

Minister of National Defense of China General Wei Fenghe, Heading A High-Ranking Delegation, Is Reportedly to Arrive in Tehran Today To Meet With Senior Iranian Officials

IRAN NEWS

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Al-Aqsa Mosque Needs to Be Protected Under Int'l Law

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations (UN) has strongly condemned the latest bout of Israeli aggression against the al-Aqsa Mosque and warned the occupying regime of the consequences of its actions, stressing that the holy Muslim site must be protected under international law.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the comment at a meeting of the UN Security Council on Monday, during which he criticized the 15-member body for its silence and inaction on the Israeli regime's crimes against the Palestinian people, saying as long as the Security Council continues to be passive and silent about such crimes, the rights of the Palestinians will not be protected.

"The continuation of the Security Council's current stance has only encouraged and emboldened the Israeli regime to perpetuate its occupation and crimes against the oppressed Palestinian people," Takht-Ravanchi said.

Iran's UN ambassador said the crimes of the Zionist regime against the Palestinian people are completely documented and undeniable, adding that they are considered war crimes under international law and the perpetrators must be brought to justice without further delay.

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President Calls for Using Revolutionary Personnel in Education System



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Emphasizing that a strong Iran is inconceivable without a principled education and promotion of education, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi said, "What is spent in the field of education is investment to ensure the future development and progress of the country".

Speaking on Monday night in a meeting with a group of educators and activists in the field of education, Ayatollah Raisi stressed the need for practical support for educators and said, "The government is determined to improve all aspects of the law on teacher ranking to promote the dignity of educators".

The President added, "Unfortunately, in terms of ranking teachers, only the financial sector has been highlighted, but various other dimensions that can improve the position of educators in society have been neglected".

He called the implementation of the document on the transformation of education a necessity and said, "This document is one of the upstream documents and the government will definitely follow and implement it as the most important document".

The President also stressed the need to follow the status of the Farhangian Reserve Fund, and said, "Following the status of this fund is one of the most important concerns of teachers and it is necessary that the relevant officials take serious action in this regard and take steps to address the concerns of teachers".

Raisi also criticized the existence of numerous and scattered systems in the field of education and stressed the need to regulate these systems, and called on the Minister of Education to start this action as soon as possible to organize this field.

The President praised the efforts and compassionate efforts of teachers during the pandemic, and said, "Dear teachers really entered the stage and tried to educate our children with creativity and initiative".

In another part of his speech, Raisi described the issues raised regarding the optimal use of school space in order to improve education and said, "It is necessary to try to have a better and appropriate use of existing capacities and facilities to increase productivity".

He further pointed out the importance of attracting efficient, young and revolutionary human resources to the body of education and reminded the important position of Farhangian University in this field.

The President said, "While respecting all the veterans and those who have worked in the field of education, today it is necessary that the Higher Education Council, which is the think tank of creating an educational transformation in the country, create a map, and a new and creative look should prevail in it with the presence of revolutionary human resources".

Russia Warns About Threats of Israeli Settlement Plans in Syrian Golan

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya has once again denounced Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights, stating that the regime's plans for the expansion of its illegal settlements in the strategic region undermine regional stability.

He made the remarks during a UN Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question in New York on Monday.

"Israel's settlement plans in the occupied Syrian Golan threaten to undermine regional stability," Nebenzya said.

In 1967, Israel waged a full-scale war against Arab territories, during which it occupied a large area of the Golan and annexed it four years later - a move never recognized by the international community.

In 1973, another war broke out, and a year later, a UN-brokered ceasefire came into force, according to which Tel Aviv and Damascus agreed to separate their troops and create a buffer zone in the Heights. However, Israel has over the past several decades built dozens of illegal settlements in the Golan in defiance of international calls for the regime to stop its illegal construction activities there.

In a unilateral move rejected by the international community in 2019, former US president Donald Trump signed a decree recognizing Israeli "sovereignty" over the Golan. Nevertheless, Syria has repeatedly reaffirmed its sovereignty over the Golan, saying the territory must be completely restored to its control.

The United Nations has also time and again emphasized Syria's sovereignty over the territory. Earlier this year, Deputy Russian Ambassador to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy said Russia is concerned over Tel Aviv's announced plans for expanding settlement activity in the occupied Golan Heights.

He said the move directly contradicts the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention.

"We stress Russia's unchanging position, according to which we do not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights that are an inalienable part of Syria," Polyanskiy said on February 23.

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ViewPoint
By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

World in Serious Arms Race

A recent study has once again proved this fact that the world is more focused on military spending and the arms race rather than focusing on the humanitarian issues, and the countries prefer to spend their money on weapons than to help people to have a peaceful life.

According to the new study, the world's military expenditure has hit unprecedented levels, surpassing \$2 trillion for the first time in 2021 and the figure may or better to say definitely rise in the upcoming years because of tension between the governments and the countries.

Researchers from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) predict that last year's total global military spend of \$2.1 trillion will only be beaten this year, given the security situation in Europe after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This figure is just limited to the official deals and it may increase considerably with adding the smuggled arms.

The top countries that boosted their military arsenal in 2021 were the U.S., China, India, the UK and Russia, together accounting for 62 percent of total expenditure, according to the study. And one can say the result of such a boost in the current Ukraine war which has led to billions of dollars of damages.

Despite the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world, global military expenditure by governments rose by 0.7 percent last year, it said. This is while many people in the world are suffering from the poverty and weak economy and they are clashing with their governments.

"In 2021 military spending rose for the seventh consecutive time to reach US\$2.1 trillion. That is the highest figure we have ever had," said Diego Lopes da Silva, senior researcher at Sipri.

Though the U.S. outspent all other nations with \$801b, it actually recorded a decline of 1.4 percent from its 2020 expenditure.

U.S. funding for military research and development rose by 24 percent between 2012 and 2021, while procurements of arms fell by 6.4 percent during the same period. Both declined year-on-year in 2021. Of course one can expect such a budget for military sector from the U.S. as a world mongering country which has been behind most conflicts in the world. Major arms factories are in the U.S. and they milk weaker countries with supply of insignificant weapons.

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Wall Along Turkey-Iran Border to Complete in 2023

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The construction of the 295-kilometers wall along the border of Turkey and Iran will be finished by 2023, the country's interior minister has said.

After inspecting the borderline from a helicopter, Soyly spoke at a press conference held at one of the border posts on April 24.

"Until now, a 191-kilometer wall has been erected along the borders of the eastern provinces of Ağrı and Iğdır," Soyly said. "Also, some 26 minefields have been cleaned in three stages."

Reminding that some 95 percent of the construction of some 250 towers with optical viewfinders has also been finished, Soyly said: "All the eastern border will be controlled with walls, towers, wire fences and thermal cameras at the Turkish Republic's 100th anniversary next year."

Turkey has also built an 837-kilometer wall on the Syrian border in the country's south, the minister highlighted.

Breaking new ground, Turkey had started guarding the country's biggest lake, Lake Van, with the Coast Guard last year against the migrant influx. "This is the first time that Coast Guard serves in a lake or region in the east," Soyly underlined. "The Coast Guard has a lot of experience in the Mediterranean and the Aegean Seas on preventing migrants [from entering]. We want to take benefits from these experiences," he added.

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Majlis to Hold Meeting on Palestinian Resistance

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Majlis is going to hold a meeting on the latest status of the Palestinian nation's resistance this week.

The Permanent Secretariat of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Intifada said in a statement on Tuesday that the meeting will be held on Thursday, ahead of the World Quds Day.

The statement also said that Khalil al-Hayyeh, father to seven Palestinian martyrs and relative of tens more, will also attend the meeting.

Iran Still Ready To Set Up Power Plant in Lebanon

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic's proposal for constructing a power plant in Lebanon is still on the table, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

Khatibzadeh said on Tuesday that internal developments in Lebanon are of great importance for the Islamic Republic and that Iran's proposition for establishing power plant in the Arab country, which has been reiterated by FM Hossein Amirabdollahian, is still valid.

Khatibzadeh made the remarks when answering a question on validation of Iranian proposal amid power outage in Lebanon.

Iranian private sector in coordination with public sector is prepared to provide Lebanese people with electricity and resolve the blackout problem in Lebanon, the spokesman added.

Of course, Lebanese officials have welcomed the proposal, but they have done nothing tangible in this respect, he noted.

The problem of power outages in Lebanon is not complicated and it needs a routine decision-making at national level, Khatibzadeh said, adding that the Lebanese people are rich; so, they do not need daily aids from certain countries and they can stand on



their own feet; however, the Islamic Republic is ready to stand with the honored people to solve the electricity problem.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Khatibzadeh referred to negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, saying that the fifth round of talks have been positive, expressing hope that these negotiations can enhance security and stability regional countries.

The saying that talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran will help de-escalation in the region is naturally correct, he said, adding that both states are important countries in the Persian Gulf region, which have impacts on ultra-regional developments.

Iran's foreign policy does not allow a third state to interfere in its bilateral ties, the spokesman said, noting that Lebanon-Iran relationship is independent from a third element.

