

**Iran's Judiciary Spokesman  
Zabihollah Khodaian Says That  
Filing a Case Against the Iranian  
National Hamid Nouri Is Political  
And Cannot be Called a Judicial One**

# IRAN NEWS

**The London-Based Qatari  
Newspaper "The New Arab"  
Reported on Monday Evening that  
President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi  
Will Pay Visits to Oman and the  
United Arab Emirates Soon**

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**2 DOMESTIC**

**Iran Oil Exports Doubled**  
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**3 DOMESTIC**

**Iran Ready to Meet Part of Energy Demand in Europe**  
> SEE PAGE 3



**Iran Produces New Isotope, Set to Expand Nuclear Program**

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Nuclear chief says Iran is determined to continue to develop its nuclear program, despite the West's efforts to cap the country's heavy water production.

The West heightened pressure to eventually dismantle Iran's heavy water production plants, as it did in some eastern European countries; Mohammad Eslami said.

Owing to effective measures adopted by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei Iran's nuclear program is expanding every day, "making profound impact" on people's livelihood, and health system, he added.

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## Turkey's Dam Construction Activities Unacceptable



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister said that it is not acceptable for Iran that Turkey takes measures in the field of dam construction which will cause problems for the Iranian people and the region

"Given the environmental conditions prevailing in the region, it is not acceptable for us that our neighbor country, Turkey, takes measures in the field of dam construction which will cause problems for our people in the country and the region, as well as has a negative effect on the amount of water inflow," said Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Iranian Parliament on Tuesday in response to a question of a Parliament member about extensive dam construction by Turkey on the Tigris, Euphrates and Aras and its impact on water inflow to Iran.

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**ViewPoint**  
By: Hamid Reza Naghashian  
**Islamic Republic of Iran  
True Ally of Syria**

The Islamic Republic of Iran since the first day of its existence has proved that it is a reliable ally for anyone who stretches hand of friendship towards it and Syria is one of those countries which has seen their strong bond practically and enjoyed this true friendship especially in the hard times.

On Sunday, Syrian President Bashar Assad in an unexpected visit to Tehran met with the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei to display another sign for the strong bond between the two nations.

In the meeting, highlighting the honor and credit that Syria has gained in the international arena after its major political and military victories in recent years, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the Arab country is now regarded as a power.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution praised the Syrian government and nation's resistance and perseverance, saying their victory in an international war has paved the way for growing credit and honor for Syria.

"Today, Syria is not the same Syria that it was before the war, although the devastation (of war) was not there at that time, but now Syria enjoys a higher degree of respect and credit and all countries look upon it as a power," the Leader said, referring to major achievements of Syria in both political and military arenas.

This is not the first time that Tehran has praised Syria and Assad for their resistance against the enemies as Tehran has shown its support even in the battlefield against enemies of Syria and now the two countries are cementing their ties.

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National Iranian Oil Co.  
(N.I.O.C.)

### Achievements of the N.I.O.C. in the 13th Government

IRAN



**Supporting Domestic Products**

Production and delivery of more than 800 sets of pens / equipment from the construction site of ten commodity groups, including well equipment, in-well supplementary field, SRP well pumps and drilling rigs worth 4,290 billion rials and preventing the outflow of currency from the country.

100% realization of localization and construction inside well and in-well equipment  
95% of well equipment items      34% of Ron Chahi supplementary course items  
13% of well pump items              34% cpr pipe and 5% drilling items

**Upgrading Technology and Supporting Knowledge-based Companies**

Financial support to 70 knowledge-based and technology companies in the project of rehabilitating inactive and low-efficiency wells with valuable contract capacity \$ 750 million

**Environmental Protection**

Signing a contract with 8 burner gas collection projects worth 470 million Euros with Iranian companies in order to implement the improvement plan and construction of East Karun burner gas collection facilities

**Social Responsibilities and Deprivation**

Completion of 385 public benefit projects related to social responsibilities with a total credit of 556 billion Tomans and their delivery to the beneficiary operating agencies in the provinces. Approval of more than 7000 billion Tomans by the esteemed board of directors of the National Iranian Oil Company related to the provincial trips of the esteemed President

**Improving the Situation of Human resources and Increasing Employee satisfaction**

Changing the status of 3,000 self-sacrificing forces  
Revival of organizational positions and support of temporary and contract forces for 15,000 people

**International field, Energy Diplomacy and Sale of crude oil and Petroleum Products**

increase in oil exports 40%  
increase in gas condensate exports 350%  
increase in revenues from exports of crude oil, gas condensate, natural gas, petroleum products and petrochemical products 300%

**Increasing the Production Capacity and Development of oil and Gas fields: oil Sector**

Restore crude oil production capacity to 3,838,000 barrels per day before the sanctions began By carrying out jihadi actions from the beginning of October 1400

**Increasing the Production Capacity and Development of oil and gas fields: Gas Sector**

Record daily production of 705,000,000 cubic meters of gas from the South Pars joint field for the first time and increase daily gas production by 1,036,000,000 cubic meters and stable gas supply in the winter of 1400

**Strategic Actions and Plans in the field of Production**

Development of a comprehensive 8-year plan for oil and gas production from 1401 to 1408 and an investment outlook of \$ 160,000,000,000

**Concluding investment Contracts and Memoranda**

Concluding Contracts and Investment Agreements Worth \$ 9,500,000,000

Knowledge-based Oil/Iranian Production, Global Export

# 26<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL OIL, GAS, REFINING & PETROCHEMICAL EXHIBITION

13 - 16 May 2022 . Tehran, International Permanent Fairground  
www.nioc.ir  
www.iran-oilshow.ir

## Iran Denounces Terror Attack on Egyptian Soldiers

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Monday condemned the terrorist attack that hit soldiers in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula two days earlier. He said that foreign-backed terrorism has unfortunately spread in Muslim countries, stressing that regional nations should have close cooperation on fighting terrorism. The Saturday attack took place in the town of Qantara. It targeted members of the Egyptian military, leaving at least eleven soldiers dead and five others wounded. The Daesh terror group claimed responsibility for the attack.

## Iran Oil Exports Doubled

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says Iran is no longer worried about its oil sales which are twice as much oil as when he took office in August, despite heavy sanctions imposed by the U.S.

"With the 13th government in power, oil sales have doubled and there is no longer any concern about oil sales," Raisi said in a live interview with national broadcaster IRIB late Monday.

According to Minister of Petroleum Javad Owji, Iran's oil exports have risen under the toughest sanctions without waiting for the outcome of the currently stalled Vienna talks to remove them.

The increase is down to different methods used to win contracts and finding different buyers. Owji has said Iran "took oil to the places the Americans cannot even think of."

Officials have also rejected claims that the Biden administration had eased the pressure of sanctions on Iran amid the Vienna talks and rising prices, saying that on the contrary, the US has grown more aggressive.

"Not only has the enemy not eased its sanctions, but it has also made them worse by going after Iranian ships and trying to capture our ships in order to prevent a jump in Iran's oil exports," Owji said in March.

President Raisi said on Monday foreign trade has touched the \$100-billion milestone which is "a completely different figure from the past".

He also said initial concerns about the strategic stocks of essential consumer goods have eased.

"Today, I assure the people that we do not have a problem with the stocks of basic goods, and that the government has taken all measures to ensure that there is no problem with the livelihood of the people," he said.

The Iranian consumer staples sector has occasionally witnessed some shortages of grocery products.



Prices across the globe have jumped at the pump and in grocery stores following first the global coronavirus pandemic, and then supply chain issues and spiking inflation. But, the challenge posed by the Ukraine crisis to the global food market has prompted many countries around the world to work through contingency plans to maintain food security.

"Today, concerns about protecting the lives of the people against the outbreak of the coronavirus, stocks of basic goods, foreign exchange, foreign trade as well as oil sales have been resolved to an acceptable extent," Raisi said.

He said the government seeks to reform the subsidy program for basic goods and phase out an "unfair" allocation of funds and distribution of foreign exchange at concessionary rates.

"From the very first days of the government, almost all economists and experts warned us that we should think of a solution to the serious problems of the country."

Raisi touched on the reopening of businesses and schools after a successful vaccination campaign, saying that "today, in addition to importing vaccines, we also have a very high capacity to produce vaccines in the country and even export them."

The president said his government's measures have brought down the number of daily deaths from the coronavirus pandemic to 7 from 700.

## Khaji Calls on Int'l Bodies To Help Syria out of Crisis

TEHRAN (IP) - Foreign minister's senior adviser for special political affairs called on International organisations, especially the Red Cross, to take the lead in lifting sanctions, implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2585 on the reconstruction of Syria's infrastructure, and increasing their efforts.

