

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to **144,842** With **Seven** More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iran Has Released a Spanish Woman Ana Baneira Who Had Been Detained in the Country Since November, Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares Told Journalists on Sunday

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2

DOMESTIC

Environmental Problems Affect Entire West Asia



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

Negative Growth Predicted for Oil Products Exports Next year



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

Most G20 Nations Condemn Russia for war, China Silent



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Kings Edge Clippers 176-175 in 2OT



> SEE PAGE 8

Army, IRGC to Hold Joint Air Defense Maneuvers

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) are set to stage joint air defense maneuvers aimed at bolstering their defenses against enemy threats to the country's skies.

According to a Saturday statement by Iran's Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base, the operational exercise will be carried out Saturday night in certain areas across the country.

The exercise will be conducted in coordination with the integrated air defense network.

Iran's Armed Forces regularly hold military maneuvers to elevate their preparedness and military prowess.

The drills serve as a warning message to the enemies against any act of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

Air defense divisions of the Army and the IRGC held a large-scale military exercise, codenamed 'Modafean Aseman Velayat 1400' (Guardians of 'Velayat' Sky 1400), involving air defense units and domestically-developed military hardware, in October 2021.

Trans-Regional States Blamed for Crisis in Region

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's defense minister has said the interference of trans-regional countries in the Middle East is aimed at ensuring the security of the Israeli regime as well as the flow of energy.

In a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Thabet Muhammad Saeed al-Abbasi in Tehran, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Gharai Ashtiani stressed that trans-regional states never seek to promote democracy but to create unnecessary crises, discord and conflicts in the region.

"Experience has proven that the presence of trans-regional countries in any part of the world has been accompanied by insecurity and division. This presence in our region is meant to ensure the flow of energy and strengthen the Zionist regime's security belt through creating artificial crises, differences, and conflicts between Muslim countries," Ashtiani added.

"Therefore, this presence has never been meant for helping human rights, promoting democracy, and aiding regional people."

The Iranian minister also said that Iran and Iraq enjoy a geopolitical connection, comprising ethnic, religious, cultural, economic, and energy elements.

See Page 7

Iran Plans to Export Nuclear Products



IRAN MEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami says that the country is planning on exporting nuclear technological products.

Eslami made the remarks on the sidelines of the Iran 29th Iranian Nuclear Conference on Sunday.

Saying that several goals and plans have been set in the nuclear industry, Eslami called for the convergence of the universities and the AEOI in order to develop resources in the nuclear field.

Noting that research opportunities and activities have been developed in Iran, Iran's nuclear chief stressed that the country is now exporting radiopharmaceuticals and nuclear equipment.

We are trying to export technological products in the nuclear field to other countries in addition to meeting domestic needs, he added.

Iran's 29th Nuclear National Conference, the largest scientific and technological event of the country's nuclear industry, was held at Shahid Beheshti University.

Shahid Beheshti University hosted the event in cooperation with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) the Research Institute of Nuclear Sciences and Technologies, and Iran's Advanced Technologies Company.

Meanwhile addressing the conference, deputy head of AEOI said that the goal behind holding this event is to show that peaceful nuclear technology is for all and nuclear weapons are for none.

Javad Karimi Sabet said that the organizers of the event received over 350 papers and 270 papers were approved.

He also noted that one of the goals of this conference is to seek the issue of the nuclear technology in the country in a sustainable way and showing that peaceful nuclear technology is everyone's right and nobody is allowed to have nuclear weapons.

He further said that the scientific achievement in the field of nuclear science was to be presented in the conference.

He once again reiterated that technology should be used for the people's lives and the conference was focused on it.

U.S. Has Already Spent More in Ukraine Than in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The United States has sent more military assistance to help Ukraine fight against Russia than Washington spent annually to fight its own war in Afghanistan, according to a report.

The data compiled by German research firm Statista showed that US military aid to Ukraine up to mid-January, covering the first 11 months of the conflict, totaled \$46.6 billion.

