up against those policies.

Tehran, Baku Agree to Continue Work on Power Plants on Joint Border

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Azerbaijani and Iranian officials have consented to implement the previously agreed document on the Khudafarin and Giz Galasi hydroelectric power plants on the Araz River.

In a meeting near the Giz Galasi reservoir on April 17, the sides agreed to continue working on hydroelectric power plants and waterworks facilities and determine the number of investments and contractors.

The contractors are yet to be identified, while the works are expected to begin in the next four months. The sides also determined that more than \$22 million would be needed to complete the construction.

On April 16, in a meeting dedicated to the results of the first quarter of 2022, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said that "work on construction of "Khudafarin"



and "Giz Galasi" Hydroelectric Power Stations should be accelerated this year."

"Negotiations are underway with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I think they should also be accelerated so that we can reach an agreement here as soon as possible," the president said.

"Because the capacity of these stations will be

very large - 240 megawatts, and after these stations are built, half of this capacity will reach us," he added.

According to the representative of Azerbaijan's Energy Ministry, Alasgar Hasanov, the total capacity of the Khudafarin hydroelectric power plant is 200 megawatts (100 megawatts belong to the Azerbaijani side). In comparison, the full capacity of Giz Galasi is 80 megawatts (40 megawatts belong to Azerbaijan).

Hasanov said it was planned that the two power plants would jointly produce 716 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year (358 million kilowatt-hours fall on the Azerbaijani side).

At the same time, it is planned to provide 252,000 hectares of existing and 12,000 hectares of new agricultural lands with irrigation water on the Azerbaijani side following the commissioning of water junctions, according to the government official.

Deputy of Hormozgan Steel Exploitation:

Proper planning and Employee Empathy are the two main Pillars of Increasing Production



you know, Hormozgan Steel, despite the problems of energy supply as a parent industrial company, is always determined with all its might to supply rolling companies in order to increase production in the country's industry." It is based on production with all its nominal capacity, but production above nominal capacity requires a correct and technical planning at all levels of the company so that all units do not have the slightest defect in performing their assigned tasks. Fortunately, with the management of Dr. Maroofkhani, the shortcomings and barriers of production in all parts have been minimized and with a detailed plan that was done from the beginning of the year, we were able to produce in both steelmaking and direct reduction above the nominal capacity. This is a valuable brilliance and victory for the employees and a great success for Hormozgan Steel Company.

Explaining the technical reasons for obtaining a record in the field of steelmaking, the Deputy Minister of Hormozgan Steel said:

Reduce emergency stops and reduce the power of electric arc furnaces, increase casting speed and make optimal use of time to produce and prepare equipment, Quality raw material as well as support as well as timely and fast transportation are the technical reasons for obtaining this record, for which many expert works have been done. Referring to the record of 165,101 tons of sponge production in the direct reduction unit as an intermediate product of Hormozgan Steel, Madani said: "Considering that our previous record in direct reduction was the production of 16,3023 tons of sponge iron, our colleagues are determined to improve this record and They were more determined to produce. Explaining the

technical reasons for achieving this record, he said: "In the field of direct regeneration, using time with the method of increasing the rate, and increasing the production speed and ready to use equipment, has played a key role in achieving the record and increasing production." Madani continued: "With the increase in production in the direct reduction area, our need for sponge iron was met and we bought less from outside the company, which had two important advantages: First, due to the high quality of sponge produced in Hormozgan steel, product quality The final is also guaranteed, and secondly, the increase in sponge production in the company, plays a key role in reducing costs and increasing profitability. In the end, he congratulated all the employees and stakeholders of Hormozgan Steel for achieving this success and stated that with the planning done, if this energy supply is provided, maintaining this amount of production and, God willing, increasing it, will continue.



Seyed Asghar Madani, Hormozgan Steel Deputy Minister of Operation, announced the achievement of two important monthly records for the production of slabs and sponge iron in this company. In an interview with Hormozgan Steel Public Relations, Madani set a monthly record of slab production of 150,495 tons and The monthly record for sponge iron production was 165,101 tons. He set the previous record in the steelmaking sector at 147,501 tons in December last year and the previous record in the direct recovery zone at 16,3523 tons in May last month. Expressing satisfaction with the obtained records, Madani said that the realization of these records is primarily the result of integration, empathy, effort and determination of employees motivated by Hormozgan Steel, and secondly, proper planning to increase production from the beginning of the year. Explaining the recent records, the civil engineer said: "As

Biden Predicts Democrats Could Bolster Senate Majority

PORTLAND (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden predicted that his fellow Democrats could win two more U.S. Senate seats in November's midterms, strengthening the party's majority to pass his agenda despite sagging approval ratings.

Speaking at a political fundraiser in Portland during his first trip to the Pacific Northwest since taking office, Biden said he was increasing his travel schedule to make the case around the country about his administration's accomplishments. "I'm determined to make sure we keep the House and the Senate," Biden told the donors. He offered no prediction for the party's prospects in the House.



Taliban Arrest Mastermind of Afghan Mosque Attack

KABUL (Dispatches) - Taliban forces have arrested a suspected Islamic State militant who planned a bomb attack that killed at least 12 worshippers at a Shiite mosque in Afghanistan, police said on Friday.

IS claimed the bomb blast that tore through the Seh Dokan mosque during midday prayers in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif on Thursday.

The attack also wounded 58 people. Balkh province's police spokesman Asif Waziri said Abdul Hamid Sangaryar was a key operative of IS. "He was the mastermind of yesterday's attack on the mosque," Waziri told AFP. The interior ministry also reported the arrest of Sangaryar, an Afghan national.



Moscow Aims to Capture Southern Ukraine



KYIV (Dispatches) - A Russian general declared that Moscow wants to seize all of southern and eastern Ukraine, far wider war aims than it had acknowledged as it presses on with a new offensive after its campaign to capture the capital Kyiv collapsed last month.

Ukraine said the comments by Rustam Minnekayev, deputy commander of Russia's central military district, had given the lie to Russia's previous assertions that it has no territorial ambitions.