In a meeting with the Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Robert Mardini, on Monday, The Iranian foreign minister's senior advisor for special political affairs, Ali-Asghar Khaji, referred to the developments in Syria and noted that the political and security situation in Syria has improved compared to the past, but the pressure of sanctions and economic problems still afflict the Syrian people.

Khaji called on International organizations, especially the Red Cross, to take the lead in lifting sanctions, implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2585 on the reconstruction of Syria's infrastructure, and increasing their efforts.

Regarding the complicated humanitarian situation of the Yemeni people, the Iranian official stated that now, with the establishment of a nationwide ceasefire in Yemen, conditions are provided for lifting the siege, giving relief, transferring patients abroad through Sana'a airport and exchanging prisoners. He called on the Red Cross and international organizations to take the lead in this regard.

Robert Mardini, for his part, stated that despite the sanctions against the people of Yemen and Syria, the Red Cross emphasizes the need for aid, sending humanitarian aid and rebuilding infrastructure, noting that political issues should not influence this humanitarian aid.

Referring to the presence and services of the Red Cross office in Syria, Mardini announced his readiness to expand cooperation with Iran in the form of an Astana format and to provide bilateral assistance to the people of Syria and Yemen.

## Iranian Nation Success in Defeating Foreign Plots

TEHRAN (MNA) - "When the people are at the scene, all problems are solved and there would be no problem that could not be solved," according to the IRGC commander-in-chief on Tuesday.

Major General Hossein Salami made the remarks at a gathering of popular mobilization volunteers (Basij) of the IRGC Tehran branch.

Salami said that the Iranian nation managed to overcome difficult times thanks to the great efforts that the people made and their presence when they were needed. Referring to the cultural and economic war that the enemy is waging against the Iranian nation, the IRGC Commander-in-Chief said, "The enemy came and surrounded us to close the doors of the world to us and deprive us of science and knowledge, and to pursue this issue seriously by assassinating our scientists."

He added that the enemies sought to frustrate the Iranian people while underlining that "you people have defeated them (enemies)."

Major General Salami continued, "The enemies, with lies and media warfare, sought to isolate Iran from the rest of the world, to make the country insecure, to put the people against the Establishment, and to destroy their trust in the Establishment, but the people have thwarted all their plots with their faith, which was a great thing and this battle continues, all routes of influence are closed to the enemy in a proxy and direct war."

"The enemy has been defeated in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan, and it has failed in an economic war and maximum pressure campaign, so we should thank God for having such a brave and courage nation," he said. "When the people are at the scene, all problems are solved and there would be no problem that could not be solved," according to the IRGC commander-in-chief.

## UN Rights Expert Solely to Assess Impact of Sanctions on Iran Visit

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A top Iranian human rights official says a UN rapporteur's visit to Iran is only aimed at gathering information on the impact of sanctions in order to hold countries imposing such unilateral measures to account.

UN Special Rapporteur Alena Douhan began her 11-day visit to Iran, where she is due to meet the country's human rights officials and members of non-governmental organizations, on Saturday.

Kazem Gharibabadi, the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs and secretary of the High Council for Human Rights, said that Douhan's mission does not involve investigating matters apart from sanctions imposed unilaterally on Iran.

"Nations hit by sanctions should use all available resources to hold the countries calling for and enforcing unilateral sanctions liable," Nour News, affiliated to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, quoted him as saying.

With regard to the continuing hostility towards Iran, the senior Iranian judiciary official said, "Naturally, any plans [to relieve sanctions], with due considerations, will be put into action."

The Special Rapporteur's mandate was established by the UN Human Rights Council in September 2014 in response to concerns about the negative impact of unilateral sanctions on the rights of civilian populations around the world.

Gharibabadi said since the establishment of the mandate, the US and the Europeans have voted against the resolution to extend the mission of the Special Rapporteur, as they do not believe in being accountable to the international community and countries hit by sanctions.

His comments came after criticism voiced by the Western media accusing Iran of exploiting the visit to avoid accountability and "deflect attention" from its alleged human rights violations.

In a statement on Thursday, 11 human rights group alleged that while Iran has denied access to any of UN human rights monitors requesting to visit the country, Douhan's visit would help Iran cover up its alleged non-cooperation with the UN human rights establishment.

## Homegrown Satellite Nour-2 Sends Back First Images

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Nour-2 (Light-2), the second homegrown satellite launched by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force in March, has beamed back its first images.

Two images released on Monday show flat views of a stretch of land in Marvdasht in Fars province and Khormoj in Bushehr province.

Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Issa Zarepour who posted the images on his Instagram account, wrote "this is the first time that a homegrown satellite has sent back high resolution true-color images."

He lauded the achievement despite sanctions imposed on the country, saying that currently Iran has the technology to develop, launch and place satellites in earth orbits and succeeded in using satellite technology.

IRGC launched Nour-2 into a low Earth orbit (LEO), nearly two years after the launch of its first military satellite.

The homegrown satellite was launched with a three-stage satellite carrier, dubbed Qased (Messenger), from a launchpad in Dasht-e Kavir, a large desert in central Iran.

Nour-2 satellite is expected to carry out a range of military and civilian missions in Iran, including reconnaissance and natural disaster response operations.

Back on April 22, 2020, the IRGC successfully placed Nour-1 into an orbit 425 kilometers above the earth's surface.

## Tehran Book Fair, Beginning of Tehran-Doha Cultural Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Culture said the Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) would be the beginning of cultural cooperation with Qatar.

Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili said on Monday that 32 countries would participate in Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), and the international guest, including Qatari officials, as 'special guests' due to extensive cultural interactions between Tehran and Doha.

Earlier, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, two editions of the Tehran International Book Fair were held virtually for the first time in the country to meet the demands of Iranian publishers, authors, translators, book activists, students, and of course, the audience.

TIBF 2022 will host 700 Iranian and 170 foreign publishers in attendance and over 1,900 others virtually.

## Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran Celebrates 49th National Day

TEHRAN - Embassy Bangladesh in Tehran on Monday held a reception and ceremony at Parsian Azadi Hotel to mark the 49th independence and national day.

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Tehran H.E. Gousal Azam Sarker and his wife Mrs. Sadia Azam hosted this ceremony where Head of Export Markets Development of Iran Trade Promotion Organization Ahmad-Reza Alaei Tabatabaei was the distinguished guest.

Addressing the distinguished guests in his speech, Mr. Sarker first highlighted major achievements of his country since the independence of the country in 1971 when the country gained independence under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He said that 26 March, Bangladesh's Independence and National Day, is indeed an occasion of celebration for us. He noted that it assumed special significance this time as we are celebrating the Birth Centenary of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of our Independence. However, we are holding this event in Tehran little late due to Nowruz and Ramadan, he added.

The ambassador stated that as Bangladesh made an independent journey of half a century, the Golden Jubilee coincides with the Vision 2021 of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of transforming the country into a digital middle-income Bangladesh. He add that Bangladesh is thus set on track for her second Vision - 2041 of transforming the nation into a developed one - in realization of the dream of Golden Bengal of the Father of the Nation - the dream of a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

Mr. Sarker then said that the country has started a confident

BY: F. TAHERPOOR



Ambassador of Bangladesh Gousal Azam Sarker, accompanied by his wife Mrs. Sadia Azam and Head of Export Markets Development of Iran Trade Promotion Organization Ahmad-Reza Alaei Tabatabaei, cuts the special cake to mark the day

journey of a developing nation by reducing poverty successfully, from 43% in 1991 to below 14% last year raising per capita income more than three and half folds to 2500 dollars within her last 13 year governance. He reiterated that GDP growth continued uninterrupted at 6% plus for decades reaching 8.15% in 2018-19, the highest in Asia, adding that although the pandemic brought it down to 5.2% growth, it is expected to cross 6% this year.

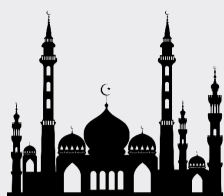
He also pointed to some more achievements of the country under PM Sheikh Hasina.

Sarker then touched upon ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran and said that Bangladesh maintains traditional bond of friendship and brotherliness cultural ties of which are rooted in millennia long people to people contacts, commonalities and an immense fund of goodwill for each other. Although it does not match with huge potentials, trade is going on uninterrupted, he added.

The diplomat went on to say that his country is working on connectivity and Tourism to take trade and investment at higher levels, adding that cooperation of the two countries in the areas of education, culture and sports are going on. Iranian experts are providing their services in important fields in Bangladesh at ever increasing scale.

He then pointed to the close cooperation of Dhaka and Tehran in several international bodies and organizations and expressed hope this close and amicable relation would get warmer through more joint co-operations.

The ceremony also witnessed performance of some Bangladesh music bands who sang some Bangla songs.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:00
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:18
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:24
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:01

20. And the apostles whom We sent before thee were all (men) who ate food and walked through the streets: We have made some of you as a trial for others: will ye have patience? for Allah is One Who sees (all things).