That compared with an average annual military spend of \$43.4 billion, in 2022 dollars, during the first ten years of the Afghanistan war, said Statista citing data from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

"When calculating the average annual costs of previous wars in which the United States has been involved in, the true magnitude of the country's Ukraine aid expenditure can be seen," Statista data journalist Martin Armstrong said. The Ukraine total doesn't include an additional \$5 billion worth of weapons and equipment that the Pentagon sent to Kiev, he said.

The figures however exclude non-military aid, such as the \$4.5 billion that US President Joe Biden pledged to fund pensions, government salary and another public spending. In total, the United States has allocated \$113 billion in Ukraine aid, and multiple administration officials have vowed to keep supporting Kiev "as long as it takes."

Americans have sent more money to Ukraine than Russia spends on its annual military budget. Russia spends about US\$65 to 70 billion a year. The US sent more than \$100 billion, including non-military aid, and plus there are the other NATO countries and those in Asia too.

A number of US lawmakers, such as Representatives Seth Moulton of Massachusetts and Georgia Marjorie Taylor Greene have called the Ukraine conflict a "proxy war" that the US and NATO are waging against Russia. Greene called the war in Ukraine "a deadly profitable industry" and demanded the US withdrawal from the NATO military alliance.

"The American people do not want war with Russia, but NATO & our own foolish leaders are dragging us into one. We should pull out of NATO," said Greene while referring to the Biden administration's massive military aid to Ukraine as a "proxy war" against Russia that Americans have no appetite for.

Ukraine is the "new Iraq wrapped up with a pretty little NATO bow, with a nuclear present inside," she further added in a series of tweets in which she has expressed fierce criticism of Washington's response to the Ukraine conflict by sending billions of taxpayer dollars to the country and risking a potential nuclear war.

A US Republican congresswoman has described Washington's massive military aid to Ukraine as a "proxy war" against Russia, calling war "a deadly profitable industry" and demanding US withdrawal from the NATO military alliance.

See Page 7

ViewPoint Martyr Soleimani a Thorn in Eyes of Western Democracy

For decades the Islamic Republic of Iran has criticized the double standard approach of the West regarding freedom of speech or human rights but each time the West has tried to justify its approach in different ways and even by lashing back at Iranian officials.

In recent months that Iran has been involved in some riots and unrests, the Western countries have been mobilized to launch scathing attack at the Islamic Republic of Iran by accusing Tehran of violating human rights but they have repeatedly violated human rights and each time they have had their own justifications for human rights violation.

In recent weeks, European countries under the pretext of defending freedom of expression and defending human rights have let anti-revolutionary Iranians hold protest gatherings against the Islamic Republic but they have not been able to tolerate the right of an Iranian student who has only mentioned the name of Martyr Qasem Soleimani in his thesis because of his belief in the performance of this honorable martyr in fighting global terrorism.

According to reports, an Iranian Ph.D. student says he will not present his thesis at Stockholm University if authorities violate the freedom of speech and do not let him honor Iranian "heroes" such as General Qasem Soleimani.

Vahid Saadattalab, who is set to defend his thesis at the Department of Materials and Environmental Chemistry on March 3, recently published his work for public reading. In addition to appreciating his family in the initial greeting, the student also commemorated General Qasem Soleimani and Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari.

The act has not been welcomed by some at the university. An employee described it as a "big deal" in an interview with SVT, signaling efforts to block the seminar.

"If this is a normal thing that you dedicate it to your family, then Soleimani is also my family; he is like a father to me, he is like a brother to me," Saadattalab told SVT.

"He saved my country so why not dedicate it to my family in a bigger picture?" he asked.

According to reports, university authorities have called for an extraordinary meeting on Wednesday to address the issue.

The student noted he should be allowed to do what he intends "if there is freedom of speech in Sweden."

Asked about the reason for naming these figures at the outset of his thesis, Saadattalab said, "They are heroes. They were the ones who saved humanity from the evil force in the Middle East actually."

See Page 7

Russia, Turkey, Syria, Iran To Set Up FMs Meeting

TEHRAN (MNA) - Russia, Turkey, Syria, and Iran have started work to determine the time and modality for a meeting of their foreign ministers.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov has said in an interview with TASS that Russia, Turkey, Syria, and Iran have started work to determine the time and modality for a meeting of their foreign ministers.