"They stopped hiding it," Ukraine's defense ministry said on Twitter. Russia had "acknowledged that the goal of the 'second phase' of the war is not victory over the mythical Nazis, but simply the occupation of eastern and southern Ukraine. Imperialism as it is."

Minnekayev was quoted by Russian state news agencies as saying Moscow aimed to seize the entire eastern Donbas region, link up with the Crimea peninsula, and capture Ukraine's entire south as far as a breakaway, Russian-occupied region of Moldova. That would mean pushing hundreds of miles beyond current lines, past the major Ukrainian cities of Mykolaiv and Odesa.

Ukraine's general staff said Russian forces had increased attacks along the whole frontline in the east and were trying to mount an offensive in the Kharkiv region, north of Russia's main target, the Donbas.

In Kharkiv city, Russian shellfire hit the main Barabashovo market. Ambulance services said there had been casualties but no details were available yet. A wedding hall and a residential building were also struck.

In Geneva, the United Nations human rights office said there was growing evidence of Russian war crimes in Ukraine, including indiscriminate shelling and summary executions, that had caused many civilian casualties. It said Ukraine also appeared to have used weapons with indiscriminate effects.

Russia denies targeting civilians.

Russia said on Thursday it had won the war's biggest fight - the battle for the main port of the Donbas, Mariupol - after a nearly two-month siege. President Vladimir Putin decided not to try to root out thousands of Ukrainian troops still holed up in a huge steel works there.

In a Russian-held section of the city, the guns had largely fallen silent and dazed looking residents ventured out on streets on Thursday to a background of charred apartment blocks and wrecked cars. Some carried suitcases.

Volunteers in white hazmat suits and masks roved the ruins, collecting bodies from inside apartments and loading them on to a truck marked with the letter "Z", symbol of Russia's invasion.

Maxar, a commercial satellite company, said images from space showed freshly dug mass graves on the city's outskirts. Ukraine estimates tens of thousands of civilians have died in the city during Russia's bombardment and siege.

Britain, India Seal Defense Deals, Free Trade Expected by Oct.

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Britain and India agreed to step up defense and business cooperation during a visit to New Delhi by Boris Johnson, who said a bilateral free-trade deal could be wrapped up by October.

On his first visit to the Indian capital as UK prime minister, Johnson discussed with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi ways to boost security ties with India, which buys more than half of its military hardware from Russia.

India's foreign secretary, however, said Johnson did not put pressure on Modi over New Delhi's position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Prime Minister Johnson shared his perspective on it, Prime Minister Modi shared ours - which is that the Russia-Ukraine war should end immediately," Harsh Vardhan Shringla told reporters. "There was no pressure of any kind." India abstained from a United Nations vote condemning the invasion and unlike Britain and other Western nations has not imposed sanctions on Moscow, which calls Russia's actions in Ukraine a "special military operation".



Imran Khan Demands Fresh Elections

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Pakistan's ousted prime minister, Imran Khan, demanded fresh elections amid political turmoil after a new government took over and warned it faces an enormous challenge to revive a battered economy.

Khan along with his over 100 lawmakers in the lower house of the parliament resigned after he lost a vote of confidence moved by a united opposition, that blamed him for mismanaging economy, governance and foreign relations.

"Whoever has made a mistake, there's only one way to correct it that hold elections as soon as possible," Khan told a large rally of tens of thousands of people in the eastern city of Lahore, the third such huge public gathering since he lost power to ratchet up pressure on the new government.

Khan asked his supporters to be ready for his call to march toward Islamabad if his demand to call fresh elections was delayed. "Wait for my call," he said.

Although Khan, a cricket star turned politician, has claimed that the United States was behind his downfall, an assertion that Washington denies, he had lately fallen out with the country's powerful military over differences for the appointment of country's top intelligence chief.

New Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday appointed a multi-party coalition cabinet made up of former political rivals in opposition who united to oust Khan.

The military has directly ruled the country for almost half its nearly 75-year history. It viewed Khan and his conservative agenda favourably when he won election in 2018, but that support waned over the appointment and economic troubles.

Khan has remained defiant so far, rejecting the opposition's accusations as part of a US conspiracy to topple him just because he went ahead to visit Russia against a warning from Washington.

"We wanted to bring oil on 30 per cent discount from Russia," said Khan, who was in Moscow the day Russia attacked Ukraine, adding that his plans included to buy wheat and gas as well.

North and South Korean Leaders in Rare Exchange of Letters

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un exchanged friendly letters with outgoing South Korean President Moon Jae-in this week, in what North Korean state media described as a rare moment of positive news for both countries.

The Korean Central News Agency, a North Korean state news agency, reported that Moon sent Kim a letter earlier this week and said he would continue to work towards Korean unification after his retirement. Kim, in return, thanked Moon for his work on behalf of the "great cause of the nation," the news report said.

Kim also said their joint efforts gave him "hope for the future" and said that he hoped "inter-Korean relations would improve".

South Korea confirmed that the pair had exchanged letters on Friday.

The exchange of letters comes at a tense time on the Korean peninsula as satellite imagery shows new excavation at the nuclear test site in Punggye-ri, suggesting that Pyongyang may be renewing nuclear activity after closing down the site in 2018.

North Korea also test-fired a new tactical guided weapon last weekend to coincide with the anniversary of the birth of founder Kim Il Sung and, in late March, broke a four-year moratorium on testing international ballistic missiles. Analysts say there could be more

testing around April 25 when Pyongyang celebrates the founding of the Korean People's Army.

Moon is due to complete his five-year term when President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol from the People's Power Party takes office on May 10. Under South Korean law, presidents can serve only a single five-year term.

Moon has used his term in office to engage with the North and met Kim an unprecedented three times during his presidency. He has also set a long-term goal of officially ending the Korean War, which concluded in an armistice rather than a peace treaty in 1953.

Moon's desire for reconciliation, however, has not kept his administration from calling for more sanctions against North Korea following the recent round of ICBM launches, according to NK News.

In February, he also warned that the Korean peninsula would be engulfed in a "crisis" if nuclear or long-range missile tests resumed. North Korea, in turn, has issued strong warnings against any military activity by its southern neighbour and said that it was capable of "extermination".