Surah 25. The Criterion, The Standard (20)

## Iran Ready to Meet Part of Energy Demand in Europe

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - An Iranian deputy president says the country will be ready to supply part of Europe's energy needs if governments in the region commit to long-term contracts and avoid seeking third party intervention.**

Masoud Mirkazemi, who leads Iran's Plan and Budget Organization, made the announcement on Monday during a meeting in Tehran with Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau.

Mirkazemi said that European governments will be able to access supplies of energy from Iran if they change their political and economic approach.

"If Europe wants to ensure the security of its energy supply it should review its strategy," he was quoted by the official IRNA news agency.

"Iran will meet part of the energy demand in Europe on the condition that the other side



shows lasting commitment and avoid being influenced by third parties," added the official.

During the meeting with Rau, Mirkazemi, who also chairs the joint cooperation committee between Iran and Poland, said that the two countries can expand their trade and economic ties by holding regular forums between private and government sector representatives.

Rau, for his part, said that Poland views Iran as a country with huge economic potentials, adding that the two countries can significantly boost their economic exchanges in the near future.

The Polish foreign minister said his country is opposed to the perception of some European capitals from Iran and said that deep rooted historic and cultural ties between Iran and Poland can help the two countries boost their cooperation in various fields.

He said that Poland is seeking to establish a direct flight route between Warsaw and Tehran as part of its efforts to increase trade ties with Iran.

## Repatriation of Export Forex Vital For Developmental Projects



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Chadormalu Industrial and Mining Company believes repatriation of the export forex is vital for the steel and mining units in implementing their developmental projects.

Addressing the specialized panel of the 12th Iranian Steel and Iron Ore Market Conference and Expo, Engi. Naser Taghizadeh said that to carry out the developmental projects, the steel industry and mining units require their export forex and the new approval of the government for levying tariff on steel export will definitely create major obstacle in way of implementing the developmental projects.

He also emphasized prioritization of discovery in the steel industry and stipulated that to get out of the unbalanced development in the chain of steel production, it needs to establish a consortium comprised of strong companies for discovering new mines.

He also said that change in the approach regarding national steel development to the alloy steels is an inevitable necessity, adding that required infrastructures should be provided in this industry for easing the presence of companies and investors in order that the country can continue competition in the international scene.

## Iran Ready for Broad Economic Ties With ECO Member States



SARI (IRNA) - The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready for inclusive, limitless cooperation with member states of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on economy and tourism, a senior Iranian official said.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of ECO Tourism Capital for 2022 which was in northern Iranian city of Sari on Tuesday, Mahmoud Hosseini, the governor-general of Mazandaran Province, said that tourism was a good basis for creating jobs for the people of the province and all member states of ECO.

He noted that the attracting foreign investment was a priority for the province and the local government would pave the way for foreign businesses to attend the province which, according to Hosseini, has a high capacity in agriculture, industry, and sea ports.

The ceremony was attended by ambassadors of the nine ECO member states to Iran and officials of the regional organization as well as Iran's tourism minister.

Uzbekistan's Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullaev whose country is currently presiding the ECO urged member states during his speech in the ceremony to focus on tourism by increasing flight lines between them.

## 3k Iranian Graduates Abroad Return Home

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Some 3,000 Iranian students who studied in foreign universities have returned to Iran after graduation, a senior government official said.

Sorena Sattari, Iran's vice president for science and technology, said in a technology meeting on Monday that the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology under his leadership has worked to bring Iranian researchers studying abroad back to the country.

Some 3,000 students, 450 of whom studied in top universities, have returned to Iran after graduation, Sattari said.

He noted that the vice-presidency worked on a program to bring back non-resident Iranians studying abroad, because dispatching students to study in foreign universities to enjoy their expertise after graduation would take 10 years to bear fruit.

The official also touched on scientific cooperation with Russia and China, noting that Iran and China were running 60 to 70 joint projects.

## Iran Aims to Increase Exports to Lebanon

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Director-General of Iranian Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare for International Affairs said that his ministry is ready to expand and promote trade with Lebanon.

Hamed Forouzan made the remarks on Monday in a meeting of the Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives and Social Welfare aimed at promotion export of products of subsidiary companies, held at the venue of the ministry in the presence of Lebanese Deputy Minister of Social Affairs and a representative of Jihad al-Bana Mohammad Al-Hajj.

During the meeting, Forouzan pointed to the longstanding history of relations between Iran and Lebanon and high level of economic and political cooperation between the two countries and underscored that Iranian Ministry of Labor has voiced its readiness to develop any kind of trade cooperation with neighboring Lebanon.

Expanding on high capacities and potentials of Iranian Ministry of Labor and economic centers, he said that his ministry is ready to transfer technical knowhow and experience to the Lebanese government and Hezbollah Resistance Movement in the fields of welfare, technical and vocational, insurance and services to retirees, export of products of holding companies and subsidiaries as well as export of digital services of knowledge-based companies.

Setting up a joint business center in Beirut is also being seriously pursued by Iranian Ministry of Labor, the Director-General emphasized.

The Lebanese Deputy Ministry of Social Affairs Abdullah Ahmed, for his part, stated that Iran's brilliant experiences in this regard can help Lebanon boost its economy as well as removal of social challenges facing the country.

## EU Willing to Develop Trade Ties With Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA)- French ambassador in Tehran Philippe Thiébaud said on Monday that the European Union is willing to develop trade relations with Iran.

Thiébaud made the remarks at the opening ceremony of Commercial Diplomacy Training for the EU-Iran Trade Development Project in Tehran on Monday.

Referring to the EU's willingness to develop trade relations with Iran, Thiébaud said that about 20% of Iran's imports from the EU have been carried out in the past year, adding that the volume of trade between the two sides has increased to about five billion euros.

Pointing to the significant role of the European Union in the fields of helping states trade and regulating trade relations with the countries of the world, he noted that the EU is committed to providing appropriate trade and economic relations with Iran.

He expressed hope for reviving the JCPOA, adding that the European Union is actively present in the JCPOA negotiations and hopes to increase trade cooperation after the lifting of sanctions.

## Azerbaijan Calls for Broadening Trade Ties With Iran

TABRIZ (IRNA) - The chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan said on Tuesday in Iran's Aras River border that his country wanted to expand trade ties and customs interactions with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Sefer Mehdiyev expressed hope that the visit would lead to increasing the level and value of trade exchange between the two countries.

Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Alireza Moghaddasi said in the meeting that interaction and trade cooperation with the Republic of Azerbaijan has always been emphasized by Iranian officials.

He added that in order to expand trade ties with Azerbaijan, seasonal meetings between the customs officials of the two countries are continuing.

## MSC Beyond Global Standards

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – The record for the refractory life of shaft furnaces and reformer at the direct reduction unit No.1 of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) was improved.

Senior Manager of production of MSC Mr. Gholamreza Salimi announced this achievement and expressed his satisfaction for the new record registered at the direct reduction unit. He then delved into details of measures taken in the direct reduction unit for setting the new record, adding that by creating modern methods and replacing the structure of the refractory bricks of the furnace and reformer and using the idle ports, this record was set.

Salimi then pointed to the advantages and achievements of this project, adding that implementation of the phases one to four of the project will save substituting 1800 tons of foreign refractory material in these five modules and it will also save flight of 4.5m euros of forex.

He reiterated that the most and apparent advantage of this project is indigenization and encouragement of the domestic refractory companies by the central team of the refractory of the company which has led to manufacture of a complete set of the refractory bricks of the shaft furnace of the direct reduction unit which happened by endeavors of Mehrgodaz Refractories Company and Dir Godaz Atashgah Spadana Company.



## 3 Remaining Gas Lines of Phase 14 of S. Pars To Be Launched, Completed by Yearend



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) says by the end of the current Iranian year, the three remaining gas lines of the mega project of Phase 14 of South Pars will be launched and completed.

Ali Nabavi said that with the launch of the gas lines of Phase 14 of South Pars, the amount of gas production will hit 2b cubic feet per day, adding that the first gas line of Phase 14 came on stream in March with the daily capacity of 500m cubic feet.

Nabavi then noted that following the trust of Oil Ministry, IDRO as the leader of the fully Iranian consortium of this mega project with the goal of improving the domestic manufacture capability has taken action to attract participation of the domestic capable manufacturers like the knowledge-based companies based on their maturation. He noted that currently the average usage of domestic production and service capability in different parts of the Phase 14 project of South Pars has surpassed 68%.

Touching upon the maximum usage of the production and services capability, Head of IDRO said that indigenization of Phase 14 of South Pars is comprised of four parts of offshore platforms, offshore pipelines, onshore refinery and offshore drilling.