The diplomat said that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a joint news conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry that Russia supported the participation of Iran in any further talks to normalize relations between Turkey and Syria.

"The organization of a four-way meeting of foreign ministers has been put on the agenda. Work is underway to determine its modality and time," said Bogdanov.

"That would make it possible to take advantage of the potential that was built up as part of the Astana process, which proved its effectiveness," Bogdanov said.

The defense ministers of Russia, Syria, and Turkey held consultations in Moscow on December 28, 2022, as part of the process of normalizing relations between Ankara and Damascus. Turkish sources reported that the sides agreed to set up a trilateral commission.

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Iran President Felicitates Kuwait National Day

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday congratulated the Kuwaiti government and nation on the country's national day.

In his message to Kuwaiti Emir Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, President Raisi wished good health and success for the Emir and prosperity for the Kuwaiti nation.

Kuwait and Iran have longstanding historical ties spanning hundreds of years. In August 2022, Kuwait sent its first ambassador to Tehran since a downgrading of relations in 2016 and now the relation is getting normal.

Environmental Problems Affect Entire West Asia

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Foreign minister has said environmental problems do not only affect certain countries, calling for cooperation among regional states to tackle economic problems.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made the comments in a message to "the first national conference on diplomacy and cross-regional environmental challenges," which was held on Sunday at the office of political and international studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was read out by Reza Najafi, the deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs.

In his message, the top Iranian diplomat warned against the growing trend of the destruction of the environment and said that people are facing more and more environmental challenges at both local and international levels.

The foreign minister also said that foreign interference, the phenomenon of terrorism, and the creation of insecurity in some countries in the region have drawn all the attention of these countries to themselves, while environmental challenges have been neglected by them.

Elsewhere, he said that some developed countries impose illegal policies such as unilateral sanctions even on areas such as environmental cooperation, and create hurdles in the way of tackling environmental challenges.

Amirabdollahian went on to note that the environmental problems have affected the entire West Asia region as well as the development and well-being of the people of this region.

"Avoiding environmental cooperation is no good solution for any country. In the long run, these challenges will turn into environmental crises in the absence of cooperation, which will inflict huge costs on all countries in the region," he pointed out.

"I hope we will witness the significant development of these co-operations among the governments in the region. The national environmental diplomacy conference can be a prelude to holding an international conference on how to deal with dust storms next year in our country, a conference that will be held according to the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly with the aim of expanding international cooperation in this field."



The first national conference on "Diplomacy and Transboundary Environmental Challenges" was held in the presence of the Iran minister of energy, and head of the environmental organization, at the office of Political and International Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the meeting, four central issues of diplomacy and climate change, diplomacy and solutions to deal with the dust phenomenon, diplomacy and sustainable management of rivers and common water resources, and diplomacy and pollution of the Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Oman Sea were discussed.

Ali Salajegheh, head of the Environment Organization, said: "We found a common language in many foreign meetings and this principle is the basis of the unity of the countries. According to the UN resolution, Iran was obliged to hold the dust meeting next year."

Salajegheh said: "What threatens the world is climate change. Pollution and environmental changes should be addressed in the meetings."

He added: "We have problems with sea issues and before others come to us and impose their laws, we must solve the problems. We will soon hold a meeting in Tehran to address the Caspian Sea."

Najafi, deputy of legal and international affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, read the message of the Foreign Minister. He said: "The result of human excesses and unkindness are the many challenges that the people of the world are dealing with. On the other hand, war and terrorism have caused the destruction of the environment and the destruction of infrastructure."

Terrorism and foreign interference in the region have caused environmental destruction and intensified territorial destruction. Since environmental challenges are closely related to other issues, any measures require the cooperation of all organizations, he added.

Bolivia Urged to Participate in Creating New World Order

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian deputy foreign minister stressed developing political relations and international cooperation between Iran and Bolivia and called for Bolivia's participation in creating a new world order based on multilateralism.

Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in a meeting with Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs Rogelio Mayta.

Mayta, for his part, welcomed Iran's initiative, saying that the two countries enjoy brotherly relations and support their human rights and anti-imperialism stances.