Incoming President Yoon has been described as more "hawkish" than Moon and has said his foreign policy towards the North will focus on "complete denuclearisation", as well as issues of "reciprocity" and "human rights".



Taiwan Details New Advanced Missile, Drone Attack Capabilities

TAIPEI (Dispatches)

- Taiwan is developing missiles that can attack enemy air bases and bring down cruise missiles, and drones that can target their firing locations, according to a report by the military-owned body making the weapons.

Taiwan last year approved T\$240 billion (\$8.20 billion) in extra military spending over the next five years as tensions with China, which claims the island as its own territory, have hit a new high and Chinese military planes have repeatedly flown through Taiwan's air defense identification zone.

Taiwan plans to more than double its yearly missile production capacity to close to 500 this year, the island's defense ministry said last month, as it boosts its combat power.

In a report to parliament this week, a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters, the military-owned National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology offered more details of what the missiles and drones it is developing could do in a war.

The Hsiung Sheng land-attack missile, which experts say could have a range of up to 1,000km - comes in two versions: one with a high-explosive warhead to hit bunkers and hardened command centres, and other with "dispersal" munitions to take out airfield facilities, it said.

Chieh Chung, a researcher at Taipei-based National Policy Foundation, said the Hsiung Sheng could reach most bases under the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command, including those near Shanghai and the province of Zhejiang.

"It could greatly boost the national army's capacity to delay or paralyse the Communist forces' pace of an invasion of Taiwan, making it hard for them to achieve a rapid war," he said.

The advanced Sky Bow III surface-to-air missile is designed to take down ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as fighter jets.

Taiwan's plans predate Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but the war has prompted conversations about the lessons Taiwan could apply to fighting off a Chinese attack, including how Ukraine has resisted a numerically-superior force.



Zaferanieh Apt (\$2400)
250sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J
L.balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Darrous Villa (\$5000)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
yard, & pkg
Fully Furn

Parsian

Apt Farmanieh
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna, J
(\$2200) F.F

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

Elahieh Apt (\$1800)
180sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, F.F

bldg Velenjak
5storey, 20bdrs
S/p, S, J, pkg lots
(\$10000) New

Vanak Apt (\$1200)
3bdrs, balcony, & F.F

Cell: +989121907875
Shanon_tari@yahoo.com
Tel : 88510081
Fax : 88506474

Vali-e-Asr (\$30 per sq.m)
400sq.m, 4bdrs, pkg lots

IRAN NEWS ADVERTISING

44253401

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

IRAN NEWS
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS
ADVERTISING

TEL: 44253448-50
FAX: 44253234
ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM

BMW Launches New 7 Series With All-Electric Model

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - BMW began pre-sales of the seventh generation of the BMW 7 Series on Wednesday, featuring for the first time an all-electric luxury sedan as well as hybrid and internal combustion engine (ICE) models. All three versions will be assembled on the same production line in BMW's Dingolfing plant, with the first deliveries worldwide to take place from November 2022.

The i7 electric vehicle (EV), a competitor to Mercedes' (MBGn.DE) electric EQS, will start at \$119,300 in the United States and 135,900 euros in Europe.

Chief Executive Oliver Zipse predicted that demand for the ICE model would be higher in the United States, where there is less stringent regulation of carbon emissions than in Europe or the United Kingdom.



IMF Slashes Global Growth Forecasts Amid Ukraine War

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The "seismic" impact of the war in Ukraine is spreading worldwide, causing the IMF to sharply downgrade its 2022 global growth forecast to 3.6 per cent.

That slowdown, 0.8 points lower than its previous estimate released in January, comes amid surging prices, shortages and rising debt levels, the IMF said in its latest World Economic Outlook.

The fallout has been felt most acutely in the poorest nations, threatening to erase recent gains as the world had begun to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the risks and uncertainty remain high, the Washington-based lender warned.

"The economic effects of the war are spreading far and wide — like seismic waves that emanate from the epicentre of an earthquake," IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said in the report.

Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, devastating the country's infrastructure and ability to produce grain and other goods, while stiff sanctions on Moscow sent fuel prices higher.

The conflict also sparked a flood of refugees into neighbouring countries.

The crisis will be the focus of global finance officials who gather in Washington this week — virtually and in person — for the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

The report shows Ukraine suffering a 35 per cent collapse of its economy this year, while Russia's GDP will fall 8.5 per cent — more than 11 points below the pre-war expectations.

European nations will see much slower growth as the war drives up fuel and food prices, pushing inflation higher around the world and keeping it high for longer than expected.

The United States and China also will feel the effects of the war and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, with US growth expected to slow to 3.7 per cent, and China's to 4.4 per cent.

The official cautioned that the overall outlook is highly uncertain, and things could get drastically worse if the war is prolonged and tougher sanctions imposed on Moscow.

"Growth could slow significantly more while inflation could turn out higher than expected if, for instance, sanctions aimed at ending the war extend to an even broader volume of Russian energy and other exports," he said.

Meanwhile, the pandemic is continuing, and lockdowns in China to defeat renewed coronavirus outbreaks are slowing activity, including in manufacturing hubs, which "could cause new bottlenecks in global supply chains."

The latest crisis hit as the global economy "was on a mending path but had not yet fully recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic," Gourinchas said.

That has fuelled an acceleration of inflation — expected to hit 5.7 per cent in advanced economies this year and 8.7 per cent in developing nations — which endangers the gains of the past two years.

And inflation will be elevated for "much longer" than previously expected the report said.



EU Works to Cut Cost of Russia Oil Ban To Win Over Skeptics

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The European Commission is working to speed up the availability of alternative energy supplies to try to cut the cost of banning Russian oil and persuade Germany and other reluctant EU nations to accept the measure, an EU source told Reuters.

Some EU countries are also pushing for other new restrictions nearly eight weeks after Russia began its invasion of Ukraine.

These include excluding Russia's top lenders Sberbank SBER.MM and Gazpromneft SIBN.MM from the SWIFT banking system, halting imports of nuclear fuel from Russia, banning more Russian news channels, suspending visas for Russians, and blacklisting additional individuals and companies linked to the Kremlin, diplomats said.