Khatibzadeh did not confirm claims that say the issue of Yemen is a hurdle in Saudi-Iran talks, adding that Yemen is one of important issues in the region; so, it is normal that Riyadh and Tehran hold talks on regional topics.

Iran Has Int'l Ballistic Missile Technology

TEHRAN (IP) - One of the senior commanders of the Holy Defense era (Iran-Iraq war) says that Iran has intercontinental ballistic missile technology.

Ismail Kowsari, one of the senior commanders of the Holy Defense era and the current member of the Iranian Parliament, in his speech at the 'Broken Claw' conference on Monday, mentioned a memory of Iran's missile father, Martyr Hassan Tehrani-Moghadam and said: "At the time of his martyrdom, Iran had acquired the technology of intercontinental ballistic missiles."

He declined to give further details. Continental ballistic missiles are ballistic missiles with a useful range of more than 5,500 kilometers (3,400 miles).

The 'Broken Claw' conference was held on Monday in the presence of Ismail Kowsari and Hassan Abbasi, director of the Yagheen Institute at the former US Embassy in Tehran.

FM Congratulates S. Africa, Zimbabwe National Days

TEHRAN (MNA)- Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has sent separate messages to South African and Zimbabwean counterparts to congratulate them on the anniversary of the national days of their countries.

Amir-Abdollahian has sent a message to South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor, sincerely congratulating her on the country's national day.

According to the official website of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the message to the South African counterpart, Amir-Abdollahian said, "I hope that with the determination of the two governments and by using the existing possibilities, we will witness the growth and expansion of relations between the two countries."

Amir-Abdollahian has also sent a message to Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs and International Trade Minister Frederick Shava to congratulate him on the Republic of Zimbabwe's National Day.

The top Iranian diplomat said in his message that "We hope to see the expansion of cooperation between the two countries given the political will of high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Zimbabwe to develop and deepen interactions in all dimensions."

Rail Transit Issue Discussed

TEHRAN (MNA) - Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Miad Salehi met with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Monday to discuss issues related to rail transit through the country.

In this meeting, which was held at the place of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Amir-Abdollahian was briefed on the latest developments and achievements in the field of rail transit, Mehr News Agency reported.

Salehi pointed to the significant growth in the transit of goods in the last six months compared to the same period last year and stressed RAI's determination in operating all facilities to the maximum in order to boost transit through Iran and realize the potential capacities of the country's rail transport industry.

He also presented a report on the latest measures taken to build the missing railway links in the north-south corridor, including Rasht-Astara and Chabahar-Zahedan railways.

Pointing to the importance of transit in the government's economic diplomacy and the policies for interaction with neighboring countries, Amir-Abdollahian, for his part, thanked the RAI head and all those involved in the country's railway industry for their extensive efforts to improve the country's transit position in the region.

The foreign minister stressed the continued support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for such efforts and stated that his ministry will follow up with relevant officials to help resolve some bottlenecks and shortcomings in this regard.

During the meeting, the deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy and the deputy head of RAI for railway operations also presented a report on the activities related to facilitating rail transit in Sarakhs and Incheh Borun as well as multimodal transportation in the northern ports of the country.

Iran is one of the countries that have a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Tehran, Baku Conduct Discussions On Joint Projects



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A number of discussions were conducted on joint projects between Azerbaijan and Iran on Monday in Baku.

In this regard, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Mehdi Safari and Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyyed Abbas Mousavi met with Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev and Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov in Baku on April 25.

During the meetings, the sides discussed the decisions of the 15th meeting of the State Commission on Cooperation in Economic, Trade and Humanitarian Spheres between the two countries, the reconstruction of Karabakh, the current state of bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest.

On March 11, 2022, the 15th meeting of the State Commission on Cooperation in Economic, Trade and Humanitarian Spheres between Azerbaijan and Iran was held in Baku.

On Monday in separate meetings with his Azeri counterpart Khalaf Khalafov and First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev, the Iranian diplomat reviewed Tehran-Baku relations and joint projects as well as reconstruction of the Karabakh region.

The two sides also discussed approvals of the Iran-Azerbaijan Economic Commission.

Iran's Ambassador to Baku Abbas Mousavi was also present at the meetings.

Quds Day, Glorious Manifestation of Islamic Ummah Unity

TEHRAN (IP) - Quds Day is a manifestation of the glory of the unity of the Islamic Ummah for the liberation of the Holy Al-Quds, the Judiciary Spokesman said in his weekly news conference.

Zabihollah Khodaeian commemorated the occasion of World Quds Day in advance and recalled that Quds Day does not belong to a particular nation, religion, or creed but to all freedom-seeking people throughout the world.

Khodaeian went on to call Quds Day a day to fight oppression and fight against racial discrimination. "Today, we are witnessing the bloodshed of the people before the eyes of the world, whose guilt is defending their soil, honor and lives, and we are supposed to condemn these crimes with an enthusiastic and intelligent presence in the Quds Day march," he noted.

He stressed that the world must know that some self-proclaimed Islamic countries will bury the desire to make Palestine a forgotten issue.

Khodaeian referred to the Razavi Shrine incident and said that the investigation into the case of the perpetrator of the Razavi shrine knife attack is over.

He added that the case would be sent to the court with an indictment within the next ten days.

"The category of investigations say this incident was not a personal motive, also the accused, under the influence of Takfiri thoughts, committed the terrorist act and had no complicity," he added. Judiciary Spokesman said that global arrogance had put the provoking divisions and disunity between the two nations of Iran and Afghanistan on its agenda but that their conspiracies had not yet succeeded due to the government's vigilance.

Khodaeian emphasized that in recent months the activities of the enemies of Iran and Afghanistan who are trying to create ethnic, religious, etc., divisions between the two nations have been under Iran's close watch.

He further explained that importing or leaving the country illegally and employment in the country without a permit is prohibited and a crime, but the judiciary has treated Afghan migrants well. "We also expect Afghan refugees to obtain the necessary permits from the Ministry of Interior for travel, employment, etc.," concluded he.

Iranian Delegation to Visit Iraq on Security Issues

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iraq's foreign minister said Monday that an Iranian delegation will travel to Baghdad after Eid al-Fitr to discuss various issues, especially security issues.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hossein stressed on Monday that the issues and problems between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey, and Iraq on security issues should be resolved through dialogue.

Iraqi top diplomat told the Al-Jazeera that an Iranian

delegation is scheduled to travel to Iraq after Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) to discuss various issues, especially security issues.

He also spoke about the military operation of Turkey in northern Iraq, claiming that the presence of American forces in Iraq is based on an agreement to help the Iraqi forces.

The Iraqi foreign minister also described the attack on US forces in Iraq as an attack on the Iraqi government and national interests.

Talks With Saudi Arabia "Positive, Constructive"

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Spokesperson for the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian parliament, Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini, has described the fifth round of talks between the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia as "very positive and constructive".

Al-Mayadeen quoted Meshkini saying: "If important countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey enjoy good relations, West Asia can turn into a bloc of power."

He stressed that his country "desires to take the lead in strengthening relations between the countries of the region and to play a wise role, without looking back."

The Sultanate of Oman and Iraq have worked to "provide the appropriate ground for the start of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia", he explained, stressing that "Tehran will continue the Iranian-Saudi dialogue until a positive result is reached, because strengthening relations between the two countries will benefit the region politically, culturally and economically."

Last Thursday, the fifth round of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia took place in Iraq with the participation of senior delegates from the two countries. Iranian media outlets reported that officials from the Iranian National Security Council met with the head of the Saudi intelligence service and discussed the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two sides.

Riyadh severed relations with Tehran in 2016, after Iranian protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in the Iranian capital following the execution of a Shia cleric in Saudi Arabia.

embassy by the Iranian revolutionary students.

Referring to an article that appeared in the Time Magazine on May 5, 1980, Jahromi quoted: "Carter's mission to rescue the hostages goes down in flames."

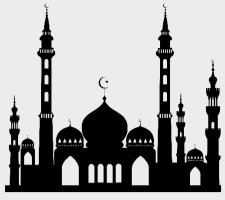
"For Carter in particular, and for the U.S. in general, the desert debacle was a military, diplomatic and political fiasco. A once-dominant military machine, first humbled in its agonizing standoff in Viet Nam, now looked incapable of keeping its aircraft aloft even when no enemy knew they were there, and even incapable of keeping them from crashing into each other despite four months of practice for their mission," read the Time cover story dubbed, 'Debate in the Desert'.

U.S., Ill-Wishers Used to Failure Against Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) – The spokesman of Iran's government said the United States and other ill-wishers of the Iranian nation are accustomed to being defeated by the country in the military and political fields but they never learn their lesson.

In an article on the anniversary of the U.S. 1980 abortive Operation Eagle Claw, known as Operation Tabas in Iran, Ali Bahadori Jahromi wrote, "The sands were agents of God," a sentence once made by the Father of the Islamic Revolution the late Imam Khomeini referring to the failure of the Tabas Operation in Iran's eastern desert.