Meanwhile, in a separate meeting with the vice president of Bolivia, Bagheri Kani elaborated on the capacities of the two countries for developing economic cooperation.

In the meeting, the vice president of Bolivia pointed to the economic, scientific, and industrial capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, calling for developing economic relations with Iran.



Tehran, Beijing Cooperation Favorable for Future of Iran

TEHRAN (Shana) -- A member of the Energy Committee of the Islamic Parliament said: "Today, the economic cooperation between Iran and China is more coherent than ever, and the recent visit of the president to this country can bring good results for Iran."

Hadi Beiginejad stated that the recent visit of the president and some members of the cabinet to China showed that Iran has a good position in the international arena, and said that Seyed Ebrahim Raisi's visit to China showed the level of relations between the two countries in various fields, especially economic.

Pointing out that the economic cooperation between Iran and China is more coherent than ever, he added: "The recent visit of the president to China can have good achievements for the country in the future. The impact of this trip can be developed in various ways and can lead to the strengthening of Tehran-Beijing cooperation."

This member of the Energy Committee of the Islamic Council stated that the strengthening of relations between Iran and China in various fields, including energy, will make the sanctions ineffective, and said: "The enemies will never succeed in their goal of isolating Iran in the international arena."

No Security Through Deals With "Child-Killing" Zionist Regime

AHVAZ (IRNA) - Intelligence Minister Ismail Khatib has said that security in West Asia is not established through deals with "the child-killing Zionist regime."

The minister made the comment on Saturday in Ahvaz, the capital city of the southwestern province of Khuzestan, during a meeting with officials there.

"Security is not established through deals and memoranda of understanding with the child-killing Zionist regime. It is established from inside and through cooperation among neighboring countries," Khatib said at the meeting.

He added that the Zionist regime is today seeking to create an integrated defense system in the regime. That's while, he added, the regime has been humiliated in the face of Palestinians and the measures it is taking would have no results but to plunder countries' assets.

The Iranian intelligence minister expressed hope that lasting security is established between Iran and its neighboring countries thanks to efforts by President Ebrahim Raisi's administration to forge good ties with those countries.

Iran Prepares for Int'l Conference on Solidarity With Yemeni Resistance

TEHRAN (IP) - The introductory meeting of the International Conference of Solidarity of the World Elites with the Yemeni Resistance was held on Saturday.

Chairing the meeting, the Dean of Shahed University in Tehran, Ahmad Cheldavi stressed that the world elites had declared their support for the Yemeni people.

Cheldavi noted: "We make our utmost efforts across the globe to end all oppression imposed against the Yemeni people."

The conference, which is going to be held on March 6 in the presence of the Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi, is set to examine the internal, regional, and international dimensions of the Yemeni crisis and its national and international consequences, and to attract the attention of global elites in various political, artistic, social, legal, and media fields to the issue of Yemen and the resistance of the Yemeni people.

Still, the declaration of solidarity with the resistance of the Yemeni people, and the effort to give material and spiritual aid to the Yemeni people to overcome the crisis were among other goals of the upcoming international conference.

Political solidarity of the global elites, international politics and the resistance of the Yemeni people, the legal solidarity of the global elites, international law and the resistance of the Yemeni people, the artistic solidarity of the global elites, the committed art and resistance of the Yemeni people will also be the pivots of the conference.

Iran, Zimbabwe Ink MoU on Cooperation

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran and Zimbabwe's Health Ministers signed a memorandum of understanding that stressed mutual cooperation.

Health Minister Bahram Einollahi and Zimbabwe's Minister of Health and Child General Constantino Guveya Dominic Chiwenga held talks on Feb.26, 2023, in Tehran.

Speaking at the event, Iran's Health Minister emphasized that although Iran and Zimbabwe are facing cruel sanctions, both can defeat the sanctions with mutual cooperation.

Einollahi stated that sanctions are one of the most brutal acts in history but definitely failed as ever.

He emphasized communicating with friendly countries and considered it a duty. Einollahi noted: The two Iran and Zimbabwe countries can have bilateral cooperation in the academic and research sectors.

He further stressed the unity of the two nations to combat the coronavirus. Also, Zimbabwe's Minister of Health and Child General Constantino Guveya Dominic Chiwenga emphasized the expansion of bilateral cooperation.