None of these measures has been formally proposed and countries have different positions on them. Neither has a date been set for the European Commission to propose a sixth package of EU sanctions against Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine on February 24, EU sources said.

Work is underway, however, to assess the costs of replacing Russian oil with imports from other suppliers, one of the sources said, noting the Commission was talking to oil-producing countries to help arrange national deals for quick and moderately priced alternatives.

Brussels is preparing a full impact assessment of an oil ban as part of possible further sanctions, the source said on condition of anonymity because the source was not authorised to speak to the press.

Oil exports are the Kremlin's main source of foreign currency and many within the EU have called for an end to oil payments because they effectively finance the war in Ukraine, which Russia calls a "special military operation".

Germany is the main opponent of an oil embargo, and although it is not the only one, a shift in its position would prompt others to follow suit, the source said.

The German government has said it is working to end Russian imports this year but has also urged a gradual approach to avoid major economic disruption.

About a third of Germany's crude oil came from Russia in 2021.

Another strategy expected to be used to persuade doubters is to prolong the wind-down period to end existing contracts or introduce a full ban on oil gradually, the source said.

Any Loan to Sri Lanka Requires Debt Sustainability

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund said discussions with Sri Lanka on a potential IMF loan program are at an early stage and any deal would require "adequate assurances" that the island country's debts can be put on a sustainable path.

In a statement emailed to Reuters, IMF Sri Lanka Mission Chief Masahiro Nozaki said that IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva discussed lending options and policy plans with a Sri Lankan delegation.

"An IMF-supported program should be designed to resolve Sri Lanka's acute balance of payments problems and put the economy back on a sustainable growth path as early as possible," Nozaki said.

The statement came after protests in response to shortages of fuel and other essentials turned deadly yesterday and Sri Lanka's Finance Minister formally asked the Fund for a Rapid Financing Instrument loan for countries needing urgent balance-of-payments support.

Nozaki said the IMF is "very concerned about the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka and hardships suffered by the people, especially the poor and vulnerable."

But he noted that IMF staff had determined last month in an annual economic review that Sri Lanka's public debt was unsustainable, and the country needs to take steps to restore debt sustainability prior to any IMF lending, including the emergency Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI).

Such restoration of debt sustainability typically requires a restructuring or reprofiling of public debts, which in Sri Lanka's case would require cooperation from China, one of its largest bilateral creditors.

The IMF used the low-conditionality RFI loans extensively to assist countries during the Covid-19 pandemic and has provided such loans to ease balance of payments problems after natural disasters, conflicts and commodity price shocks.

"These considerations would need to be examined for a potential RFI for Sri Lanka, once adequate assurances are obtained that debt sustainability will be resolved," Nozaki said.

Japan Stimulus to Include Cash for Low-Income Households

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The Japanese government has decided to provide handouts of ¥100,000 (RM3,314) to newly cash-strapped households as part of an emergency relief package expected to be announced next week, the Yomiuri daily reported.

The cash handouts will be offered by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government to households whose incomes have fallen to levels that exempt them from paying residential taxes from the new fiscal year that began this month, the paper said.

The spending would come from last fiscal year's extra budget and reserves, the Yomiuri said, without citing sources.

The Liberal Democratic Party-led (LDP) government has already announced cash handouts of the same amount for such households that qualified in fiscal 2021, with payouts beginning this spring. These households would not qualify for the new payouts, the paper said.

The government is now working to compile a series of emergency measures by the end of this month to help households and small firms cope with surging fuel and other prices, tapping budget reserves of up to ¥5.5 trillion.

The government also plans to provide aid for low-income families, of ¥50,000 per child, the Yomiuri said.

Also under consideration is whether to raise a subsidy ceiling for fuel wholesalers from ¥25 per litre, the Asahi newspaper reported separately.

How to finance the relief package has been a sticking point between the LDP and its small coalition partner Komeito, whose leader, Natsuo Yamaguchi, has repeatedly called for the compilation of an extra budget before the parliament session ends in mid-June. Yamaguchi and Kishida will likely discuss the issue when they meet later today, broadcaster NHK reported.

The LDP has so far resisted calls for an extra budget to enable a quick rollout of aid before an upper house election this summer.

China Exports to North Korea Surge



BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's exports to North Korea surged in January-March with sales of edible oil, wheat flour and pharmaceutical compounds to its reclusive neighbour sky-rocketing after a Covid-induced pause, Chinese customs data showed.

China resumed freight trains to North Korea in January for the first time since Covid-19 led to a border lockdown between the two countries in early 2020, halting almost all trade.

The rebound in trade comes as the United States is urging the UN Security Council to further sanction North Korea over its renewed ballistic missile launches. North Korea has been subjected to UN sanctions since 2006, although the Security Council does allow for humanitarian exemptions.

In January-March, Chinese exports to North Korea leaped to US\$173.4 million from only US\$13 million a year earlier, and nearly recovered to the US\$215.3 million figure for the first quarter of 2020, when Covid was just emerging. Imports more than quintupled from a year earlier to US\$23.5 million, according to the customs data.

For March alone, Chinese shipments to North Korea stood at US\$57 million, up from US\$13.0 million a year earlier, while imports were at US\$3.5 million, versus US\$1.3 million in the previous year.

The top export items were edible oil and wheat flour. North Korea bought US\$16.4 million of soybean oil, US\$5.1 million of palm oil, US\$4.3 million of wheat flour and US\$4.1 million of soda in the first quarter, the customs data showed.

North Korea has long suffered from food insecurity, with observers saying mismanagement of its economy had been exacerbated by sanctions and then the unprecedented border lockdowns due to Covid-19.