The Tabas Operation was a U.S. Armed Forces operation ordered by the then president Jimmy Carter on 24 April 1980 to attempt to rescue 52 embassy staff held captive at the US



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:06
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:43
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:15

7. And they say: "What sort of an apostle is this, who eats food, and walks through the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to give admonition with him?"
8. "Or (Why) has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he (not) a garden for enjoyment?" The wicked say: "Ye follow none other than a man bewitched."
Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (7-8)

Jakarta Urged To Lift Tariffs on Iranian Exports

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Secretary General of Iranian delegation to Inter-Parliamentary Summit Mr. Mojtaba Rezakhah in meeting with Ambassador of Indonesia to Tehran Mr. Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro called for broadening ties in all fields and urged Jakarta to lift tariffs on Iranian exports.

In the meeting, Rezakhah said that the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes broadening ties with Indonesia in all fields, adding that existing capacities for expansion of cooperation needs these ties to be deepened more than ever.

He also pointed to many historical and cultural commonalities as well as great potentials of the two countries which pave the ground for expansion of bilateral cooperation. Rezakhah then pointed to last month's visit of Iranian inter-parliamentary delegation to Jakarta and its meeting with Indonesian officials, and said that in the meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Summit several issues like the dispute between Russia and Ukraine were raised, noting that both Iran and Indonesia believe that the dispute should be resolved through dialogue.

He reiterated that Majlis welcomes and supports any joint investment and activity for broadening cooperation in favor of public interests of the two countries like in the economic, industrial, medical, pharmaceutical, oil and petrochemical, tourism and construction fields.



He also called for lifting of some tariffs on imports of Iranian goods which has worsened recently.

Then Indonesian Ambassador Mr. Prasetyo Yuliantoro, for his part, pointed to the amicable relation of his country with Tehran, adding that the two countries had constructive interactions during the inter-parliamentary summit and called for broadening bilateral ties.

He went on to say that these cooperation can accelerate with imminent visit of Iranian and Indonesian Parliamentary Friendship to Jakarta and Indonesian Parliament Vice-Speaker to Tehran.

The Indonesian diplomat further emphasized developing economic cooperation and joint interactions between Tehran and Jakarta in the fields of oil and petrochemical products especially through barter trade, adding that Indonesia welcomes joint investment cooperation with Iran in different fields to meet the existing demands for maximum broadening ties.

Then he said Indonesia is keen to expand its cooperation and interactions with Iran in all fields.

First B2B Trade Webinar of Iran And Hungary to Be Held Soon

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran and Hungary decided to hold their first B2B trade video conference soon to improve the trade relations between the two countries.



The decision was made during the meeting of Vice-Ambassador of Hungarian Embassy Mr. Nador Kartesz and Hungarian commercial attache Zolt Gyombolai with caretaker of the international department of Iran's Chamber of Commerce Mr. Farzad Mehrani.

In the meeting, Mehrani called for introducing trade potential of Iran and Hungary via trade video conferences by the chambers of commerce of the both countries and they decided the first B2B trade video conference of Iran and Hungary to be held soon.

Mehrani also expressed hope on expansion of trade cooperation between Tehran and Budapest and emphasized potentials of different sections of the chamber and subsidiary bodies in line with support of broadening the bilateral international co-operations.

Then Nador announced readiness of the Hungarian Embassy for supporting traders of the two sides for broadening trade exchanges, adding that both countries can cooperate in some fields like agro, agro machineries, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

Meanwhile in the meeting one of Iran's chamber of commerce officials highlighted some problems and concerns of Iranian traders like getting visa, adding that the chamber expects Hungarian Embassy in Tehran take action for easing the visa process for Iranian traders who have introduction letters from the chamber. He then said the coordination for holding the first trade video conference between the two countries is underway.

BMI Strikes Deal With NIORDC to Fund Oil Storage Project



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Bank Meli Iran (BMI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) on Tuesday to finance the construction of an oil storage facility in southern Hormozgan Province.

The signing ceremony was held in Tehran and attended by senior officials including Oil Minister Javad Oji, NIORDC Head Jalil Salari, and BMI Managing Director Mohammadreza Farzin, Shana reported.

To become the largest petroleum products storage facility in the country, the mentioned oil storage facility which is called Shahid Mahdavi Storage is going to have the capacity to store 600 million liters of oil.

Following the construction of Shahid Soleimani Petro-refinery and Persian Gulf Mehr Refinery in Hormozgan Province and the increase in the output of oil products in the province, this storage facility is aimed at increasing the storage capacity of such products in the region.

According to Salari, increasing the capacity of the country's petroleum products storage facilities is being seriously pursued in line with the development of refining projects in the country.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the official mentioned the positive cooperation with BMI in other projects and said that so far, the bank has provided nearly nine billion dollars for NIORDC projects.

Referring to the ways of financing these projects, Salari said that NIORDC attracts investment for some projects by awarding them under Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) contracts, and for some projects the company uses government resources.

"We have plans during this year to be able to sign a memorandum of understanding every month to attract financial resources that have nothing to do with government resources," he added.

The official further mentioned the NIORDC's underway knowledge-based projects and noted that several projects are currently under assessment and NIORDC will probably sign various MOUs in different sectors including software development and smartening of operation in the coming months.

"I hope that the necessary permits will be obtained sooner and the bidding process will be implemented, and finally we will be able to follow the projects one by one," Salari added.

Expansion of Trade Ties Can Help India, Iran Meet Their Needs

ZAHEDAN (IRNA) - India and Iran have certain needs, which can be met through the increase of trade exchanges, an Iranian official said.

Sistan and Baluchestan Governor General Hossein Modarres Khiabani said in a meeting with Consul General of India in Sistan and Baluchestan J.P. Singh on Monday that India is among developing and progressive countries in Asia and that the two nations should expand cooperation.

Expressing hope that the two countries can develop collaborations and maintain proper coordination, the Iranian official said that India and Iran enjoy vast commonalities.

Some 30 percent of Indian language has its roots in Persian, Modarres Khiabani said, adding that the commonalities are extraordinarily vast when it comes to Sistan and Baluchestan province, where big tribe of Baluch people are living, and they are very close to Pakistan and India.

He went on to say that the provincial officials will facilitate consular services, travel, and residence of Indian nationals, as well as investments in the province.

In accordance with guidelines of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and President Ebrahim Raisi have stressed that expansion of trade exchanges with neighboring countries is on the agenda in line with the Islamic Republic's Look to the East policy, the governor general said, urging India to give importance to deepening trade ties with Iran.

The trade exchanges between India and Iran will be profitable for both sides, he said, noting that both nations, as two powerful states, can pursue a win-win process in a bid to meet their requirements and enhance cooperation.

Pasteur Institute Covid Jab Capacity at 5m a Month

TEHRAN (IFP) - The director of Pasteur Institute of Iran says the vaccine-producer now has a capacity to manufacture 5 million doses of its Pastocovac Coronavirus vaccine every month.

Alireza Biglari says the institute has secured the authorization for administration of Pastocovac jabs to children aged 2 and higher.

He says the vaccine is already being administered to over-5-year-olds and will be available for younger children if officials decide to roll out inoculation for the age group.

Biglari says Pastocovac has showed high efficiency against Covid with little side effects.

"This vaccine has been jointly produced with Cuba's Finlay Institute at Pasteur Institute of Iran and is the first vaccine in the world that can be multivalent, which means, it is the first Covid-19 jab in the world that can counter several mutations [of the virus] at the same time," he says.

The official says the institute has so far delivered more than 14 million doses of Pastocovac to the Health Ministry and has almost 3 million doses in stock that are ready to delivery.

Iran Exports Veterinary Medicine to 9 Countries

TEHRAN (MNA) – Head of Iran's Veterinary Organization said that "Now the export of veterinary medicine has increased from three items to 18 items, which are exported to 9 countries."

Deputy Minister Agriculture Minister and Head of Iran's Veterinary Organization Seyed Mohammad Aghamiri said that "Previously, 9 items of animal medicine were exported to three countries, but now 18 items of that medicine are exported to 9 countries, and of course we are trying to increase the capabilities in this field."

The head of Iran's Veterinary Organization added that his organization has supporting the technological production and knowledge-based production of drugs, vaccines and biological products on the agenda in line with the slogan of the current Iranian year of 1401 which is named by the Leader of the Revolution the "Year of production, knowledge-based firms and job-creation."

Currently, in the field of veterinary medicine, 6 knowledge-based products have been registered while 2 knowledge-based products are being registered, and it is hoped that this number will increase this year.

In another part of his speech about the effect of drought on the production of veterinary medicine, he said: "Studies show that in March of last year, compared to the same month of the year before, the consumption of veterinary medicine decreased, which seems to be due to the decrease in livestock population."

Managers of 23 Companies Dispatched to Germany

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization says the organization in cooperation with International Trade Center dispatched managers of 23 production-export companies to Germany aimed at boosting exports to this country.

Alireza Payman Pak said that Iran Trade Promotion Organization dispatched 23 managers of companies to Germany which is aimed at supporting small and medium-sized exporting companies for entering Germany's market.

He said that these selected managers will be present in the cities of Cologne and Hamburg from April 24 to May 14. He noted that during this visit, managers will attend B2B meetings with German companies to prepare the grounds for exports to Germany.