Chiwenga arrived in Tehran on Saturday for bilateral engagements with the host government. His visit here is a result of the Second Republic's diplomatic offensive led by President Mnangagwa which seeks to return capital back to Zimbabwe under "Zimbabwe is open for business" mantra.

Iran boasts of a strong economy dominated by oil and gas. It is also characterised by agriculture and services sectors, among others.

Their interest to collaborate with Zimbabwe is a sign that big economic powerhouses are taking note of the awakening Zimbabwean economy which is being configured towards the attainment of an upper middle-income society.



Notice of tender for export sale No. 25/1401/Z

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 60,000 metric tons of Iron Ore concentrate (%Fe:66.5) on basis of F.O.B at Shahid Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 14:00 P.M. on 6th Mar. 2023 to the Golgohar complex in Sirjan. (50 km in Shiraz road) Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 10:00 A.M. on 7th Mar. 2023 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %

| | | |
|---------------|-------|----------|
| Min | 66.50 | Fe |
| Min | 24 | FeO |
| Max | 28 | |
| Max | 0.05 | P |
| Max | 1.2 | S |
| Max | 2.5 | SiO2 |
| Max | 0.5 | Al2O3 |
| Max | 0.9 | CaO |
| Max | 2.5 | MgO |
| 7 | | Moisture |
| 98% < 3mm | | Max |
| 80% < 0.45 mm | | Size Ave |

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Iranian Automakers Await Certification to Export Cars to Russia

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iranian automakers Iran-Khodro and SAIPA are awaiting certification in Russia for the export of cars, according to a spokesperson for Iran's Trade Ministry.

Omid Ghalibaf told RIA Novosti this week that SAIPA had already signed an agreement with a Belarusian company to supply 45,000 Shahin and Quick model cars, which will also be delivered to the Russian market.

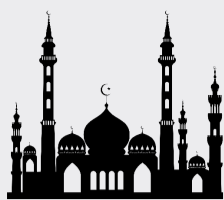
However, Ghalibaf did not clarify whether the cars will be shipped directly to Russia or via Belarus due to Western sanctions. While negotiations with Moscow are underway, there are currently no direct agreements between Iranian automakers and Russia.

Last November, Moscow and Tehran signed a memorandum of understanding for Iranian car exports to Russia valued at \$300 million, and the two countries also explored the possibility of joint automobile production.

Iranian automaker Iran Khodro, which assembles revamped models of Chinese Haima and Dongfeng brands, also launched production of the Tara sedan based on the Peugeot 301 last year, according to data from the companies. The company also plans to introduce new models based on Peugeot and Citroen prototypes in the future.

Last December, Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali announced Tehran's interest in collaborative automotive manufacturing with Moscow. Autostat data shows that there were 10,400 Iran Khodro cars, represented by the Samand model, in Russia as of July 2022.

Iran has managed to create an automobile industry that meets domestic demand despite decades of Western sanctions, and the government has reduce the country's reliance on foreign car imports since the US reimposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic in 2018.



PRAYER TIME

| | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| ■ Noon (Zohr) | 12:17 |
| ■ Evening (Maghreb) | 18:15 |
| ■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr) | 05:12 |
| ■ Tomorrow's Sunrise | 06:35 |

47. To every people (was sent) an apostle: when their apostle comes (before them), the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be wronged.
48. They say: "When will this promise come to pass, - if ye speak the truth?"

Surah 10. Jonah (47 - 48)

Negative Growth Predicted for Oil Products Exports Next year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of board of directors of Iran's Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters Union (OPEX) says oil products exports next year will face negative growth due to different reasons.

Speaking to ILNA, Mr. Ajmad Maroufkhani pointed to the effective factors on Iran's oil product exports' market and said that among international factors, recession due to pandemic in China was important and it had more negative impact than Russia-Ukraine war, adding that not the pandemic has been controlled and China's market sees positive trend, and it will lead to the rise in the international demand and supply.

He then added that some cumbersome domestic regulations and wrong decisions have affected the growth in exports, especially the recent decision of Majlis which pushed the exports towards negative trend.