China also exported US\$11.3 million of chemical compounds mostly used in making steroids in the first three months. It also shipped more than US\$3.7 million of tobacco to its neighbor.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

شناسه آگهی: ۱۳۰۵۶۲۱

TENDER NO.:
01-31-9780009

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
32	PARTS FOR "BROWN BOVERI-SULZE" GAS TURBINE TYPE NS70	367

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 12,839 EURO or 3,506,925,460 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN
PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL
NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 35 89 Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

Public Relations
www.shana.ir
www.nisoc.ir
<http://iets.mporg.ir>
www.setadiran.ir

OIC Calls UN to Stand Firm Against Islamophobia

NEW YORK (IP) - In a meeting attended by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday, representatives of the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) drafted a statement (to be adopted on Monday) condemning any desecration of the Holy Quran and other acts of Islamophobia. The OIC Group strongly condemns the recent vile act of desecration of the Holy Quran during rallies in Sweden organized by the Danish Right-

Wing Party Stram Kurs. Such provocative acts illustrate the alarming rise of Islamophobia and the need for global efforts to counter this.

Such Islamophobic behavior hurts the sensitivities of over 1.5 billion Muslims and constitutes a gross abuse of the right of freedom of expression, and substantiates extremist narratives. They result in rising hatred and violence against Muslims.



Ukraine War Steals the Show at Venice Art Biennale

VENICE (Dispatches) - Pavlo Makov fled Russia's invasion with almost nothing but is proud to represent Ukraine at this year's Venice Biennale, which raises questions about the role of art at a time of war.

"I feel myself much more a citizen of Ukraine than an artist from this country," the 63-year-old told AFP ahead of the opening this weekend of one of the world's most prestigious art exhibitions.

He added: "I'm simply doing something that I have to do. It's like a duty." Back after a pandemic-induced break, the 59th edition of the Biennale has been overshadowed by the war in Ukraine.

Organizers banned Moscow's representatives in protest at the invasion, while Ukraine's national exhibit only made it here after being whisked out of Kyiv on the day Russian troops crossed the border.

Makov's installation comprises 78 light blue funnels mounted on a triangle through which water flows, slowing as it travels downwards to drip slowly into the collecting basin, echoing in the otherwise silent space.

He describes his work, "The Fountain of Exhaustion", as "a metaphor for contemporary life".

"I don't think art can change the world. But art can help us to survive," he said. Makov sees as unavoidable Russia's exclusion from the Biennale, where 58 countries are represented in national pavilions showcasing 213 individual artists.

"The dialogue with Russian culture we have now has only one place, at the front," he said.

The funnels for his work were brought from Kyiv by curator Maria Lanko, who left the Ukrainian capital when Russia invaded on February 24 and drove for six days through Romania, Hungary and Austria to Italy.

The 35-year-old had been preparing for war, although she had to leave behind the massive base of Makov's installation.

"We kind of joked, saying: 'Okay, if ever something starts we can put those boxes in a private car and take them out'," she told AFP.

In the nearby Giardini, the halls of the Biennale's Russian pavilion are empty.

The curator and artists resigned following the invasion, with artist Kirill Savchenkov saying "there is no place for art when civilians are dying".

Organizers of the Biennale praised the move and subsequently banned anyone linked to the Russian government from the entire event, joining a global cultural boycott of Moscow over the war.

They also financed the reconstruction of Makov's artwork.

"It is definitely due to this solidarity (that) we have this project finished here," he said.



Makov himself left Ukraine with his family -- including his 92-year-old mother. They are currently in Austria.

Packing in haste, initially "I only took documents and money", he said.

But then came the thought that "I may not be able to have shower in the next coming week... So you take underwear with you and the pair of jeans and that's it."

The Biennale, which is open to the public from April 23 to November 27, was due to take place in 2021 but was postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

This year's edition -- the theme of which is "The Milk of Dreams" -- is curated by Italian Cecilia Alemani, who has ensured there is a majority of women and non-binary artists.

"In the 57 editions of the Biennale, except for the last one, there has been a great preponderance of male artists. This is why I wanted to rebalance the history," the 45-year-old told AFP.

Looking to the Ukraine conflict, Alemani said she appreciated the Russian team's decision to resign rather than "have that brand for the rest of their lives".

She added: "It is also the role of the Biennale ... to record the turmoil of history."

In this spirit, Alemani announced the launch of "Piazza Ucraina" (Ukraine Square), a space designed for meditation, discussions and performances.

It is marked by a mountain of sandbags, similar to those erected around statues in Ukraine to protect them from attack.

Malaysia to Explore Further Opportunities For Palm Oil, Rubber



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia is intensifying its efforts to boost demand for palm oil and rubber, and is ready to meet the encouraging demand for the commodities.

To this end, the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC) is engaging with Egyptian and Qatari agricommodity players to propose several initiatives, including a proposal to have the Malaysian palm oil included in the Egyptian Food Subsidy Scheme.

In a statement today, the MPIC said the Malaysian Palm Oil Board anticipates crude palm oil production to improve by 4.9 per cent to 19 million tons this year, from 18.12 million tons in 2021.

"This would increase palm oil stocks by 21.1 per cent to 1.95 million tons in 2022, from 1.61 million tons in 2021.

"This is excellent news for industry players and market onlookers, as it shows that Malaysia is prepared to meet the encouraging demand for palm oil from the market, including from Egypt and Qatar," it said.

To increase exports of Malaysian commodities, especially palm oil, MPIC Minister Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin conducted an Economic and Agricommodities Promotion Mission to Egypt and Qatar from April 16-20, 2022.

During the mission, the minister had chaired a roundtable meeting with Egyptian and Qatari agricommodity players, as part of MPIC's initiatives to promote Malaysian agricommodity products.

The roundtable discussions covered trade promotional activities, business cooperation and information exchanges between governments and key players from within the industry, particularly for palm oil, rubber, and timber products.

The minister had also encouraged Qatari investors to collaborate with Malaysian manufacturers who are experienced in the formulation and production of rubber products.

"They could leverage Malaysia's position as one of the world's main exporters of rubber products, as well as the free trade agreement between Malaysia and other ASEAN countries where most rubber products have zero import tariff," said Zuraida.

Gov't Lifts Ban on Export of Tomato, Eggplant, Potato and Onion

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration will not implement the decision to ban the export of four Iranian agricultural products, including tomato, eggplant, potato and onion.

On April 19, the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture Jihad sent a letter to the Iran Customs Administration to temporarily ban the export of the mentioned four agricultural products. However, the Iranian parliament's economic committee objected to the decision, arguing that the ban would result in a number of reasons, including losses for farmers. This resulted in the decision being annulled.