Payman Pak added that some educational programs, visiting German companies and exhibitions as well as visiting the infrastructures related to the trade are of the other programs included during this dispatch.

23 companies have been chosen to be dispatched out of 100 companies through calls and interviews.

Managers of these companies are to visit some famous German brands during their 20-day stay in Germany.

Trade Promotion Organization has started its practical cooperation with International Trade Center three years ago and under the project of technical assistance.

Over 3.4m Tons of Steel Products Exported in a Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran exported 3.406 million tons of steel products in the past Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended on March 20), Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) has announced.

The IMIDRO's data put the country's annual steel products export at 2.832 million tons in year 1399.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

Iran's crude steel production increased by 11.8 percent in the first two months of 2022 when the production by the world's top 64 steelmakers declined by 5.5 percent, according to the World Steel Association (WSA)'s report.

Iran was ranked first among the world's top steel producers in terms of production growth, followed by India, Germany, Russia, and the United States.

Based on the report, Iran produced 5.3 million tons of crude steel during the mentioned two months.

The country's crude steel production in February stood at 2.5 million tons which was also 3.7 percent higher than the same month in 2021.

According to the World Steel Association, similar to the past two years, Iran has maintained its 10th place among the world's top steel producers, after countries like China, India, Japan, and Russia.

Sister Andre Claims Title of World's Oldest Person

MARSEILLE (Dispatches) - A French nun who recently celebrated her 118th birthday with her traditional port-and-chocolate cocktail is now the world's oldest known person, following the death announced Monday of a Japanese woman one year her senior.

Lucile Randon, known as Sister Andre, was born in southern France on February 11, 1904, when World War I was still a decade away.

She now lives at a nursing home in Toulon along the Mediterranean coast, beginning every day with breakfast and then a morning mass, though her eyes can no longer see.



Twitter Confirms Sale of Company to Musk for \$44b

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Elon Musk clinched a deal to buy Twitter Inc for \$44 billion cash on Monday in a transaction that will shift control of the social media platform populated by millions of users and global leaders to the world's richest person.

It is a seminal moment for the 16-year-old company that emerged as one of the world's most influential public squares and now faces a string of challenges.

Discussions over the deal, which last week appeared uncertain, accelerated over the weekend after Musk wooed Twitter shareholders with financing details of his offer.



Russia Warns U.S. Against Sending More Arms to Ukraine



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has warned the United States against sending more weapons to Ukraine, saying the delivery of arms supplies is "pouring oil on the flames".

The U.S. has provided about \$6.4bn in military assistance to Ukraine since 2014, with \$3.7bn of that allotted in a series of packages announced in the wake of Russia's invasion of its neighboring country some two months ago.

In comments made on the Rossiya 24 TV channel, Anatoly Antonov, Moscow's ambassador to the U.S., said the delivery of military equipment to Ukraine raised the stakes of the conflict, now in its 61st day.

"We stressed the unacceptability of this situation when the United States of America pours weapons into Ukraine, and we demanded an end to this practice," Antonov said, referring to an official diplomatic note sent to Washington expressing Moscow's concerns. "What the Americans are doing is pouring oil on the flames," Antonov added. "I see only an attempt to raise the stakes, to aggravate the situation, to see more losses."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin visited Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, late on Sunday and met President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the first visit by U.S. officials since the war began on February 24.

They pledged new assistance worth \$713m for Zelenskyy's government and other countries in the region, and promised US envoys would return to Ukraine soon. On Monday, President Joe Biden nominated Bridget Brink, the current US ambassador to Slovakia, to be Washington's envoy to Ukraine, stepping up diplomatic measures as well.

"In terms of Russia's war aims, Russia has already failed and Ukraine has already succeeded," Blinken told reporters in Poland after the two officials returned from Kyiv, which ran three hours instead of an allotted 90 minutes.

Zelenskyy has been pleading with US and European leaders to supply Kyiv with heavier arms and equipment.

Last week, the U.S. announced its latest \$800m military aid package for Ukraine, expanding the scope of the systems provided to include heavy artillery as Ukrainian forces try to stave off a major offensive in their country's east.

"They [the Ukrainians] need long-range fires. You've heard them express the need for tanks and we are doing everything that we can to get them the types of support, the types of artillery and munitions that will be effective in this stage of the fight," said Austin.

"We want to see Ukraine remain a sovereign country, a democratic country, able to protect its sovereign territory," he added. "We want to see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine. So it has already lost a lot of military capability and a lot of, a lot of its troops, quite frankly."

Cuba Accuses U.S. of Trying to Exclude It From Regional Summit

HAVANA (Dispatches) - Cuba's foreign minister has accused the United States of seeking to exclude the country from an upcoming regional summit, just days after the two nations held their first high-level talks in four years.

In a series of tweets on Monday, Bruno Rodriguez said the US was pressuring regional governments to block Cuba from participating in the Ninth Summit of the Americas in June in Los Angeles, California.

"We have learned from various sources that the United States government has been carrying out intense efforts and exerting pressure on countries in the region to try to exclude Cuba from the IX Summit of the Americas," Rodriguez wrote.

"There is no justification for excluding Cuba or any other country from this event that we have attended the last two editions," he said.

We have learned from various sources that the United States government has been carrying out intense efforts and exerting pressure on countries in the region to try to exclude #Cuba from the IX Summit of the Americas.

He said U.S. officials were already leaving Cuba out of pre-summit conversations on such issues as a regional health strategy and migration, both of vital interest to the island's leaders.

A U.S. Department of State spokesperson told the Reuters news agency that "no invitations [to the summit] have been issued from the White House at this time".

The U.S., at odds with Cuba since the early days of Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution, further ratcheted up sanctions against the country under former President Donald Trump, cutting off most travel and remittances between the US and the island.

Relations have remained tense under President Joe Biden, whose administration has criticized alleged human rights violations against Cubans who joined rare public protests against their government last July.



Germany Pledges Quick Decision on First Heavy Arms Delivery to Ukraine

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany will decide soon on whether to approve the delivery of 100 old Marder infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine, a government spokesperson said on Monday, in what would be the first German heavy weapons shipment to Ukraine.

German defense company Rheinmetall has requested approval to export the vehicles to Ukraine, a defense source told Reuters on Monday, aiming to restore them over the coming months before shipping them.

Rheinmetall has also requested approval to export 88 old Leopard 1A5 tanks to Ukraine, German newspaper Die Welt reported, citing documents.

Rheinmetall's move is set to force Chancellor Olaf Scholz to take a clear position on whether heavy weapons can be sent directly from Germany to Ukraine because the deals require approval from the national security council, which is chaired by Scholz.

A Rheinmetall spokesperson declined to comment. Scholz is facing growing criticism at home and abroad for his reluctance to deliver heavy weapons such as tanks and howitzers to help Ukraine to repel Russian attacks.

The German government spokesperson did not give a time frame for when a decision on the Marder deal would be taken.

Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht wrote in a letter to the ruling coalition last week that export requests to Ukraine "will be checked with absolute priority. After coordination in the cabinet, they will be decided the same day as a general rule."

On their first visit to Ukraine since Russia invaded two months ago, the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defence on Sunday pledged additional military aid to Kyiv, including advanced weapons.

Ukrainian pleas for heavy weapons have intensified since Moscow shifted its offensive to the eastern region of Donbas, a territory seen as better suited for tank battles than the areas around Kyiv, where much of the fighting has taken place so far.

Moscow describes its actions in Ukraine, now entering a third month, as a "special military operation".

Liberal Newcomer Beats Conservative Three-Time PM in Slovenian Elections

LONDON (Dispatches) - Political newcomer liberal Robert Golob defeated Slovenia's three-time Prime Minister conservative Janez Jansa in elections on Sunday in a country split by bitter political divisions over the rule of law.

Golob's Freedom Movement (GS), which he launched only in January, has built on anger with Jansa's regime in the former Yugoslav state.

The opposition accuses Jansa of having tried to undermine democratic institutions and press freedoms since he returned to power in 2020.

With almost all the votes counted in the country of around two million people, Freedom Movement (GS) stood at 34.5 percent of the vote compared to 23.6 percent for Jansa's Slovenian Democratic Party.

"Our objective has been reached: a victory that will enable us to take the country back to freedom," Golob told jubilant supporters late Sunday.

"People want changes and have expressed their confidence in us as the only ones who can bring those changes," he said earlier via a livestream from his home where he was in isolation after contracting Covid-19.

The 55-year-old former power company manager has promised to restore "normality", having billed the elections as a "referendum on democracy".

Political analyst Miha Kovac said civil society and younger voters in particular had been mobilised.

Analysts had expected an increased turnout and for voters to turn against Jansa's style.

Turnout stood at some 70 percent of the 1.7 million electorate - significantly higher than the 52 percent in the last parliamentary elections in 2018.

"The vote was a vote against Jansa," said Kovac. "Against Slovenia on the Hungarian path, against an illiberal democracy in Slovenia, against the government taking over the public television, against the control of judiciary."