Nabavi then said in the field of platforms, indigenization so far has progressed by 74%, in the field of pipeline this figure is 46%, in the field of onshore refinery the indigenization has materialized for 74% and the figure stands at 60% in the drilling and on the whole Phase 14 is the most Iranian-made project in South Pars.

He then pointed to some other domestic capabilities being used in the project like the 30,000 ton steel structures of the project which has been fully home-made.

## Havana Hotel Blast Toll Rises to 35

HAVANA (Dispatches) - Rescue workers have pulled another four bodies from the ruins of a Havana luxury hotel wrecked in an explosion last week, raising the death toll to 35, an official said.

Crews continued to comb through the rubble of the Saratoga five-star hotel, which was being renovated and had no guests at the time of the late-morning blast last Friday that was seemingly caused by a gas leak.

The search is now focused on the basement and sub-basement of the building.

"It is at a very dangerous stage because of the concentration of rubble and the danger of collapse," fire department head Luis Carlos Guzman told state television Monday, updating the death toll.



## Pope Postpones Trip to Lebanon for Health Reasons

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Pope Francis has postponed a trip to Lebanon initially planned for June over health concerns, Lebanon's tourism minister Walid Nassar said.

Nassar did not elaborate on the "health reasons" behind the postponement, but the pope who has suffered from pain in his knee was seen using a wheelchair for the first time at a public event on Thursday.

"Lebanon received a letter from the Vatican officially informing it of the decision to postpone the scheduled visit of the Pope to Lebanon," Nassar said in a statement published by the official National News Agency.



## Sri Lanka PM Quits as Violence Kills Three, Injures 150



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa quit after a day of violence saw three people including an MP killed and over 150 wounded as government supporters armed with sticks and clubs attacked protesters.

Lawmaker Amarakeerthi Athukorala from the ruling party shot two people — killing a 27-year-old man — and then himself after being surrounded by a mob of anti-government protesters outside the city, police said.

Sri Lanka has suffered months of blackouts and dire shortages of food, fuel and medicines in its worst economic crisis since independence, sparking weeks of overwhelmingly peaceful anti-government demonstrations.

On Monday scores of Rajapaksa loyalists attacked unarmed protesters camping outside the president's office at the sea-front Galle Face promenade in downtown Colombo since April 9, AFP reporters said.

The violence began after several thousand supporters of the prime minister, brought in buses from rural areas, poured out of his nearby official residence.

Rajapaksa had addressed some 3,000 supporters at his house and pledged he would "protect the interests of the nation."

The supporters then initially pulled down tents of protesters in front of the prime minister's Temple Trees residence and torched anti-government banners and placards.

They then marched to the nearby promenade and began destroying other tents set up by the "Gota go home" campaign that demands the president step down.

"We were hit, the media were hit, women and children were hit," one witness told AFP, asking not to be named.

Police fired tear gas and water cannon and declared an immediate curfew in Colombo which was later widened to include the entire South Asian island nation of 22 million people.

Over 150 injured people were hospitalised, Colombo National Hospital spokesman Pushpa Soysa told AFP.

Officials said the army riot squad was called in to reinforce police. Soldiers have been deployed throughout the crisis to protect deliveries of fuel and other essentials but until now not to prevent clashes.

"Strongly condemn the violent acts taking place by those inciting & participating, irrespective of political allegiances. Violence won't solve the current problems," President Rajapaksa tweeted.

The U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka said Washington condemned "the violence against peaceful protesters today, and call(s) on the government to conduct a full investigation, including the arrest & prosecution of anyone who incited violence".

"Our sympathies are with those injured today and we urge calm and restraint across the island," Julie Chung tweeted.

MP Athukorala's car was surrounded in the town of Nittambuwa outside Colombo as he returned home from the capital after the clashes.

## Putin's Victory Day Speech Leaves No Clue On Future Escalation

KYIV (Dispatches) - Vladimir Putin exhorted Russians to battle in a defiant Victory Day speech on Monday, but was silent about plans for any escalation in Ukraine, despite Western warnings he might use his Red Square address to order a national mobilization.

In Ukraine, there was no let-up in fighting, with Kyiv describing a stepped-up Russian offensive in the east and a renewed push to defeat the last Ukrainian troops holding out in a steelworks in ruined Mariupol.

Monday's annual parade in Moscow - with the usual ballistic missiles and tanks rumbling across the cobblestones - was easily the most closely watched since the 1945 defeat of the Nazis that it celebrates.

Western capitals had openly speculated for weeks that Putin was driving his forces to achieve enough progress

by the symbolic date to declare victory - but with few gains so far, might instead announce a national call-up for war.

He did neither, but repeated his assertions that Russian forces were again fighting Nazis.

"You are fighting for the Motherland, for its future, so that no one forgets the lessons of World War Two. So that there is no place in the world for executioners, castigators and Nazis," Putin said from the tribune outside the Kremlin walls.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in his own speech, promised Ukrainians they would triumph. "On the Day of Victory over Nazism, we are fighting for a new victory. The road to it is difficult, but we have no doubt that we will win," said Zelenskiy, in plain army garb with his shirt sleeves rolled up.

In a clear reference to Putin, Zelenskiy added: "The one who is repeating the horrific crimes of Hitler's regime today, following Nazi philosophy, copying everything they did - he is doomed."

Sheltering in a metro station in Kharkiv, Ukraine's mainly Russian-speaking second city which has been bombed relentlessly since the war's first days, World War Two survivor Vira Mykhailivna, 90, buried her tear-stained cheeks in her palms.

"I didn't think this could ever happen to us," she said. "This day was once a great celebration."



## Sweden's Ruling Party to Decide on NATO Membership on May 15

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Sweden's ruling Social Democrats will decide on May 15 whether to overturn decades of opposition to NATO membership, according to the party.

Monday's announcement came more than two months after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, which sparked an urgent rethink of security policy in Sweden and Finland.

Finnish President Sauli Niinisto is expected to announce his support for an application this week.

Niinisto's announcement, on May 12, would trigger what is likely to be a hectic few weeks during which the map of northern Europe's security architecture could be redrawn.

In Sweden, Social Democrat Party secretary Tobias Baudin told Swedish public service radio SR that the decision was not yet made.

"Our message is that on May 15 there will be a decision for the party leadership to take a position on," he said on Monday.

The Social Democrats - the biggest party in Sweden for the last 100 years - are holding three digital party meetings this week to canvas members' opinions on NATO membership ahead of the final decision by the leadership at the weekend.

Meanwhile, parliament is holding a parallel, all-party review of security policy, which is due to report on May 13.

"I want to have that on the table before I make a decision," Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said in a debate on NATO on Swedish TV on Sunday.

A formal application to join NATO could be made at the alliance's June summit in Madrid and is likely to be fast-tracked, though getting the signatures of all 30 alliance members could take up to a year.

Military non-alignment has long been a policy bedrock for many Swedes and while support for NATO membership has been growing sharply - most polls in recent months have shown a clear majority in favour - many still remain uncertain.

A decision to seek NATO membership would be sure to anger Moscow, which has threatened to station nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, across the sea from Sweden.

The Left and Green parties have rejected calls for membership, while the rest of the opposition wants to go ahead.

## Marcos Poised for Philippines Election Triumph

MANILA (Dispatches) - Ferdinand Marcos Jr was headed for a stunning victory in the Philippines' presidential election on Monday with double the votes of his nearest rival, putting the son of the notorious late dictator on the cusp of a historic political fightback.

An unofficial tally by the election commission showed Marcos, 64, was close to passing the required 27.5 million votes to secure a majority in a presidential election for the first time since the end of his father's 1965-1986 rule.

The count makes almost certain a previously unthinkable return to power of the Marcos family, 36 years after its humiliating retreat into exile after being toppled in a "people power" uprising.

"I hope you won't get tired of trusting us," Marcos told supporters in remarks streamed on Facebook, a platform at the heart of his campaign strategy.

"We have plenty of things to do," he said, adding "an endeavour as large as this does not involve one person."

Marcos Jr had 26.3 million votes, more than double the 12.5 million votes for Leni Robredo, the vice president, with 81.8% of the eligible ballots counted, according to the unofficial Commission on Elections (COMELEC) tally.

Despite its fall from grace, the Marcos family returned from exile in the 1990s and has since been a powerful force in politics, retaining its influence with vast wealth and far-reaching connections.

Marcos Jr has served as a governor, congressman and senator, his sister, Imee, is currently a senator and mother Imelda, the influential power-broker and widow of the late dictator, served four terms in the House of Representatives.

Marcos has presented no real policy platform, campaigning on a simple but ambiguous message of unity.

His presidency is expected to provide continuity from outgoing leader Rodrigo Duterte, whose ruthless, strongman approach proved popular and helped him to consolidate power rapidly.