The Iranian Ministry of Agriculture Jihad has changed its decision addressed to the IRICA, and currently, the export of the mentioned products is not banned. Still, the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad may replace the ban on the export of these products with an increase in duties.

Iran to Hold Trade Exhibition in Kazakhstan

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Affairs announced plans to organize an international exhibition of export capabilities and potentials of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kazakhstan's Almaty.

Mehdi Safari broke the news on Friday and stated that Iran enjoys significant trade capability and capacity in its relations with Central Asian countries especially Kazakhstan.

As licensed by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) and joint cooperation of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Chamber of Commerce, the exhibition, which is the largest trade event and exclusive exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Central Asia, will be held on July 1-3 in Almaty of Kazakhstan.

This prestigious exhibition will be held in the fields of oil, gas, petrochemicals, construction materials, energy and engineering services (water and electricity), agriculture, industry, equipment and machinery, detergents, cosmetics, tourism, home appliances, furniture and wood industries, carpets and rugs, food industries, poultry, livestock and car parts.

Barter Trade Bypassing...

FROM PAGE 1

"Can Russia follow Iran's lead to circumvent Western sanctions? Some analysts say it already is," the broadcaster said.

During a two-day visit to Moscow in January, Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi shared that the two countries had discussed monetary and banking issues and agreed to remove trade barriers to increase trade to \$10 billion a year.

Commercial exchanges between the two countries hit a new record in 2021, exceeding the equivalent of \$4 billion. Russian exports to Iran accounted for over \$3 billion, while Russian imports from Iran reached \$967.3 million, according to media reports. "The two countries can take steps to break the dominance of the dollar over monetary and banking relations and trade with the national currency," Raeisi said during his visit.

Nearly 80 percent of trade between Russia and Iran currently consists of agricultural products. Russia exports grains and oilseeds to Iran and imports Iranian fruits and vegetables, dried fruits and nuts.

Vice-Governor of Iranian Central Bank Mohsen Karimi said earlier this month that Iran is willing to trade with Russia in national currencies and agreements on this arrangement already exist. Last November, Iran and Pakistan clinched a barter trade agreement during the meeting of their Joint Economic Committee in Tehran.

Pakistan was Iran's eighth-largest trade partner in 2008-09, prior to the intensification of sanctions on Tehran, but the bilateral trade of some 1.3 billion at the time could not withstand the negative impact of the sanctions. The two countries are now working to reverse this trajectory, and through the new barter mechanism they are optimistic to solve enough obstacles to increase annual trade to 5 billion by 2023.

During Adviser to Prime Minister of Pakistan for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood's visit to Tehran in December, the two sides signed their first barter trade agreement to exchange Pakistani rice with Iranian LPG.

Other countries are joining the bandwagon. On Tuesday, Iran's deputy agriculture minister Mohammad Qorbani said agreements have been reached with the Central Asian nations of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to start barter trade.

The Islamic Republic is also stepping up commercial exchanges with Brazil. Qorbani said their agriculture ministers had agreed to a new barter arrangement. Brazil, he said, has welcomed imports of fresh apples, nuts, herbs and saffron from Iran, which will help balance out trade deficit between the two countries.

According to the minister, Iran levies only 4% import duty on Brazilian goods exports, while Brazil has about 120% custom duty on imported products. Tehran hopes the new agreement will help reduce the imbalance, he said.

Iran exports \$100 million worth of goods to Brazil a year against \$500 million-\$800 million in imports from the Latin American nation. It ships 300,000-400,000 tonnes of urea to Brazil a year, but the figure will rise to 2 million tonnes in two years, Qorbani said. Iran began sending test cargoes to Brazil, a new market for Iranian petrochemicals exports, in mid-2019 but the trade ran into trouble when Iranian vessels were stranded at Brazilian ports for weeks after state-run oil firm Petrobras refused to sell them fuel due to sanctions imposed by the US.

Inflation Rate...

FROM PAGE 1

An administration that took office in August has taken credit for that, saying its fiscal and monetary policies helped contain price rises in Iran.

That comes as the government has reported a significant increase in its oil revenues since the middle of 2021 despite sanctions imposed by the US which ban Iran's trade of crude.

Experts say falling inflation rate coupled with quarters of economic growth are signs that Iran has managed to emerge from an economic crisis caused by the US sanctions and the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

No Country Dares...

FROM PAGE 1

"Given our capabilities, we can have effective presence in all maritime environments of the world whenever the Commander-in-Chief [of the Iranian Armed Forces] orders us to do so," Admiran Irani said, referring to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Stressing that the presence of other countries' naval fleet in the region is not justified, Irani said, "We have extensive interests and resources in the sea [and] wherever we feel threatened, our fleet will be there."

"Today, we escort our ships anywhere across maritime locations to ensure [their] and we are faced with no restrictions. Our presence offers security to the region and the entire world," the top Iranian commander noted.

The commander censured some regional countries that are influenced by the anti-Iran propaganda of the West, saying Iran aims to increase its own defensive capabilities and is not a threat to any country.

Unfortunately, some countries that were fooled by the U.S. media propaganda, introduced the term Iranophobia to the region, Irani told al-Alam TV.

"They were unaware of the fact that if Iran boosts its defense capabilities, it is aimed at protecting its own interests. Iran is never a threat to its neighbors, as Iranians have not invaded any place or done injustice to any society over the past centuries," the Iranian commander added.

Iranian commanders have repeatedly warned against the presence of hostile, extra-regional navies in the region, asserting that neither the region nor the countries that host them would become more secure by their presence.

U.S. Should Have...

FROM PAGE 1

"The White House should abandon its excessive demands and its indecision and walk down the path of realism and resolution [of the standing differences]," he added.

The top diplomat, meanwhile, expressed gratitude towards Borrell and his deputy Enrique Mora over their efforts to coordinate the talks.

Borrell, for his part, appreciated the Islamic Republic's will for conclusion of an agreement and the various initiatives that the Islamic Republic has come up with to facilitate the prospect.