But he warned that GS had no government experience - even though it could partner with the more experienced Social Democrats (SD), who have 6.7 percent of the vote with almost all ballots counted.

"It's like a company that abruptly grows," Kovac added. "It has no infrastructure, no know-how, no people that know how to work in parliamentary bodies."

Jansa, 63, an admirer of US ex-president Donald Trump, had campaigned on promises of stability.

"Ahead of the new government there are many challenges, but during our mandate we have set a solid ground for a peaceful navigation," he said late Sunday.

"It is easy to pay billboards, to have the backing of all media and the so-called civil society," he said. "But then hard work and challenges come, and there nothing of that can help you."



Nicaragua Withdraws From Regional Bloc OAS After Election Row

MANAGUA (Dispatches) - Nicaragua has said it has completed its withdrawal from the Organization of American States (OAS) despite the regional bloc saying the move was not allowed for another year.

Nicaragua's Foreign Minister Denis Moncada announced the immediate break from the organization and the closure of the OAS's offices in the capital, Managua.

President Daniel Ortega had announced the Latin American country's withdrawal in November last year. That came after the OAS criticized the fairness of elections that saw Ortega win a fourth consecutive term amid a months-long crackdown on opposition figures.

The OAS had said the withdrawal could not go into effect until 2023 because Nicaragua was an active member at the time of the announcement.

Still, Moncada said that as of Sunday, Nicaragua was no longer part "of all the deceitful mechanisms of this monstrosity, the so-called Permanent Council, so-called commissions, so-called meetings, so-called Summit of the Americas".

"We will not take part in any of the entities of this diabolical instrument of evil called the OAS," he added.

In a statement, the OAS said Nicaragua remained a "full member and must comply with all its commitments" until the end of its current membership period. It called on Managua to "respect" its relationship with the bloc, which was formed in 1948 and has focused for decades on election integrity across the Americas.

For its part, regional neighbour Venezuela - which officially withdrew from OAS in 2020 - quickly hailed Nicaragua's resignation as "courageous", calling the body "an instrument of US imperialism".

Relations between Nicaragua and the OAS have been increasingly fraught in recent years.

In 2016, the organisation sent a mostly unsuccessful mission to Nicaragua to mediate amid opposition accusations of fraud in that year's election, which saw Ortega win his third consecutive term as president, with his wife Rosario Murillo becoming vice president.



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Jordan Villa (\$5000)
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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, & pkg
marble fl
Fully Furn

Jordan (\$1800)
180sq.m, 3bdrs
balcony, F.F

Velenjak (\$2400)
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, F.F

Darrous Villa
1200sq.m, 5bdrs
S/p, yard, & F.F

Farmanieh Apt (\$1500)
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, & F.F
(\$3000)

Elahieh (\$2600)
260sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, S, J, balcony
pkg, & Fully Furn

Jordan office (\$8000)
300sq.m, 4bdrs
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Germany to Buy 60 Heavy Transport Helicopters From Boeing

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany will buy 60 CH-47F Chinook heavy transport helicopters from Boeing B.A.N worth around €5 billion (US\$5.40 billion) as it upgrades its military armor, Bild am Sonntag newspaper reported today, citing government sources. The helicopters will be financed from the €100 billion planned special fund for the military which Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine,

the paper said. Read full story

The helicopters could be delivered in 2025/26 at the earliest and would replace the roughly 50-year-old CH-53G helicopters made by the Sikorsky unit of US arms makers Lockheed Martin LMT.N, it said.

Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht will inform the parliament of the decision next week, the newspaper said.



India's Russian Oil Purchases More Than Double 2021 Total

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India has bought more than twice as much crude oil from Russia in the two months since its invasion of Ukraine as it did in the whole of 2021, according to Reuters calculations, as Indian refiners snapped up discounted oil that others have shunned.

Refiners in India have placed orders for at least 40 million barrels of Russian oil since the invasion on Feb. 24, Reuters calculations based on information from crude tenders and traders show. The purchases are for loading in the June quarter.

That compares with total imports of Russian oil into India of 16 million barrels in the whole of last year, according to Reuters calculations. The world's third biggest oil importer and consumer ships in over 85% of its crude oil needs of 5 million barrels per day (bpd). Its refiners are buying cheaper Russian oil to partly offset the impact of higher official selling prices of some producers like Saudi Arabia, company sources said.

"We try to insulate consumers as much from price shocks as we can, but we need to protect our profits as well... so we are buying Russian oil," an official at one refiner, who declined to be named, said.

According to Reuters calculations, purchases of Russian barrels by private refiners Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy outstrip imports by state refiners Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum Corp, and Bharat Petroleum Corp.

Reliance has purchased at least 15 million barrel of Russian oil so far for the June quarter, trade sources said last week. Reliance did not respond to a request for comment at that time.

Nayara Energy, part owned by Russia's top producer Rosneft, has purchased 8 million to 9 million barrels of Russian crude for loading in April-May, trade sources said. Nayara did not respond to a Reuters email seeking comments.

Western sanctions against Russia since its invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a "special operation", have prompted many oil importers to shun trade with Moscow, pushing Russian crude's discount to other grades to record levels.

While New Delhi has called for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, it has not explicitly condemned Moscow's actions.

Defending India's oil imports from Russia, the country's oil minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday said that India's purchases from Russia are a minuscule fraction of the country's overall oil needs.

Indian companies are buying Russian oil on a delivered basis, with sellers arranging for shipping and insurance.

Washington has already said it does not object to New Delhi buying Russian oil below market rates, but warned against a steep rise in imports as that could hamper the U.S. response to the war in Ukraine. Analysts said India's Russian oil imports may taper off as a full-scale implementation of the European and U.S. sanctions from mid-May and late June might hit logistics.

"Indian refiners' capacity to process Russian oil is limited, and also there could be logistic challenges like insurance, tankers and payment mechanism once full European and U.S. sanctions against Russian kick in," said Giovanni Staunovo, commodity analyst at UBS Group AG. Already under pressure from sanctions, some trading houses are scaling back their dealings in Russian oil, he said.

WB Readies Sri Lanka Aid Package, IMF Calls Loan Talks Fruitful

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund said it held "fruitful technical discussions" with Sri Lanka on its loan request, while the World Bank said it was preparing an emergency aid package for the crisis-stricken country.

Sri Lanka, an island country of 22 million people, is struggling to pay for imports amid a crushing debt crisis and sharp drop in foreign exchange reserves that has fuelled soaring inflation. Prolonged power cuts and shortages of fuel, food and medicines have sparked nationwide protests. Read full story

Sri Lankan Finance Minister Ali Sabry has been in Washington this week talking to the IMF, the World Bank, India and others about financing help for his country, which has suspended payments on portions of its US\$51 billion in external debt.

The World Bank's emergency response package includes US\$10 million to be made immediately available for the purchase of essential medicines, funds shifted from its ongoing Covid-19 health preparedness project, a World Bank spokesperson said.

The global lender, which along with the IMF held its spring meetings this week, did not provide a total value for its package, but Sabry said on Friday that about US\$500 million in aid was being considered.

The World Bank spokesperson said the package would leverage existing bank-financed projects and repurpose funds to quickly provide medicines, meals for school children and cash transfers for poor and vulnerable households.

Support to provide cooking gas, basic food supplies, seeds and fertilisers and other essentials is also under discussion, the spokesperson said, adding that the World Bank was "deeply concerned" about the situation in Sri Lanka.

The IMF said in a statement yesterday that talks between its staff focused on the need for Sri Lanka to implement "a

Russia Seen Cutting Key Rate by 200 Points to 15%

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The Russian central bank is expected to cut its key interest rate by 200 basis points to 15% on Friday as it tries to stimulate more lending in the economy in the face of high inflation, a Reuters poll suggested on Monday.

Russia faces soaring inflation and capital flight while grappling with a possible debt default after the West imposed unprecedented sanctions to punish President Vladimir Putin for sending tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24.

The bank hiked rates to 20% from 9.5% in late February in an emergency move that Governor Elvira Nabiullina said helped stabilize the ruble and overcome an inflation spike. The bank then cut the interest rate to 17% on April 8.

Thirty-one of 32 analysts and economists polled by Reuters predicted that Russia will cut the key rate by 200 basis points to 15% on Friday. "A whole range of Bank of Russia representatives have signaled the high likelihood of a key rate cut to support the economy," said VTB Capital. "We expect a rate cut to 15%, but allow for more aggressive actions by the regulator in case of a further slowdown in weekly inflation."

Annual inflation in Russia accelerated to 17.62% as of April 15, its highest since early 2002, the economy ministry said last week, but weekly inflation slowed. The central bank aims to bring inflation to its 4% target in 2024.

"The central bank seems confident that the most acute phase of Russia's economic crisis has passed and that such restrictive monetary conditions are no longer necessary," said Liam Peach of Capital Economics, who forecast a cut of 150 basis points.

Germany to Hike 2022 Inflation Forecast to 6.1%

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The German government is set to hike its inflation forecast for this year to 6.1% due to the impact of the war in Ukraine, up from 3.3% it had forecast in January, according to government document seen by Reuters on Monday.