A major boon has been Marcos securing Duterte's daughter, Sara Duterte-Carpio, as his running mate, tapping her father's support and helping him to make inroads in new voter territory.

The unofficial tally showed Duterte-Carpio winning the vice presidency by a massive margin.

Marcos was criticized for skipping presidential debates and made few media appearances during the campaign, enabling him to limit scrutiny and control his message via a network of influencers and bloggers granted broad access to his events.



## Macron Urges EU Not to Repeat Making Same Mistakes as in the Past

PARIS (Dispatches) - Europe must learn from its past mistakes and make sure no side is humiliated when Russia and Ukraine negotiate for peace, France's president said after describing Vladimir Putin's World War Two anniversary speech as "intimidation" and "warlike".

Addressing massed ranks of service personnel on Red Square on the 77th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany, Putin on Monday condemned what he called external threats to weaken and divide Russia.

Speaking to reporters in the European Parliament, Emmanuel Macron said the May 9 anniversary was marked by two different faces.

On the one hand, Putin had sought to "show force, intimidation" and deliver a "resolutely warlike speech", while on the other the EU was working on deepening a peaceful project led by the people, Macron said.

"I believe that this project of peace, of stability, of prosperity ... (we) must continue to make it more democratic, more united, more sovereign," he said.

However, he warned that while Europe was now helping Ukraine, there would come a point when Moscow and Kyiv would sue for peace and at that point neither side should be humiliated or excluded as had happened to Germany in 1918.

"We must have this standard because we know that the coming weeks and months will be very difficult," Macron said, adding that the 27-nation European Union would continue to impose new sanctions on Russia.



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## High Fuel Prices Not Likely to Impact Travel Demand for Now

RIYADH (Dispatches) - The International Air Transport Association (IATA) does not expect high fuel prices to dent travel demand in the near term, but could later this year or next, Director General Willie Walsh said on Monday.

"What we're seeing at the moment is not in any way deterring people from travel," Willie Walsh told an industry event in Riyadh, adding that current indications are showing that the industry's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic is accelerating.



## China's Exports Growth Hits 2-Year-Low

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's export growth slowed to single digits, the weakest in almost two years, while imports barely changed in April as tighter and wider COVID-19 curbs halted factory production and crimped domestic demand, adding to wider economic woes.

Exports in dollar terms grew 3.9% in April from a year earlier, dropping sharply from the 14.7% growth reported in March although slightly better than analysts' forecast of 3.2%. It was the slowest pace since June 2020.

Imports were broadly stable year-on-year, improving slightly from a 0.1% fall in March and a bit better than the 3.0% contraction tipped by the Reuters poll.

The weak figures show China's trade sector, which accounts for about a third of gross domestic product, is losing momentum as lockdowns across the country ensnared supply chains in major centres like Shanghai, heightening risks of a deeper slowdown in the world's second-largest economy and beyond.

"The virus outbreaks in China led to huge difficulties in the production chains and the supply chains," Chang Ran, a senior analyst at Zhixin Investment Research Institute said in a note on Monday. "Meanwhile, some countries in Southeast Asia have transitioned from recovery to production expansion, replacing Chinese exports to some extent."

Julian Evans-Pritchard, senior China economist at Capital Economics, said the main headwind to exports is weakening foreign demand.

"The sharpest falls were in shipments to the EU and U.S., where high inflation is weighing on real household incomes," he said. "The declines were also especially pronounced in electronics exports which suggest a further unwinding of pandemic-linked demand for Chinese goods."

Beijing's extraordinary efforts to curb the country's largest COVID-19 outbreaks in two years have clogged highways and ports, restricted activity in dozens of cities including Shanghai and forced companies from Apple supplier Foxconn to automakers Toyota and Volkswagen to suspend some operations.

Factory activity was already contracting at a sharper pace in April, industry surveys showed, raising fears of a steep slowdown that could also hit global growth. Shi Xinyu, a foreign trade manager in Yiwu, a commodities trading hub, said only 20-50% of stores in the city are open due to COVID disruptions.

"(The weak import demand came amid) the downward economic cycle and COVID hit," Shi said. "Life is already hard enough and it happens we've got a leaky roof as it rains."

Additionally, heightened risks from the Ukraine war, persistently soft consumption and a prolonged downturn in the property market are also weighing on growth, analysts say. With the national jobless rate at a near two-year high, authorities have promised more help to shore up confidence and ward off further job losses in a politically sensitive year.

Some analysts even warn of rising recession risks, saying policymakers must provide more stimulus to reach an official 2022 growth target of about 5.5% if Beijing doesn't ease its zero-COVID policy.

## Biden Sidelined Global Energy Partners With Record Emergency Oil Release

LONDON (Dispatches) - The United States announced a record-sized release of emergency crude oil reserves in March without consulting partners in the International Energy Agency, leaving them scrambling to match with releases of their own, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

Unilateral action by Washington to address global supply or price issues risks undermining the U.S. relationship with the IEA, the world's energy watchdog that normally oversees international releases from emergency stockpiles, and could raise questions about the continued relevance of the group.

The Paris-based IEA, which groups together 31 mostly industrialized countries, was established after the 1973 oil price shock to ensure continuous energy supplies to its members in the event of an embargo, war, or devastating storm.

The group's members have become worried that U.S. President Joe Biden is using the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to tamp down rampant domestic inflation for political reasons, instead of protecting consumer countries from a global supply disruption, according to the sources who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the topic.

"The IEA was embarrassed by the (U.S.) release which was at the start done essentially unilaterally by the U.S.," said a source familiar with the diplomacy around the release.

"It is the common understanding of IEA members that we must cooperate as a whole," said another source, this one from an IEA member country, who said the U.S. announcement came as a surprise.

The IEA told Reuters it had been in close contact with all member countries including the United States in the run-up to its two stock release announcements this year: "This consultation as well as the decisions for taking collective action were conducted in line with IEA procedures."

The U.S. Department of Energy said the United States had been in "frequent contact" with the IEA and its member states on energy security leading up to the announcement, but confirmed its decision to release the oil was "independent" of the IEA.

It did not comment on whether the United States shared in advance the timing and volume of its release. "The United States and other IEA members countries can and have, independently, released oil from their strategic reserves separate from any IEA collective action," the department said in a statement to Reuters.



## G-7 Imposes More Sanctions On Russia After Meeting With Zelenskyy

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The G-7 countries imposed a series of new sanctions on Russia following a videoconference meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday, the White House said.

In a joint statement, the G7 said they will reinforce Russia's economic isolation and "elevate" a campaign against Russian elites who support President Vladimir Putin.

The leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States held the meeting on May 8, a day traditionally set aside in Europe to mark the end of the European portion of World War II and the liberation of Europe from Nazi forces.

The commemorations are set to be echoed in Russia on Monday - the day Russia traditionally marks the end of the European war - with questions open about whether Putin will use the occasion to ratchet the war up or down.

"We commit to phase out our dependency on Russian energy, including by phasing out or banning the import of Russian oil. We will ensure that we do so in a timely and orderly fashion, and in ways that provide time for the world to secure alternative supplies," the joint statement said.

"This will hit hard at the main artery of Putin's economy and deny him the revenue he needs to fund his war," the White House said.

The West has so far displayed close coordination in its announcements of sanctions against Russia, but has not moved at the same pace when it comes to Russian oil and gas.

The United States, which was not a major consumer of Russian hydrocarbons, has already banned their import.

But Europe is far more reliant on Russian oil. The European Union has already said it is aiming to cut its reliance on Russian gas by two-thirds this year, though Germany has opposed calls for a full boycott, with member states continuing intense negotiations Sunday.

The G-7 also slammed Putin personally for his actions in Ukraine.

The Russian president's "unprovoked war of aggression" against its Eastern European neighbor has brought "shame on Russia and the historic sacrifices of its people," the group said in its statement.

"Russia has violated the international rules-based order, particularly the U.N. Charter, conceived after the Second World War to spare successive generations from the scourge of war," the statement continued.

## Japan to Take Time Phasing out Russian Oil Imports



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan will take time to phase out Russian oil imports after agreeing on a ban with other Group of Seven (G7) nations to counter Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Monday.

The G7 nations committed to the move "in a timely and orderly fashion" at an online meeting on Sunday to put further pressure on President Vladimir Putin, although members such as resource-poor Japan depend heavily on Russian fuel.

"For a country heavily dependent on energy imports, it's a very difficult decision. But G7 coordination is most important at a time like now," Kishida told reporters, repeating comments he made at the G7 meeting.

"As for the timing of the reduction or stoppage of (Russian) oil imports, we will consider it while gauging the actual situation," he said. "We will take our time to take steps towards a phase-out." He did not elaborate.