He, however, expressed disappointment concerning a mid-March-present pause that has been announced in the negotiations, urging fresh talks between the EU's representative and Iran's top negotiator Ali Baqeri-Kani.

Major Surge...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Head of the Iran-Oman Joint Economic Committee Mohsen Zarrabi told Omani newspaper Muscat Daily on Wednesday that Iranian exports to Oman had increased by 63% over the year to late March to reach \$716 million.

Zarrabi said the increase was significant given the impact of US sanctions on Iran and restrictions imposed on trade because of the pandemic.

Iran has seen a major boom in its non-oil exports since 2019 when the country started to feel the impacts of American sanctions on normal sales of crude.

The sanctions caused the government to introduce measures to diversify the economy away from oil, including incentives for exporters that has led to higher sales of Iranian products in international markets.

UK Favors to...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran and the remaining parties to the JCPOA have been engaged in talks in Vienna to revive the deal since April last year, with Tehran insisting that the sanctions must be fully removed in a verifiable manner.

The British official, in response to another question by IRNA on London's assessment of the Vienna talks, said that Britain believes that the Vienna talks have reached their end and there is a good agreement on the table.

Johnson's aide expressed hope that the opportunity can be used to re-implement the JCPOA.

Switchboard:
(+98) (21) 44253448
Public Relations Tel:
(+98)(21) 44253450
Editorial Board: 44253449
Public Relations Fax:
(+98)(21) 44253395
Advertising Department:
Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234
Website:
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

E-Mail Address:
info@irannewsdaily.com
ISSN 1024-6053
P.O. Box: 15875-8551
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St.,
Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzadaran
Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Printed by:Honar Sarzmin Sabz
Distributed by:
Cities of Iran Cultural and
Artistic Institute
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Bielefeld Sack Coach Kramer

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Second-from-bottom Arminia Bielefeld sacked their head coach Frank Kramer in a last-gasp bid to avoid relegation from the Bundesliga.
With four games left, Bielefeld are three points from a guaranteed place in Germany's top flight next season.
Last Sunday's 3-0 defeat at home by Bayern Munich was their seventh straight loss, which sparked Kramer's sudden departure.
"We want to give the team a boost in order to stay in the Bundesliga," said sports director Samir Arabi.

Ko Resets for LPGA in L.A.

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - World number one LKo Jin-young will seek to bounce back from a disappointing performance in the Chevron Championship last month when she returns to LPGA action at the Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles.
"I didn't play well in the Chevron so I need to fix something to do my swing, so I practiced hard," said the South Korean star, who finished tied for 53rd in the first major championship of the year in Rancho Mirage, California.

Grizzlies Rally to Shock Timberwolves, Warriors Defeat Nuggets

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The Memphis Grizzlies erased a 26-point deficit to stun the Minnesota Timberwolves 104-95 on Thursday and take a 2-1 lead in their NBA playoff series.
Down 26 points in the second quarter and 25 with 3:10 left in the third, the Grizzlies held their nerve in Minneapolis, out-scoring the Timberwolves 37-12 in the fourth quarter to match the fourth-largest comeback in NBA playoff history.
"It's an emotional victory -- coming from being down a lot," said Desmond Bane, who led the Grizzlies with 26 points.
But he cautioned that there was still a lot of work to do in the best-of-seven Western Conference series.
"We've got to keep our heads," Bane said. "It's first to four."
Elsewhere the Golden State Warriors were closing in on those four needed victories, taking a 3-0 stranglehold on their series with a 118-113 victory over the Nuggets in Denver.
In Salt Lake City, the Dallas Mavericks weathered a late surge from the Utah Jazz for a 126-118 victory that gave the Mavs a 2-1 series lead.
But the Grizzlies produced the most astonishing result of the night.
Brandon Clarke scored 12 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter for Memphis.
Ja Morant connected on just five of 18 shots from the field but put together a triple-double of 16 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for Memphis, who used a 21-0 fourth-quarter scoring run to turn the tables on the T-wolves.



Minnesota led 47-21 with 10:28 left in the second quarter when the Grizzlies mounted their first charge, trimming the deficit to seven points at halftime.
The Timberwolves regained the upper hand with a quick start to the third quarter, taking a 73-50 lead on Jaden McDaniels' three-pointer with 4:28 left in the period.
D'Angelo Russell's three-pointer with 3:10 left in the third put Minnesota up 79-54, and despite the Grizzlies' scoring surge to end the period they trailed by 16 going into the fourth.
Bane drilled a three-pointer with 8:33 to play to cap a 21-0 scoring run that tied the game at 83-83.
Tyus Jones drained a three-pointer to put Memphis up for the first time, 86-85, and they didn't trail again.
Russell led the Timberwolves with 22 points, but he missed all three of his shots from the field in a scoreless fourth and teammate Karl-Anthony Towns, limited by foul trouble and aggressive defense from the Grizzlies, was held to just eight points.
In Denver, Stephen Curry and Jordan Poole scored 27 points each and Klay Thompson added 26 as the Warriors withstood a Nuggets team led by NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic's 37 points and 18 rebounds.
Draymond Green came up with a big steal with 34.7 seconds remaining and Golden State closed the game on a 9-2 run. They can finish the series with a win in Denver on Sunday.
It was a bitter defeat for the Nuggets, who took a 111-109 lead on a layup by Jokic with 3:20 left.
Golden State clamped down defensively and the Nuggets went six straight possessions without a basket as the Warriors seized control.
The Mavericks held off the Jazz despite again playing without injured star Luka Doncic, who has missed all three games of the series with a calf strain but appears set to return for game four.
Jalen Brunson shook off a sore back to score 31 points for Dallas.
Spencer Dinwiddie scored 10 of his 20 in the fourth quarter and Maxi Kleber added 17.
Donovan Mitchell scored 28 of his 32 points in the second half for Utah, who cut the deficit to one point on Mike Conley's three-pointer with 6:42 left in the fourth quarter, but couldn't get in front.