He said that currently the export trend of oil products is not positive and there is no growth, adding that currently the government due to its budget deficit and economic condition has put is all pressure on the field of energy, it means, all pressures are now on the shoulders refining and petrochemical.

Maroufkhani further said that the recent decision of Majlis for imposing tariff on exports, if it is implemented in next year's budget, will halt the growth trend of exporting oil, gas and petrochemical products and the growth will become negative.

He then pointed to some other international factors affecting Iran's export of non-oil



exports and reiterated that lack of hope on the revival of the JCPOA and stepping up the secondary sanctions by the U.S. are the other factors affecting the exports.

He went on to say that currently, East Asia, South Persian Gulf and CIS states are the major markets for Iran's oil products exports and these countries mostly demand fuel products like gasoline, gas oil, fuel oil and naphtha.

Last week, a senior member of OPEX reported major increases in exports of certain petrochemicals and oil products in the calendar year that started in late March 2022.

He said that petrochemicals shipment had accounted for \$12 billion or 27% of Iran's total exports in the 10 months to late January.

Hamid Hosseini said oil product exports from Iran had reached \$13 billion between March 2022 and January this year.

Hosseini said that Iran had earned some \$4.9 billion from exports of 6.6 million metric tons (mt) of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in the nine months to late December, an increase of 120% compared to the same previous period.

He said exports of methanol from Iran had reached \$1.8 billion for 6.8 million mt of shipments in the nine months to late December.

Innovation Is Elixir Creating Value Added in MSC



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

ISFAHAN – The CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) Mr. Mohammad Yaser Tayyebnia said that their view in the country should be different and should circulate innovation in all fields like production, purchase, sales and even management and organizational ruling, adding that industrial managers should go for innovators and knowledge-based companies and companies should move towards those companies that knowledge and science forces are their real values.

Speaking during his visit to the National Festival and Exhibition of Future Path, the festival and exhibition are held focused production through innovation in order that with the increase in cooperation and assistance of the knowledge-based companies, these important achievements happen in MSC, Isfahan Province and the whole country to turn into the innovation hub in the region.

Tayyebnia went on to say that MSC has reached self-sufficiency by 90% in providing its required equipment domestically and it aims to develop innovation and continuation of this trend is the guarantee of the growth and progress of the company. He further said that national steel industry in the future years will not be able to enjoy most of the current advantages and therefore MSC in its second step has plan for a change in its approach.

He went on to say that there are licenses for creating 100m tons of plants in the country but in the next 13 to 14 years, steel industry will challenges with problems like raw materials as well as restrictions like energy supply and the rise in its price. He noted that the issue of transportation is considered as the Achilles' heel of the steel industry.

Tayyebnia further said that Mobarakeh Steel Company's target of producing 25m tons of steel and earning \$15n has been changed in the future outlook of the company which includes investment in new businesses. He stated that today equipment of an industry does not distinguish it from other industries but specialty and knowledge of its human forces distinguishes it from others. So the company should move towards innovation and investment in the knowledge-based companies, he added.

He stated that human resources is one of the indicators which is used in the organizations with different approaches and therefore MSC seeks a development in its view and of course it will not just happen with the change of individuals, managers and infrastructures.

Iran Ready to Boost Customs Cooperation With Pakistan



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Consul General to Pakistani city of Quetta Hassan Darvishvand has announced his country's readiness to boost bilateral cooperation on customs affairs as well as on setting up joint border markets.

Darvishvand made the announcement on Saturday during a visit to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, Balochistan Province, where he met with local officials.

His trip took place several days ahead of the inauguration of a project that would transfer electricity from Iran to Gwadar Port. The project will be inaugurated in the presence of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The Iranian diplomat, during his talks with Gwadar's officials, said that Iran and Pakistan have land and sea borders and possess numerous capacities to develop relations including in the trade sector.

Transport, joint border markets and customs issues were other topics discussed as well.

Tehran, Minsk Discuss Transportation Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran and Belarus are expanding cooperation in the transportation sector.

The issue was discussed at the meeting between Belarus' Transport and Communications Minister Aleksei Avramenko and Iran's Deputy Minister of Industries, Mining and Trade Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi, BelTA reported, citing the press service of the Transport and Communications Ministry.