There have been no ships loading Russian oil for Japan since mid-April, according to Refinitiv data. About 1.9 million barrels were exported from Russia to Japan in April, 33 per cent down from the same month a year ago.

The Ukraine crisis has highlighted Japan's energy dependence on Russia even as Tokyo has acted swiftly and in tandem with the G7 in instituting sanctions.

The latest ban underlines a turn in Japan's policy. Japan has said it would be difficult to immediately cut off Russian oil imports, which accounted for about 33 million barrels of Japan's overall oil imports, or 4 per cent, for 2021.

It has already said it will ban Russian coal imports in stages, leaving just liquefied natural gas (LNG). Japan is in a particularly tough spot since it shut down the bulk of its nuclear reactors following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Russia was Japan's fifth-biggest supplier of crude oil and LNG last year.

## Moody's Sees Malaysia's Economy Expanding 1.1% in Q1 2022

KUALALUMPUR (Dispatches) - Moody's Analytics projected that Malaysia's economy had grown 1.1 per cent quarter-on-quarter in the first quarter of 2022 (Q1 2022), following the 6.6 per cent expansion in Q4 2021.

It said the gains from a robust external position have largely extended into the opening months of 2022. "Also, a rise in private consumption after the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and policy shift towards living with the virus is likely to have supported March-quarter growth," it said in a statement today.

Additionally, it said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is expected to keep its benchmark policy rate steady at 1.75 per cent during its May meeting.

As for the Asia Pacific economy, the financial services company said inflation readings for April are expected to trend higher in Asia.

India's consumer price index (CPI) is likely to have risen to 7.3 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) last month from 7.0 per cent in March, reflecting higher food prices and elevated energy costs.

Similarly, CPI in Indonesia is expected to increase to 3.0 per cent y-o-y in April from 2.6 per cent previously.

Meanwhile, Kenanga Research said as BNM is broadly expected to keep the overnight policy rate (OPR) unchanged at 1.75 per cent and the US dollar index (DXY) to remain elevated at around 104.0, the ringgit may continue to trade under pressure, within the 4.36 - 4.38 range.

"The USD may continue to be supported by a series of potential hawkish statements by the United States Federal Reserve speakers and rising price pressures.

"However, a stronger-than-expected domestic macroeconomic reading, especially for Q1 2022 gross domestic product may help to limit ringgit's depreciation," it said.

BNM is scheduled to have its third monetary policy meeting on May 11, while the announcement of Economic and Financial Developments in Malaysia in Q1 2022 will be made on May 13.

## Indonesia Maintains Steady Growth in Q1 Thanks to Exports

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia's economy maintained steady growth in the first quarter of 2022 despite global tensions, official data showed today, as the nation reaped the benefits of soaring commodities prices and an easing of Covid restrictions.

Indonesia was badly affected by the

coronavirus pandemic, with its exports and tourism-reliant economy taking a massive hit in 2020 as GDP shrunk by 2.07 per cent - its first recession since the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

But South-east Asia's largest economy has picked up in recent months, and the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) today reported an on-year expansion of 5.01 per cent in January-March.

"The high economic growth for the first quarter of 2022 is caused by the recovery of public activities," head of the bureau Margo Yuwono said during a press conference.

"Public mobility in the first quarter of 2022 has been really good."

Exports showed an especially impressive growth of 16.22 per cent in the first quarter of 2022 as prices for Indonesia's palm oil, nickel and tin soared on the global market.

Moody's Analytics said Indonesia's first-quarter showing exceeded their forecast.

"The result indicates that Southeast Asia's largest economy is on track to achieve the government's full-year growth target of 4.5 per cent to 5.3 per cent," it said in a note released today.

Indonesia in March had dropped quarantine requirements for all travellers with a negative PCR test.

It has also seen a tripling of foreign tourist arrivals between January to March this year, compared to the same period in 2021.

The country's economy expanded 3.69 per cent in 2021 as coronavirus cases started to decline and export prices for key commodities like palm oil, coal and nickel rose significantly.

But while Indonesia - the world's top palm oil producer accounting for 35 per cent of global trade - has reaped the benefits of the high prices in recent months, in April it suspended exports in the face of domestic shortages.

## FM Congratulates Uzbekistan on 30th Diplomatic Ties Anniversary

TEHRAN (IRNA)- Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in a message congratulated the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties with Uzbekistan. He said that the event is very important as the starting point of friendly relations between the two countries. Iranian and Uzbek officials have always tried to develop cooperation in all fields, he added. He hoped a bright future in Iran-Uzbekistan bilateral relations.



## Russian Oil Embargo Risks Further Inflation for Europe

LONDON (Dispatches) - European countries already reeling from record inflation risk aggravating their plight with the decision to shut themselves off from Russian oil imports. European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen promises the planned embargo will be implemented "in a way that allows us and our partners to secure alternative supply routes", but German economy minister Robert Habeck has warned the region's top economy will suffer, citing possible shortages and further upward pressure on prices. The step is seen as more manageable than disrupting flows of Russian natural gas. But an oil ban leaves the world with less supply as the US and Europe face the fastest inflation in decades alongside wilting confidence because of the war in Ukraine. "Russian oil can be replaced on the world market in the short term, but with additional costs and logistical challenges," German industry trade group BDI said this week. "Given the oil embargo, energy prices will probably continue to rise." The EU has long agonised over whether it can withstand being cut off from a top energy supplier, having received more than a quarter of its oil imports from Russia last year. Natural gas, which mostly flows through pipelines, is harder to replace and deliveries of liquefied fuel by sea from other suppliers couldn't cover the shortfall. The IMF reckons EU output in 2023 would be about 3% lower without Russian oil and gas imports. For Germany, the Bundesbank says activity is at risk of shrinking nearly 2% this year if an energy embargo leads to restrictions on power providers and industry. Some analysts have argued that the impact would be less severe, and that the economy would be able to handle the shock.



Berenberg economist Holger Schmieding says Europe could phase out Russian oil by year-end without causing shortages and dramatic price increases. UBS Global Wealth Management said that while the impact of the embargo on Europe's economic growth is likely to be "manageable", uncertainty over supplies will probably "keep energy prices supported".

### Islamic Republic of Iran...

FROM PAGE 1

Syria has also been so far true ally as the country was the only one which helped and supported Iran during the eight-year Iraqi imposed-war. At that time Hafiz Assad, father of Bashar, was the leader of Syria and now his son follows the path and ideals of his father as well as friendship with Iran. Now Syrian through strengthening its bond with Iran is turning to a strong country in the region and it is becoming a serious threat to the Zionists. Ayatollah Khamenei in the meeting also noted that the Syrian president and its nation are now honored by all regional nations, adding, "Some leaders of countries that are neighbors to us and you, have relations with the leaders of the Zionist regime and drink coffee together. However, people of the same countries pour into the streets on (International) Quds Day and chant anti-Zionism slogans and this is the current reality of the region."



He said various factors were influential in Syria's resistance and victory in an international war, adding, "One of the most important of those factors was your own high morale and, God willing, you would be able to reconstruct the ravages of war with the same morale, because you have a great work to do."

Now Tehran and Damascus should work together for creating a stronger front against their enemies especially against the Zionists and the U.S. Despite having good and strong political relation, the two countries need to expand this good relation to other fields like economy, tourism and culture.

The Islamic Republic of Iran can help Damascus in its reconstruction as the country has suffered heavy damages during years of war with terrorist groups and enemies.

President Ebrahim Raisi should take advantage of the current good relation between the two countries for boosting bilateral trade and promoting cultural and tourism issues. Syria can enjoy Iran's capacities for re-building the damaged areas and both countries can cooperate in different fields as Iran in recent years have achieved huge successes in several fields like knowledge-based and Nano technologies. Of course, Iran can help Syria in the construction sector but all depends on strong determination from Damascus because Iran has always shown its good will for cooperation with its real allies especially Syria and any request will be welcomed by Tehran.

Tehran and Damascus are in a condition that they can help each other and Damascus should not let some countries come between them. Assad's second visit to Tehran since the civil war in Syria once again signaled the strong and amicable tie between Tehran and Damascus as many countries envy it and are trying to create rift between them through disseminating fake news and reports which will be in vain due to the wise leadership in both sides and President Assad sees Iran as a genuine and reliable friend especially in the time of need.