Berlin, which is due to present its spring economic forecasts on Wednesday, sees consumer price growth easing to 2.8% in 2023, the document showed.

German annual inflation rose to its highest

level in more than 40 years in March as prices of natural gas and oil products soared following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and gas and electricity bills for German households signing new contracts hit a record high last month.

Germany's ruling coalition announced relief measures last month worth roughly 16 billion euro (\$17.2 billion) to help consumers cope with soaring energy costs and to reduce dependence on Russian gas.

April inflation data is due to be published on Thursday.

The German government's spring forecasts see consumer spending jumping by 9.7% this year, 0.6 percentage points more than forecast in January, the document showed. In 2023, consumer spending will grow more slowly at a rate of 4.8%.

Berlin meanwhile sees the savings rate shrinking to 10.9% from 15.0% last year.

A survey showed last week that one in 10 consumers in Germany were dipping into their savings to shoulder rising costs. Especially younger consumers aged 25 to 34 were more likely to say they were saving less or had taken out loans to help pay their bills.

The sharp rise in energy prices is also hitting companies. An Ifo survey published on Monday showed that nearly half of German companies planned to reduce investments due to rising energy costs.

German business morale unexpectedly rose slightly in April, following a big drop in March, as companies were less pessimistic after the economy appeared resilient following the initial shock of the war in Ukraine.

However, the government's spring forecasts show that the unemployment rate is expected to decline to 5.0% this year from 5.7% in 2021 and to remain stable next year.

The government is also set to cut on Wednesday its growth expectations for Europe's biggest economy for 2022 to 2.2% from 3.6%, a source had told Reuters on Friday. Berlin sees growth picking up slightly to 2.5% in 2023, the source had said.

Investors in the Dark On China Industrial Transport as Data Curbs Bite

BEIJING (Dispatches) - A wave of COVID-19 lockdowns in Shanghai presents the biggest test yet for investors, trading companies and logistics managers trying to follow China's economy after the government restricted firms from releasing real-time data.

As China's most populous city struggles to emerge from weeks of crippling coronavirus curbs, companies can no longer see how goods are moving in and out of the key port as a result of a recent data law that cracked down on data sharing.

Industrial barometers from crude oil inventories at import terminals to high-frequency container throughput at ports were widely available previously, offering a real-time window on the world's second-biggest economy unhampered by the delays and possible distortions of official economic data.

But since China's Personal Information Protection Law went into effect in November, crucial sources of information about the world's biggest exporting nation have gone dark.

Shipping companies and brokers have resorted to less accurate satellite-based tracking to monitor port delays. Traffic data to gauge truck shipping and commerce is no longer available. Traders track port activity by phone calls or even hand-counting ships.

That lack of visibility will affect every other link in China's globe-spanning supply chains as work gradually resumes, the flow of goods picks up and shippers seek to clear traffic jams off China's east coast.

"We are no longer able to obtain some of the high-frequency data, like daily cargo turnover at ports, railway and air traffic passenger data," said Dong Chen, head of Asia macroeconomic research at Pictet Wealth Management.

"Some of the data became monthly basis only," Chen said. "We just have to deal with what it is."

The Cyberspace Administration of China and the Ministry of Transport did not respond to requests for comment on the impacts of the data law.

The data law is the latest in what accountancy PwC calls "one of the most stringent regulatory regimes many multinationals will encounter." The measures limit how domestic and foreign organizations can collect and use data, affecting every company operating in China.

Organizations monitoring industrial or commercial activity in China must comply with strict rules on data classification, storage, cross-border transfers, transparency and user consent management before they may publish such data to clients.

As a result, some data providers have suspended or ceased publishing data or moved it behind pay walls.

"Everyone is writing and talking about the port congestion in China due to recent wave of COVID, but we cannot find much authentic data to assess the actual situation," said a Beijing-based oil trader.

Brussels Prepares to Hit Russia With Smart Sanctions on Oil Imports



LONDON (Dispatches) - The European Union is preparing "smart sanctions" against Russian oil imports, The Times reported on Monday, citing the European Commission's executive vice president, Valdis Dombrovskis.

"We are working on a sixth sanctions package and one of the issues we are considering is some form of an oil embargo. When we are imposing sanctions, we need to do so in a way that maximises pressure on Russia while minimizing collateral damage on ourselves," Dombrovskis told The Times.

He said that precise details of the oil sanctions had not yet been agreed but could include a gradual phasing-out of Russian oil or imposing tariffs on exports beyond a certain price cap, the newspaper reported.

Russia is Europe's biggest oil supplier, providing 26 per cent of EU imported oil in 2020. Europe gets roughly a third of its gross available energy from oil and petroleum products, in sectors from transportation to chemicals production.

Ukraine and some EU states, including Poland and Lithuania, want a ban on Russian oil and gas, whereas Germany and Hungary are opposed to an immediate oil embargo.

Oil and oil products made up more than a third of Moscow's export revenues last year. Currently, Europe spends around US\$450 million per day on Russian crude oil and refined products, around US\$400 million per day for gas, and roughly US\$25 million for coal, according to think-tank Bruegel.



Iran Leading Country In Eliminating Malaria

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has become the leading country in the region in battling and eliminating Malaria, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

The director of the Health Ministry's Center for Communicable Diseases Control Dr. Mohammad Mahdi Gouya expressed hope that certification of malaria elimination will soon be granted by the World Health Organization to Iran.

He said the certification will be not only a great health achievement but also a development achievement for the country.



Turkey Embraces TV Series, Social Media, Sports Events for Exports

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey plans to engage with a new strategy to promote its brands and goods and looks to embrace multiple channels such as TV and sports organizations, as well as new store concepts, as it looks to extend the range of its exports further to remote markets.

Turkey has over the recent years voiced its determination to boost sales to distant geographies and unveiled action plans.

To ensure greater recognition of its export products, Turkey now plans to engage with TV series and movies, video games and names influential on social media, Anadolu Agency (AA) reported.

It cited the draft strategy prepared by the Trade Ministry, which has been conveyed to the related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for evaluation.

The Remote Countries Strategy and Action Plan Draft highlights the aim to extend the range of exports and boost sales to 18 countries.

These include the United States, Australia, Brazil, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, India, Japan, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Chile, Thailand and Vietnam.

The total foreign sales to these countries soared by 42.2% year-over-year in 2021, reaching \$27.16 billion, according to the data compiled from the Turkish Exporters' Assembly (TIM).

The figure rose from \$18.9 billion in 2020, the data showed, despite the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic and the disruption in supply chains.

Turkey currently holds just a 0.26% share of the \$8.2 trillion worth of imports of the 18 target countries, located an average distance of 8,500 kilometers (5,280 miles) from the country.

Ankara foresees further opening up to these markets and increasing exports to the level of at least \$82 billion.

Turkey's overall exports reached a record \$225.4 billion in 2021, and the government has revised its target to \$250 billion and \$300 billion set for 2022 and 2023, respectively.

The strategy envisages the setting up of a support program that will ensure greater visibility of Turkish brands at sports and fashion events, including the Olympics, world cups, motor sports and international fashion weeks.

Turkey plans to back the opening of various concept stores in countries where "pop-up stores" and "pop-up retail" concepts have particularly become widespread and in sectors such as luxury goods.

The strategy projects deep analysis and guides for companies for each of the countries, including potential product groups, investment environment, trade and business policies and market features.

Sub-sectors will be determined and the potentials of these in related countries will be analyzed, followed by a setting of target-focused entry strategies, according to the road map.



Sectoral trade delegations will be paying more frequent visits to the related markets, supported by trips of general trade delegations at least once a year.

Turkey plans to boost financial support for the sectoral delegations and increase the engagements in national, individual and virtual fairs.

The strategy also envisages greater support for advertising activities in printed and visual media, also targeting countries' consumption channels, shopping malls and chain stores. The activities will seek to particularly bring forward the "Made in Turkey" tag.

Other activities related to Turkish goods and services will include promotions and cooperation with influencers on social media.

TV series and movies, as well as video games, will also be embraced to increase the awareness, driven by cooperation with series and movie actors and placement of products on these platforms.

According to the strategy, Turkey looks to support promoting activities by directing pioneering brands to become sponsors and prestigious international events that will be held in the distant countries.

Events that could increase the recognition of Turkish TV series and film productions in the international arena will also be sought after. And support for participation at such programs, internationally prestigious film festivals, biennials and festivals is planned to be increased.

World in...

FROM PAGE 1

"The increase in R&D spending over the decade 2012-21 suggests that the United States is focusing more on next-generation technologies," said Alexandra Marksteiner, researcher with Sipri's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program. "The U.S. government has repeatedly stressed the need to preserve the US military's technological edge over strategic competitors."



China became the world's second-largest spender, marking an increase of 4.7 percent in 2021 from the previous year. Growing its military prowess for 27 consecutive years, China injected an estimated \$293b into its military in 2021.

Sipri senior researcher Dr Nan Tia said that China's "growing assertiveness" in and around the South and East China Seas have become a "major driver of military spending in countries such as Australia and Japan".