Avramenko pointed to efficient economic cooperation between the two countries over the years.

Speaking about transportation sector, he praised the well-developed bilateral legal framework and work on a document that will scrap permits for international road haulage.

This will allow logistics companies to use road transportation more often when building new transportation routes between Belarus and Iran.

As far as air travel is concerned, aviation administrations have carried out work to launch the Tehran-Minsk-Tehran flight.

Iranian airline Mahan Air plans to operate regular flights in the spring-summer season this year. The issue of signing an airworthiness agreement between the aviation authorities is also on the agenda.

Avramenko noted that the world economy is going through dramatic transformations. "In the current situation, it is important to quickly handle problems that affect the sustainable functioning of transportation and transport infrastructure, to find new routes for cargo delivery, including multi- and inter-modal transportation schemes, and to introduce advanced logistics technologies," the minister said.

According to the Belarusian minister, the use of the infrastructure of the International North-South Transportation Corridor is of particular interest, which can be used to transport cargo not only among Belarus, Iran and other littoral countries of the Persian Gulf, but also India and Pakistan, by sea.

Mousavi stressed that countries should build on the results achieved and continue to develop cooperation in the areas of mutual interest.

The parties confirmed their eagerness to promote cooperation.

Airline Restores Boeing Grounded Because of Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - An Iranian airline has restored a Boeing 737 aircraft to its fleet as part of a domestic overhaul program that is aimed at offsetting the impacts of US sanctions on the Iranian aviation industry.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said in a report that the aircraft had returned to Aseman Airlines fleet after a successful test flight on Thursday that lasted one and a half hours.

The report said Iranian technicians had carried out heavy checks on the plane's cabin and cargo sections, adding that two landing gears on the aircraft had also been replaced.

It said the repaired aircraft will increase Aseman Airline's seat capacity by 800 per day. The airline had earlier restored a Fokker 100 by replacing its engine.

The Iranian government has supported domestic airlines in their efforts to restore some 100 jetliners that have remained grounded because of parts shortages as a result of US sanctions.

Earlier this month, Iran's Qeshm Air announced it had restored an Air Airbus A320 after 11 years of grounding.

The sanctions have also barred Iranian airlines from purchasing new aircraft. A first home-made aircraft is expected to come to the market within the next few years while airlines continue to place orders for second-hand planes from other countries.

Registration Begins for Employment Entrance Exam of PGSOC

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company (PGSOC) says the registration for its nationwide employment entrance exam of the company for hiring 506 human forces and experts for the refinery has begun.



According to the public relations of the company, Mr. Alireza Jafarpour said that Persian Gulf Star Refinery as the biggest refinery of the company will hire its required human forces for the fourth shift through the nationwide entrance exam.

He added that enrolling for participating in the examination started on Sunday for 10 days, adding that the applicants should log on www.sanjesh.org for more information and registration for the exam.

Jafarpour added that the exam will be held in May, adding that the exam is aimed to attract maximum native staff from the province in different fields and reiterated that the forces will be chosen fully from the native applicants except in the field of chemical engineering. He said that applicants from other parts of the country can participate in the exam but attracting the native forces are the priority.



Notice of tender for export sale

No. Z/1401/24

GolGohar Mining and Industrial Company

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export **140,000 metric tons of Pellet (%Fe:65.00)** on basis of F.O.B at Barco Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 14:00 P.M. on 06. Mar.2023 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road).

Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 10:00 A.M. on 07.Mar.2023 at the office of the Seller.

| Analysis % | | |
|------------|-------|---------------|
| Min | 65.00 | Fe |
| Max | 1.0 | FeO |
| Max | 0.05 | P |
| Max | 0.01 | S |
| Max | 3.5 | SiO2 |
| Max | 0.7 | Al2O3 |
| Max | 0.9 | CaO |
| Max | 2.5 | MgO |
| Min | 250 | CCS(kg/p) |
| Min | 90 | 8-16 mm% |
| Ave | 5 | -6 mm% |
| Max | 4.0 | A.I% |
| Min | 94 | T.I% |
| 19-24 | | Prosity% |
| Min | 90 | Reducibility% |

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

Macron to Visit China in April

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron said he will visit China in early April, in part to seek Chinese help with ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

China called for a comprehensive ceasefire in Ukraine on Friday and has put forward a 12-point peace plan. "The fact that China engages in peace efforts is a good thing," Macron told reporters at an agricultural fair in Paris.