## Saudi Fights to Lead Saturated MidEast Aviation Market



RIYADH (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia pitched aviation industry leaders on its plans to become a global travel hub, drawing scepticism from analysts who questioned how it could compete against regional heavyweights. The conservative kingdom's aviation goals, part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's wide-ranging "Vision 2030" reforms, include more than tripling annual traffic to 330 million passengers by the end of the decade. It also wants to draw \$100 billion in investments to the sector by 2030, establish a new national flag carrier, construct a new "mega airport" in Riyadh and move up to five million tons of cargo each year. Officials outlined how they intend to hit those targets during a global aviation forum that began Monday in Riyadh. Organizers said 2,000 delegates are trying to chart the airline industry's post-pandemic recovery. "Over the next 10 years the kingdom will emerge as the Middle East's leading aviation hub," Transport Minister Saleh Al-Jasser told the forum's opening session. The strategy hinges on tapping Saudi Arabia's large domestic market, he told AFP in an interview, citing what analysts described as a major advantage for Saudi carriers over regional rivals Emirates and Qatar Airways. "We are very focused on building connectivity to Saudi Arabia, in helping the tourism industry to grow in Saudi Arabia and helping the Saudi people connect to the world... That's what we are focused on," he said. But steep competition raises questions about how feasible the Saudi plans are. "They're fighting multiple headwinds on the aviation front," said Robert Mogielnicki with the Arab Persian Gulf States Institute in Washington.

## Italy Extends Vetting Powers to Protect Key National Assets

ROME (Dispatches) - Italy's parliament has extended Rome's special vetting powers to protect its key national assets by including the hydroelectric sector and new companies that plan to operate in industries deemed strategic, lawmakers said. The 15-month-old government led by Prime Minister Mario Draghi has used its so-called "golden powers" to set conditions on scores of mergers and has blocked several attempts by China to extend its presence in the euro zone's third-largest economy. The changes, approved by the Senate overnight, were introduced in a government decree that was originally set up to strengthen anti-takeover regulation in the telecoms and defense industries. The upper-house Senate decided that a notification to the



government will be required to set up a company operating in sectors deemed strategic in case a non-EU firm owns a stake of at least 10%, a parliamentary document seen by Reuters said.

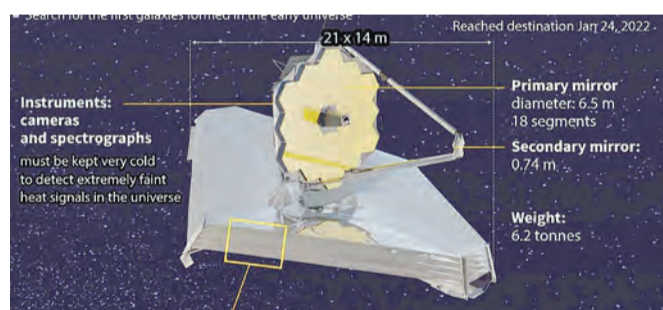
A separate amendment established that the golden powers also apply to companies operating major hydroelectric concessions, such as dams.

"The extension of the golden power to the hydroelectric sector is a decisive step towards the ecological transition and in giving value to economic and energy assets," said Andrea Cioffi, a senator with the 5-Star Movement who promoted the measure.

As part of its plans to beef up the scrutiny of corporate takeovers, the Italian government will soon establish a dedicated division to oversee merger deals involving strategic companies.

## Webb Telescope's First Full Color, Scientific Images Coming in July

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Get ready for a summer blockbuster. The James Webb Space Telescope will produce "spectacular color images" of the cosmos in mid-July -- its first observations dedicated to its mission of scientific discovery, an astronomer overseeing the project said Monday. The successor to Hubble has spent the last five months aligning its instruments in preparation for the big reveal, with scientists deliberately remaining coy about where the cameras will be pointed. "We'd really like it to be a surprise," Klaus Pontoppidan, a scientist at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore told reporters, adding that the secrecy was partly due to the first targets not yet being finalized. NASA and its partners the European Space Agency (ESA) and Canadian Space Agency (CSA) formed a committee to create a ranked list of objects, which they now intend to work through. Webb's team has already released a series of star field images taken for calibration purposes, but the new photographs will be of astrophysics targets, key to deepening humankind's understanding of the universe, said Pontoppidan.



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Get ready for a summer blockbuster. The James Webb Space Telescope will produce "spectacular color images" of the cosmos in mid-July -- its first observations dedicated to its mission of scientific discovery, an astronomer overseeing the project said Monday. The successor to Hubble has spent the last five months aligning its instruments in preparation for the big reveal, with scientists deliberately remaining coy about where the cameras will be pointed. "We'd really like it to be a surprise," Klaus Pontoppidan, a scientist at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore told reporters, adding that the secrecy was partly due to the first targets not yet being finalized. NASA and its partners the European Space Agency (ESA) and Canadian Space Agency (CSA) formed a committee to create a ranked list of objects, which they now intend to work through. Webb's team has already released a series of star field images taken for calibration purposes, but the new photographs will be of astrophysics targets, key to deepening humankind's understanding of the universe, said Pontoppidan.

## Venezuela Begins Imports of Iranian Heavy Oil For Refining

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela has begun importing Iranian heavy crude to feed its domestic refineries, documents from the state-run oil company PDVSA showed, a deal that widens a swap agreement signed last year by the U.S. sanctioned countries. The two last year initially agreed to a swap deal, with PDVSA importing Iranian condensate to dilute and process its extra heavy oil for export. In return, Venezuelan crude was shipped via the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). Iran's heavy crude, which is similar in quality to Venezuela's Mesa 30 crude, is set to augment domestic oil fed to PDVSA's refineries. Venezuela also in recent years received Iranian parts and equipment to revamped its refineries. At least 200,000 barrels of Iranian heavy crude were delivered in mid-April to the 310,000-barrel per day (bpd) Cardon refinery, Venezuela's second largest, while another 400,000-barrel parcel of the Iranian oil is being discharged this week at the country's Jose port, the documents showed. The Middle Eastern country also recently sent condensate to Venezuela on Iran flagged tankers.

As its domestic oil output became heavier, Venezuela in recent years struggled to source medium and light grades for its refineries, contributing to limited production and intermittent scarcity of motor fuels. The South American country's heavy oil output also

increasingly needs lighter crudes or refined products to be used as diluents so it can produce exportable grades. Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji traveled to Venezuela last week to meet President Nicolas Maduro and discuss trade agreements with his counterpart, Tarek El Aissami.

### Iran Produces...

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He made the remarks during an inauguration ceremony marking the manufacture of homegrown kits for newborn screening tests designed to detect metabolic conditions on Tuesday. "We managed to procure oxygen-18 isotope in the process of heavy water production," Tasnim quoted Eslami as saying. Oxygen-18 isotope is widely used in various sciences such as the environment, biochemistry, diagnosis, and medical treatment. Eslami said that the kits used for detecting newborns' metabolic condition used to be imported to the country in limited numbers, adding that "Iran is now among the top five countries manufacturing the kits." "The kit was produced within a year and we have plans to export it as well," he added. Last January, Iran's nuclear spokesman, Behrouz Kamalvandi, said the country is currently producing enough heavy water inside the country, and is even exporting surplus to eight countries. He said the country must have its own nuclear power plants, and produce the fuel required for those plants, as well as the nuclear medicine it needs.

### Turkey's Dam...

FROM PAGE 1

"The issue has been raised at least three times in the past eight months in two meetings with the Turkish Foreign Minister in New York, as well as in a phone call with him," he added. "Despite the fact that there is no bilateral agreement between Tehran and Ankara on water cooperation in the past, 4 months ago we asked the Turkish government to establish a joint water committee between the two countries so that we can address the concerns in this regard. We must make sure that dam constructions by Turkey do not have a negative impact on the water supply to Iran."

He went on to say, "Turkish officials have so far assured us that the dam constructions are done primarily in mountainous areas for hydropower use."

Referring to the visit of the expert delegation of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Energy to Turkey in the form of a joint border committee, the minister added, "A Turkish delegation is scheduled to visit Iran soon to follow up on this issue, and the necessary legal, political and diplomatic measures have been taken between the two countries in this regard."

Elsewhere, he pointed to Iran's water right of Helmand (Hirmand) River, saying that Iran is not satisfied with the interim governing body of Afghanistan regarding the Helmand River.

Referring to the meeting of the Joint Commission of Iran and Afghanistan on the Helmand River, he added that Afghanistan's governing body has agreed about Iran's water right of Helmand but now blames water shortages for the delay. "If there is a violation of Iran's access to Helmand, we will pursue the issue in international forums because there is a bilateral agreement in this regard."

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## Alcaraz Wins Madrid Open Title

MADRID (Dispatches) - Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz won his second ATP Masters 1000 title at the Madrid Open after defeating defending champion Alexander Zverev 6-3 6-1 in front of his home crowd.

Alcaraz looked dangerous throughout his run at the claycourt tournament, where he stunned 21-times major winner Rafa Nadal and world number one Novak Djokovic before cruising past world number three Zverev in the title clash.

## Osaka Pulls out of Italian Open With Injury

ROME (Dispatches) - Naomi Osaka has withdrawn from the Italian Open in Rome to rest an Achilles injury ahead of the French Open, the WTA said.