"An example is the AUKUS trilateral security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States that foresees the supply of eight nuclear-powered submarines to Australia at an estimated cost of up to \$128bn," the researcher said.

India, the third-highest military spender, recorded \$76.6b in expenditure on its military as it countered the threat of encroachments by the Chinese military on its eastern border. India's spending rose by 0.9 per cent from 2020 and by 33 percent from 2012.

The UK marked an increase of 3 per cent in military spending to \$68.4b, taking the fourth spot. It replaced Saudi Arabia, which instead decreased spending by 17 percent.

Russia, which is in war with Ukraine now, increased its military expenditure by 2.9 percent in the run-up to the war. In 2021, Moscow spent \$65.9b to boost its military power at a time when it built up its forces along the Ukrainian border. Ukraine war made European countries mull increasing their military budgets and for this reason in 2022 and in 2023 the figure for world military expenditure will definitely exceed the current level.

High oil and gas revenues helped Russia boost its military spending in 2021, Lucie Béraud-Sudreau, director of Sipri's military expenditure program said.

"Russian military expenditure had been in decline between 2016 and 2019 as a result of low energy prices combined with sanctions in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014," he said.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's expenditure declined to \$5.9b, but still accounted for 3.2 percent of the country's GDP.

More NATO countries have stepped up spending due to Russian threat, including Germany, which is the third largest spender in central and Western Europe. Mr Lopes da Silva said that analysts expected spending in Europe to continue to grow.

So with a quick glance at this figure, one can realize that for most countries military issue and military expenditure is more important than any other issues because they see their survivals in this issue rather than focusing on humanitarian and social justice issues.

This attitude will lead to more wars and conflicts in the world as well as more poverty and social injustice in the future and one can easily see that humanitarian issues are overshadowed by arms sales and races in the world and the rule of the jungle will dominate the world in the years ahead as one can currently see some signs of it in some parts of the world.

Al-Aqsa Mosque...

FROM PAGE 1

Stressing that the full recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is a prerequisite to the resolution of the conflict, Takht-Ravanchi called on the Security Council to hold Israel accountable through all legal means at its disposal.

Referring to the recent crimes of the Israeli regime in the occupied Palestinian territories, Takht-e Ravanchi said the situation there has worsened with the continuation of Israel's racist policies and brutal crimes against the Palestinian people. "The Israeli regime has committed its crimes before the eyes of the international community and knows very well that it will not face any consequences," the Iranian diplomat noted.

Takht-e Ravanchi censured the recent Israeli attacks on al-Aqsa Mosque during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, saying any desecration of Muslim sanctities and hurting the feelings of Muslims around the world is disgusting and should not be tolerated. "The current worrying trend must be tackled immediately and seriously. To prevent a catastrophe with far-reaching implications, the historical and legal status of this sacred place must be protected under international law," he said. "We call on the international community to take precautionary measures to protect al-Aqsa Mosque, including its cultural heritage, from attacks by Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers," he added.

Israeli forces have repeatedly attacked Palestinian worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound site since early April, with the onset of the holy month of Ramadan which coincided with Jewish Passover.

Pakistan Seeks Increase in Size, Duration of IMF Program



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan has sought an increase in the size and duration of its \$6 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) program, the country's Finance Minister, Miftah Ismail, said on Monday.

Ismail made the comments in a video statement following talks with the IMF in Washington. It came after the fund said Islamabad has agreed to roll back subsidies to the oil and power sectors ahead of a resumption next month of a review of the IMF's support for the country.

"I've requested the fund and I think they have, largely, they've agreed to extend this program for another one year," he said. "I've also requested that they enhance the funding available to Pakistan from \$6 billion under this program to perhaps a little bit more."

The details will be decided when the mission comes to Pakistan in May, he said.

"Based on the constructive discussions with the authorities in Washington, the IMF expects to field a mission to Pakistan in May to resume discussions over policies for completing the 7th EFF review," the IMF said in a statement, referring to its Extended Fund Facility program.

This covers \$6 billion of support the IMF agreed in 2019 to extend to Pakistan. Payment of the funds has been slowed down several times because of IMF concerns over monetary policy and fiscal tightening measures.

The IMF also said the Pakistani authorities had requested to extend the EFF arrangement through June 2023 after the talks in Washington agreed to drop the subsidies.

From April to June, Pakistan will be giving more than \$2 billion of subsidies to the oil and power sectors.

According to former finance minister Shaukat Tarin, the IMF had previously questioned how the government could fund that without risking a high fiscal deficit.

If the IMF review is cleared, Pakistan will get more than \$900 million, which will also unlock other external funding.

With a widening current account and foreign reserves falling as low as \$10.8 billion, the South Asian nation is in dire need of external finances.

U.S. Asset Freezes Worsen Afghan Women's Suffering

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The United States, as well as the Taliban authorities, is contributing to the suffering of women in Afghanistan through asset freezes, U.N. independent experts said on Monday.

The United Nations and foreign governments, including Washington, have condemned moves by the Taliban to backtrack on women's rights commitments such as on girls' education in the months following their takeover in Aug. 2021.

However, the statement by 14 U.N. independent rights experts also blamed the U.S. government for making life worse for Afghan women through blocking billions of dollars of central bank assets made up in part of aid money for the country accumulated over decades.

"While gender-based violence has been a long-standing and severe threat to women and girls, it has been exacerbated by the measures imposed by the US...," said the statement, without giving specific details.

It also blamed the Taliban's "widening gender-based discrimination" for deteriorating women's rights.

The current humanitarian crisis where 23 million are reliant on food aid is having a "disproportionate impact"



on women and children, the statement added.

Central bank funds have been frozen since August as the Taliban took over and foreign forces withdrew.

U.S. President Joe Biden issued an executive order in February to renew the freeze and said it was working to free up half of that money to help the Afghan people while

holding the rest to possibly satisfy terrorism-related lawsuits against the Taliban.

The U.N. experts appointed by the Geneva-based Rights Council called the order's provisions "overly broad" and said they were resulting in "over-zealous compliance with sanctions thus preventing people of Afghanistan from any access to basic humanitarian goods".

Under international human rights law, governments including the United States have an obligation to ensure their activities do not result in rights violations, the statement said.

The experts said they formerly relayed their concerns and recommendations to Washington. They have not yet received a reply, they said. Reuters is seeking comment from the United States.

Afghan...

FROM PAGE 1

An Afghan delegation visit to Tehran comes following the recent tensions between Islamic Emirate forces and Iranian border guards.

On Saturday, a dispute occurred between Afghanistan and Iranian border forces in the Islam Qala district of Herat province after Islamic Emirate forces wanted to pave a road alongside the border.

Afghan and Iranian border forces have faced each other several times in Nimroz and Herat provinces since the Islamic Emirate took power in Afghanistan last year.

Russia Warns About...

FROM PAGE 1

Last December, Israel announced that it intends to double the number of its illegal settlements in the Golan, despite an earlier resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly demanding the regime's full withdrawal from the occupied territory.

Israeli-Russian relations have soured since the beginning of Moscow's military operation in Ukraine. Observers had already predicted that the Russia-Ukraine crisis could put Israel in a difficult position, as the Tel Aviv regime has good relations with both Moscow and Kiev.

Earlier this month, the Israeli regime voted in favor of a United Nations General Assembly resolution suspending the Russian Federation's membership in the UN Human Rights Council.

Saint-Etienne to Play Home Game Without Fans

PARIS (Dispatches) - Saint-Etienne must play their last home game of the Ligue 1 season behind closed doors after crowd trouble marred Saturday's loss to Monaco that kept them in the relegation play-off place. It is the second time this season Saint-Etienne have been hit with a stadium closure by French football authorities. They hosted Clermont in November in front of empty stands after protests from angry fans delayed a game against Angers.

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PSG Make New Approach To Ex-Arsenal Boss Wenger

PARIS (Dispatches) - PSG have made a new approach to Arsene Wenger about a move to Paris. Wenger, reports Le Parisien, has been sounded out by PSG about the sporting director's role. PSG were confirmed Ligue 1 winners on Sunday, but sports chief Leonardo is under pressure after another flop in the Champions League. Former Arsenal boss Wenger is seen as a potential replacement, with coach Mauricio Pochettino also to be pushed out.

Nuggets Stay Alive as Bucks, Heat Move Closer to Advancing

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Nikola Jokic scored 37 points and the Denver Nuggets avoided being swept out of the NBA playoffs, holding off the Golden State Warriors 126-121.

The 27-year-old Serbian, last season's NBA Most Valuable Player, also delivered eight rebounds and six assists as the Nuggets pulled within 3-1 in their best-of-seven Western Conference first-round series to force a fifth game on Wednesday at San Francisco.

The defending champion Milwaukee Bucks and the Eastern Conference top-seeded Miami Heat pushed their series leads to 3-1 with lopsided victories.

The Bucks routed the Chicago Bulls 119-95 and the Heat dominated the Atlanta Hawks 110-86.

The upstart New Orleans Pelicans, last team to clinch their playoff spot, beat the West's top-seeded Phoenix Suns 118-103 to knot their series two games apiece.