Ronaldo Thanks Liverpool Fans for Show of Compassion

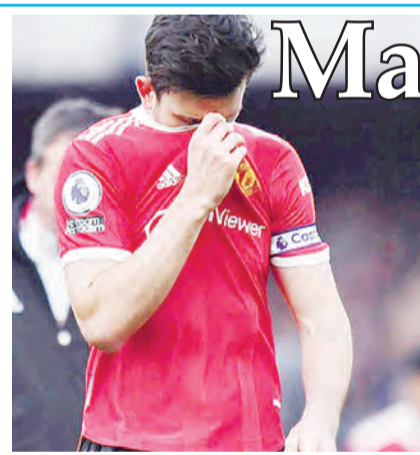
MANCHESTER (Dispatches)- Cristiano Ronaldo expressed his gratitude to Liverpool fans for their show of support after his newborn baby son died.
The fierce rivalry between Manchester United and Liverpool was set aside during the seventh minute of Tuesday's 4-0 win for the home side at Anfield as the entire stadium joined in a minute's applause.
Liverpool fans also sang their anthem "you'll never walk alone".
Ronaldo missed the match to be with his family after he and partner Georgina Rodriguez announced the sad news on Monday.
"One world... One sport... One global family," Ronaldo posted on Instagram, alongside a video of Anfield rising to its feet.
"Thanks, Anfield. Me and my family will never forget this moment of respect and compassion."
Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp described the ovation as his "moment of the match" despite a resounding win for his side.
Ronaldo and Rodriguez, who were expecting twins, also confirmed the birth of a baby daughter on Monday.
The couple, who met during Ronaldo's time at Real Madrid, have a four-year-old daughter together, while Ronaldo has three other children.

Ten Hag to Become Man Utd Manager Next Season

LONDON (Dispatches) - Erik ten Hag will leave Ajax to become Manchester United manager next season, the English giants confirmed on Thursday.
The 52-year-old, who has signed a three-year contract, faces a huge task to revive the Red Devils fortunes after a fifth consecutive trophyless season.
The Dutchman becomes the fifth permanent manager at Old Trafford since Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013 sent the 20-time English champions into decline.
Ten Hag is on course to win his third league title with Ajax and took the four-time European champions to the semi-finals of the Champions League in 2019 for the first time in 22 years.

"It is a great honour to be appointed manager of Manchester United and I am hugely excited by the challenge ahead," said Ten Hag.
"I know the history of this great club and the passion of the fans, and I am absolutely determined to develop a team capable of delivering the success they deserve."
"It will be difficult to leave Ajax after these incredible years, and I can assure our fans of my complete commitment and focus on bringing this season to a successful conclusion before I move to Manchester United."
United sit sixth in the Premier League, 23 points behind leaders Manchester City, and are unlikely to qualify for next season's Champions League.
The club have been looking for a permanent manager since Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was sacked in October.
Ralf Rangnick was appointed interim boss for the remainder of the season, but the German has been unable to inspire any improvement in United's performance.
Rangnick has been fiercely critical of the standard of the United squad in recent weeks, claiming after Tuesday's 4-0 defeat by Liverpool that United are "six years" behind their rivals.

Maguire Receives Bomb Threat



LONDON (Dispatches) - Harry Maguire's house was checked by police on Thursday after the Manchester United captain received a bomb threat.
England defender Maguire, who lives with his fiancée and two children, has endured a difficult season with club and country, but it is not known who made the threat.
The 29-year-old's home was swept by Cheshire Constabulary to ensure his safety.
"In the last 24 hours, Harry has received a serious threat to his family home,"

a spokesman for Maguire said.
"He has reported this to the police who are now looking into the matter.
"The safety of his family and those around him is obviously Harry's number one priority.
"He will continue to prepare for this weekend's fixture as normal and we will not be commenting in any further detail at this time."
The bomb scare is the latest issue for Maguire, who has been subjected to stinging criticism from pundits and jeers from England fans this season.
Maguire was part of the United team thrashed 4-0 at arch rivals Liverpool on Tuesday.
He is next due to play when United travel to Arsenal for a crucial Premier League clash in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League.
United, who have slipped to sixth in the Premier League, on Thursday announced the appointment of Ajax boss Erik Ten Hag as their new manager from next season.

ATP Slams Wimbledon's Unfair Ban of Russian and Belarusian Players

LONDON (Dispatches) - Wimbledon's decision to ban Russian and Belarusian players from this year's tournament has been slammed as "unfair" by men's tour organizers the ATP.
All England Club chiefs on Wednesday revealed their move in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
But ATP bosses claim the ban, which extends to all Lawn Tennis Association events in Britain, is discriminatory and sets a damaging precedent.
Russian and Belarusian players had been allowed to compete in ATP tournaments since the war in Ukraine started, although they were not able to use their national flags.
The ITF had already banned both countries' teams from the Davis Cup and the Billie Jean King Cup.
"We believe that today's unilateral decision by Wimbledon and the LTA to exclude players from Russia and Belarus from this year's British grass-court swing is unfair and has the potential to set a damaging precedent for the game," an ATP statement said.
"Discrimination based on nationality also constitutes a violation of our agreement with Wimbledon that states that player entry is based solely on ATP Rankings."
"We strongly condemn Russia's reprehensible invasion of Ukraine and stand in solidarity with the millions of innocent people affected by the ongoing war."



Murray Reverses Decision to Skip Clay to Enter Madrid Open

LONDON (Dispatches) - Andy Murray has reversed his decision to skip the entire clay-court season after being confirmed as a wildcard entry for the Madrid Open.
The 34-year-old, who has been training in Florida with coach Ivan Lendl, had initially considered sitting out all matches on the surface to minimise the wear and tear on his body ahead of the grass court season.
However, he has now changed his plans and will be in action in the Spanish capital next week.
Murray could also enter the Italian Open, which begins on May 2.
But he remains unlikely to feature at the French Open.
Former world number one Murray, who has battled back from career-saving hip surgery, previously said clay had exacerbated injury issues and almost caused him to miss last year's Wimbledon.
Murray, now ranked 83rd in the world, has lost in the second round in his last six tournaments, including to world number two Daniil Medvedev at the Miami Open late last month.
He recently reunited with Lendl, with whom he won all three of his Grand Slam titles.