The four-time Grand Slam champion suffered the injury in her opening match in Madrid earlier this month, before struggling in a second-round loss to Sara Sorribes Tormo.

"Unfortunately I'm going to have to withdraw from Rome as the injury which I picked up last week in Madrid hasn't healed yet," the Japanese star said in a statement.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY MAY 11, 2022

# Verstappen Claims Inaugural Miami GP Title

MIAMI (Dispatches) - The inaugural Miami Grand Prix Formula One race in Miami Gardens, Fla., lived up to its billing as a heavyweight battle between the series' two points leaders -- Charles Leclerc of Ferrari and Max Verstappen of Red Bull.

Verstappen worked his way out to a 4.6-second lead over Leclerc when the Ferrari driver pitted on Lap 25. The stop was a slow one. Verstappen pitted a lap later and responded with a quick stop. With stops completed, Verstappen's lead had jumped to over 7 seconds.

On Lap 41 of 57, Pierre Gasly in an AlphaTauri and Lando Norris in his McLaren made contact to bring out a safety car. The crash sent some teams scrambling to pit and move to different tire compounds.

Verstappen, Leclerc, Sainz and Perez stayed out, but suddenly tightly packed at the front of the field in that order when the safety car retired on Lap 47 of 57.

Leclerc kept the pressure on Verstappen over the next seven laps until Verstappen pulled away over the final three laps.

Verstappen had started the race alongside teammate Perez in the second row behind the Ferraris of pole-sitter Leclerc and Sainz.

But the Dutch-Belgian Red Bull driver passed Sainz just after the standing start. He then tracked down Leclerc, caught him on Lap 8 and passed the Monaco driver on the first turn of Lap 9.

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## Replay for Abandoned Brazil-Argentina World Cup Qualifier Confirmed

PARIS (Dispatches) - FIFA confirmed the abandoned 2022 World Cup qualifier between Brazil and Argentina will be replayed, after rejecting appeals from both national federations.

Brazilian health officials stormed the pitch seven minutes into the clash on September 5 between the South American giants in Sao Paulo, stopping the match and triggering a melee involving team officials and players.

According to Brazil's National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), four Argentine players based at English clubs at the time should have been placed in "immediate quarantine" for breaching Covid-19 protocols.

FIFA in February ordered a replay and banned Cristian Romero and then club-mate Giovanni Lo Celso of Tottenham, and Aston Villa's Emiliano Martinez and Emiliano Buendia for two matches.

World football's governing body also handed a series of fines to the two national football federations, prompting both to lodge appeals.

FIFA's disciplinary committee upheld the 50,000 Swiss franc (\$50,342) fines imposed on both as a result of the abandonment.

However, it reduced a separate 500,000 Swiss franc fine given to the Brazilian FA to 250,000 Swiss francs, and halved the Argentine FA's initial fine of 200,000 Swiss francs.

Brazil and Argentina have already qualified for the World Cup in Qatar later this year.

## Raducanu to Play First Event in UK Since U.S. Open Triumph

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's Emma Raducanu will make a first competitive appearance in front of a home crowd since her remarkable triumph at the U.S. Open after it was announced Monday she had entered next month's Women's Tour Association event in Birmingham.

The teenager's only previous WTA tournament in Britain was in Nottingham last year prior to her emergence on the world stage at Wimbledon.



The race was conducted on a purpose-built, 19-turn, 3.36-mile street circuit around the Hard Rock Stadium where the NFL's Miami Dolphins play. The circuit did not get much love from drivers before the race because the surface proved extremely slippery on the portions that were not rubbered up, making for one-groove racing. The racing turned out to be better than predicted.

The two Aston Martin cars of Lance Stroll and Sebastian Vettel started the race from the pits. It was discovered that their fuel was too cold and they opted to start from the pits to avoid a penalty. They had qualified 10th and 13th, respectively, and started last and second to last.

The only American-based team, Haas F1 Racing, had a so-so day. Mick Schumacher appeared to be on the verge of collecting his first points but while running ninth, he made contact with Vettel and slipped to a 15th-place finish. Kevin Magnussen finished 16th for Haas.

## Wawrinka Rekindles Fire With Rare Win In Rome

ROME (Dispatches) - Swiss veteran Stan Wawrinka insisted he still has "fire" in him after picking up his first victory in over a year with a 3-6, 7-5, 6-2 win over American Reilly Opelka in the first round of the Italian Open.

The 37-year-old, who has tumbled from his best ranking of number three in the world to 361st, last tasted success in the opening round of the 2021 Australian Open when he beat Marton Fucsovics in five sets.

This year he had previously lost in the opening rounds in the only two tournaments he had entered, in Marbella then Monte Carlo, after struggling with a long-term foot injury that has dogged him since 2019.

"After two surgeries, at my age I could easily stop playing... but I still have this fire in me," said Wawrinka.

"I still believe that I can play great tennis. I still believe that I make some big results, maybe not now, but in a few months."



# Beckham Hopes Ronaldo Stays on at Man United

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester United are set to undergo major changes after another disappointing season but former midfielder David Beckham hopes Cristiano Ronaldo sticks around for at least another year.

United's 4-0 hammering at Brighton & Hove Albion at the weekend means they cannot finish higher than sixth.

The Old Trafford side have appointed Ajax Amsterdam manager Erik ten Hag to replace interim boss Ralf Rangnick from the end of the current campaign, with the Dutchman expected to revamp the squad during the close season.

Ronaldo has scored 24 goals in all competitions this season and Beckham, who also wore United's number seven jersey, hopes the 37-year-old forward will stay on.

"It's important to him — we all know how much United means to him. He's still doing what he does best," Beckham told Sky Sports at the Miami Grand Prix.

"To be doing what he's doing at his age is really incredible so hopefully it continues for another year or two."

Beckham, who won six Premier League titles at United, said fans had stuck by the side through some difficult times, with United's last league title coming in the 2012-2013 season.

## Klopp Still Believes in Liverpool's Title Chances

LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said he maintains belief that the Reds can beat Manchester City to the Premier League title and keep their hopes of a historic quadruple alive.

City extended their lead at the top of the table to three points and also boosted their goal difference to four better than Liverpool's with a 5-0 thrashing of Newcastle on Sunday.

The Reds stumbled a day earlier when they were held 1-1 at home by Tottenham.

However, Klopp shrugged off suggestions that he should now focus on saving his players' energies for facing Chelsea in the FA Cup final on Saturday and the Champions League final against Real Madrid on May 28.

"Until it's not reachable anymore, why should we stop believing? That's what we do," said Klopp at his pre-match press conference ahead of Tuesday's trip to Aston Villa.

"It is clear that it is not over, whatever happened, because we both have three games to play. And my concern is actually: how can we win our games?"

"In an ideal world you win all the games and you are always in a great mood. A lot of times we have to respond on setbacks and that's what we have to do."

City boss Pep Guardiola claimed he felt the whole of England is behind Liverpool's title bid.

Speaking shortly after the win over Newcastle, Guardiola said: "Everyone in this country supports Liverpool, the media and everyone."

However, Klopp said he does not get that feeling with the hostile environment his side face on the road. "I have no idea if the whole country is supporting us," added Klopp. "It is not the feeling I get when we go to other places and play there, it is actually the opposite, but maybe he knows more about that than me."

Liverpool are sure to have a fan in the manager of their next opposition.

Steven Gerrard never lifted a league title as captain at Anfield, but is revered as one of the club's greatest ever players and been tipped as a potential successor to Klopp.



## Haaland Close To Sealing Man City Transfer

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Borussia Dortmund top striker Erling Haaland is close to sealing a transfer deal with Manchester City and a move to the lucrative Premier League, several German media reported.

Haaland is among the hottest transfer prospects this summer with the Norwegian 21-year-old having scored 61 goals in 66 league games for the Ruhr valley club since joining them in early 2020.

Several top clubs including Real Madrid, Paris St Germain and City, among others, have been linked with the player at times.

Sky Germany, which holds the rights to the Bundesliga, reported on Monday the player had informed the club of his wish to leave and that Manchester City had contacted the club over the player's release clause.

Several other media, including Bild newspaper and Kicker magazine, citing unnamed sources, also said a deal could be finalised in the coming days.

The club did not comment on the matter on Monday.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said he was ready to battle City for more trophies in the future but admitted Haaland moving to their title rivals is a transfer that will take things to the next level.

"I signed a new contract (until 2026) knowing that City will not stop developing," Klopp told Sky Sports. "It's not about City to define if we can be happy or not. It's about us and what we can make of it."

"If Erling Haaland goes there, that will not weaken them. Definitely not. I know in the moment that other people talk about money, but this transfer will set new levels."

Dortmund are interested in Salzburg forward Karim Adeyemi as a possible Haaland replacement.