Jokic acknowledged that the Nuggets were determined to avoid a sweep on their home floor against the Warriors.

After Stephen Curry nailed a long jumper to give Golden State a 121-119 lead with 1:21 to play, Jokic made a layup, Monte Morris sank a go-ahead jumper with 33 seconds remaining and, after a steal by Austin Rivers, Jokic fired a pass to Will Barton for the deciding corner three-pointer with 8.3 seconds remaining.

No team in NBA history has overcome a 3-0 deficit to win a playoff series, but Jokic says the Nuggets have the spirit to make history.

In the 2020 playoffs played in the coronavirus bubble, the Nuggets became the first team to rally from 3-1 down in a series twice in the same post-season.

Morris had 24 points and Aaron Gordon added 21 for Denver.

Curry had 33 off the bench — 15 in the fourth quarter — to lead Golden State, while Klay Thompson had 32 in his first 30-point playoff game since the 2019 NBA Finals.

In Chicago, Giannis Antetokounmpo delivered game highs of 32 points and 17 rebounds to lead the Bucks. The Greek star also passed off seven assists and blocked two shots to put the Bucks in control as they head home for game five on Wednesday.



Bucks reserve Grayson Allen scored a career-playoff-high 27 on 10-of-12 shooting, 6-of-7 from three-point range, while Jrue Holiday added 26 points and Bobby Portis had 14 for Milwaukee, who were again without injured forward Khris Middleton.

The Bulls, who haven't won a home playoff game since 2015, were led by Zach LaVine with 24 points and 13 assists while DeMar DeRozan added 23 points.

Jimmy Butler led the Heat in Miami, scoring 36 points to put the team on the brink of advancing. Miami held Atlanta star Trae Young to just nine points on 3-of-11 shooting — all three of his baskets three-pointers.

Butler added 10 rebounds, four assists and four steals for a Heat team that was without Kyle Lowry, who was sidelined with a hamstring strain but was a vocal presence on the bench.

Trailing by one after the first quarter, the Heat seized control with a 30-15 second quarter that featured a 15-0 scoring run and closed with an 11-0 surge. They'll try to close it out on their home floor on Tuesday.

Phoenix, who led the league with 64 regular-season wins, find themselves heading home for game five on tied 2-2 with a young Pelicans team that harried them throughout a sometimes tense battle in New Orleans.



PARIS (Dispatches) - Spanish star Carlos Alcaraz, aged 18, on Monday became the youngest player to enter the top 10 of the ATP world rankings since his compatriot Rafael Nadal did so at the same age in 2005.

Alcaraz climbed two places to ninth in the world due to his straight-sets victory over Pablo Carreno Busta in the Barcelona Open final on Sunday. Britain's Cameron Norrie drops out of the top 10 to number 11.

It was the third title of the season for Alcaraz, having won the Miami Masters at the beginning of the month and the Rio tournament in February.

Carreno Busta swaps places with another Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut, the former climbing to 18 and the latter moving down one spot to 19th.

Novak Djokovic still sits atop the standings despite losing to Russian Andrey Rublev in the final of the Belgrade Open. World number two Daniil Medvedev is out with a hernia problem.

Verstappen, Thompson-Herah Win Top Laureus Awards

MADRID (Dispatches) - Formula One champion Max Verstappen was named the 2022 Laureus Sportsman of the Year while Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson-Herah copped the top women's honor at the digital awards ceremony in Seville.

Verstappen became the first Dutch driver to win the world championship when he clinched his maiden crown by beating seven-times winner Lewis Hamilton on the final lap of the last race of the 2021 season in Abu Dhabi in December.

"Since I was a little kid, I dreamt of being on the top step and winning the championship," the 24-year-old Verstappen said. "The reaction back in Holland was amazing from all the newspapers and fans. It's something we'll never forget."

"It was a lot of hard work and years of preparation. I'm incredibly proud... It means a lot to be recognised for this award, one of the highest ones in the world, so I'm incredibly happy."

Jamaica's Thompson-Herah became the first woman to win back-to-back Olympic sprint doubles when she retained her 100m and 200m titles in Tokyo last year and capped a memorable Games with gold in the 4x100m relay.

"I know Usain (Bolt) has won Laureus Awards before, so to bring this trophy back home to the Caribbean, also in Jamaica, is very special," Thompson-Herah said. "I have watched that (100m) race about a thousand times now. I would say I am very, very proud, but I cannot dwell on the past... My motivation is to be even better. I told myself that I want to be the greatest female sprinter."

Italy's soccer team were named Team of the Year for the second time after winning the 2020 European Championship, having previously received the honor after winning the World Cup in 2006.

British teenager Emma Raducanu took the Breakthrough of the Year prize after her fairytale New York triumph in September when she claimed the U.S. Open title as a qualifier.

NFL great Tom Brady, who made a U-turn on his retirement plans this year, was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement award after winning a record seventh Super Bowl with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Polish striker Robert Lewandowski of Bayern Munich won the Exceptional Achievement award after scoring a German Bundesliga record of 41 goals last season to break Gerd Muller's 49-year-old mark.

Seven-times MotoGP world champion Valentino Rossi, who called time on a career spanning more than two decades last year, won the Sporting Icon award — his third Laureus honour having scooped the Comeback of the Year (2011) and Spirit of Sport (2006) awards.



Rashford Considering Man Utd Future

LONDON (Dispatches) - Marcus Rashford is seriously considering his future at Manchester United.

The Manchester Evening News says Rashford will seek greater clarity on his role at United when Erik ten Hag takes over as manager.

Rashford, 24, has been considering his future at United after a chastening season in which he has scored five goals and started 12 Premier League games out of a possible 26,

but sources say he is now looking forward to embarking on a new chapter with Ten Hag.

Rashford was omitted from the England squad by coach Gareth Southgate for the first time last month. There are two more England squad get-togethers for Nations League matches in June and September before the World Cup starts on November 21.

Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain are interested in Rashford and Liverpool have even expressed admiration for the forward, who is approaching the final year of his United contract. United have the option of a one-year extension to tie Rashford to the club until 2024.

Sources say Rashford accepts he is not an integral part of interim manager Ralf Rangnick's plans as United prepare for their final four matches of the season.

WTA Not Returning to China in 2022

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The WTA is still working to find a resolution to the standoff with China over the Peng Shuai issue but will not return to the country this year, Tour chief Steve Simon said.

Former doubles world number one Peng's wellbeing became a concern for the WTA after she posted a message on social media last November accusing China's former Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault.

The post was subsequently removed and Peng disappeared from public view for three weeks.

The following month, the WTA suspended all of its tournaments in China, a decision expected to cost the elite women's tour hundreds of millions of dollars in broadcasting and sponsorship.

"We remain dedicated to finding a resolution to this," Simon told The Tennis Podcast.

"We want to find a resolution that Peng can be comfortable with, the Chinese government can be comfortable with, and we can be comfortable with."

"We are not about walking away from China. We have suspended our operations there right now. We will continue to do that until we get to a resolution."

"We will stay resolute. We do hope to be back there in 2023 with the resolution that shows progress was made in the space. That's a victory for the world if we can accomplish that."

Peng, who had already effectively retired from professional tennis, made an appearance at the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February and denied she had accused anyone of sexual assault, adding that she herself had deleted the social media post.

The WTA, however, stuck to its demand for a formal investigation into Peng's allegations and an opportunity to meet with her privately to discuss the situation.

"We have not had any recent communication with Peng and the world has not seen Peng since the Olympics either," Simon said.

"I don't think you will make change in this world by walking away from issues. You have to create change."

"It might not be everything we want. But we have to find a solution that finds that balance that allows us to go back and see progress in the area."



Whyte Slams WBC Champ Fury's Dirty Tactics

LONDON (Dispatches) - Dillian Whyte has accused Tyson Fury of "dirty" tactics during the WBC heavyweight champion's victory at Wembley.

Fury retained his world title with a sixth round stoppage against Whyte, the British star ending the bout with a devastating upper cut.

However, Whyte believes the referee should have penalised Fury for shoving him before his head thumped against the canvas.

"I was buzzed but obviously I was trying to regather my senses and he proper pushed me and I fell over and hit my head on the canvas, which is illegal," Whyte told Sky Sports on Monday.

"This isn't wrestling, this is boxing. I should have been allowed extra time to recover and then carried on fighting."

"I got caught, no doubt about it. I got caught by a good shot. I was hurt, I was trying to get my senses together and he full on, two-handed pushed me. It wasn't like a one-armed thing."

"I should have had time to recover, time to go back to my corner, but Tyson Fury gets away with a lot of things."

Whyte claimed Fury headbutted him after he sustained a gash over his right eye, the first time the Briton had sustained a cut in 31 professional fights.

"He kept on leaning down to the side and putting the head in and stuff like that," he said.

"He leans down and he put the head in, he clashed with me and I got the cut and obviously the ref started telling me off."

"The fight spiralled a bit, until he started punching me in the back of the head. I started doing it to him and then his corner started throwing water and stuff like that, which was a bit crazy."

"I kept on getting all the blame. He was the one that was holding, he was the one that was headbutting and being dirty in the fight."