"China must help us put pressure on Russia so that it never uses chemical or nuclear weapons, (an effort) which China has already made, and that it stops its aggression as a precondition for talks," he added.



Nepal's Ruling Coalition in Turmoil

KATHMANDU (Dispatches) - Nepal's ruling coalition was in turmoil after the prime minister said he planned to support a presidential candidate from an opposition party, a decision that prompted the deputy prime minister and three other ministers to resign.

Political analysts said the moves did not suggest the fledgling government of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, a former Maoist rebel who goes by his nom de guerre Prachanda, was in immediate trouble as it still enjoys majority support in parliament. But they said the turmoil could lead a new coalition being formed.



Most G20 Nations Condemn Russia for war, China Silent



BENGALURU (Dispatches) - Finance chiefs of the world's largest economies strongly condemned Moscow for its war on Ukraine, with only China and Russia itself declining to sign a joint statement.

India, which as chair of the Group of Twenty (G20) economies was hosting a meeting in the city of Bengaluru, was reluctant to raise the issue of the war but Western nations insisted they could not back any outcome that did not include a condemnation.

The lack of consensus among G20 members meant India resorted to issuing a "chair's summary and outcome document" in which it simply summed up the two days of talks and noted disagreements.

"Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed that it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy," it said, citing disruption of supply chains, risks to financial stability and continuing energy and food insecurity.

"There were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions," it said, referring to measures put in place by the United States, European countries and others to punish Russia for the invasion and to starve it of revenues.

The outcome was similar to that of a G20 summit in Bali last November when host Indonesia also issued a final declaration acknowledging differences. The G20, formed over two decades to tackle economic crises, has increasingly struggled to reach the consensus needed to issue an official end-of-meeting communique.

"Although there was not what we would call a communique, but only an outcome statement, we still think we've made some progress in having all the ministers on board," Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

German Finance Minister Christian Lindner said China's refusal to join the declaration was "regrettable".

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen earlier told Reuters that it was "absolutely necessary" for any statement to condemn Russia. Two delegates told Reuters that Russia and China did not want the G20 platform to be used to discuss political matters. Russia, a member of the G20 but not of the G7, refers to its actions in Ukraine as a "special military operation", and avoids calling it an invasion or war.

India has kept a largely neutral stance, declining to blame Russia for the invasion, seeking a diplomatic solution and sharply boosting its purchases of Russian oil.

China and India were among the nations that abstained on Thursday when U.N. voted overwhelmingly to demand Moscow withdraw its troops from Ukraine and stop fighting.

Besides the G7 nations, the G20 bloc also includes countries such as Australia, Brazil and Saudi Arabia.

"It's becoming difficult for the G20 to engage in constructive discussion because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which is an act that shakes the foundations of the global order," Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki told reporters.

On the sidelines, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) held a meeting on Saturday with the World Bank, China, India, Saudi Arabia and the G7 on restructuring debt for distressed economies, but there too there were disagreements among members, said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

"We just finished a session in which it was clear that there is a commitment to bridge differences for the benefit of countries," Georgieva, who co-chaired the roundtable with Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, told reporters.

One delegate told Reuters that some initial progress was made, mostly on the language around the issue, but restructuring was not discussed in detail.

Yellen said there were no "deliverables" from the meeting, which was mostly organizational.

Further discussions are planned around the time of the IMF and World Bank spring meetings in April.

Pressure has been building on China, the world's largest bilateral creditor, and other nations to take a large haircut in loans given to struggling developing nations.

Quake Toll in Turkey Exceeds 50,000

ANTAKYA (Dispatches) - Turkey has arrested 184 people suspected of responsibility for the collapse of buildings in this month's earthquakes and investigations are widening, a minister said, as anger simmers over what many see as corrupt building practices.

Overnight, the death toll from the earthquakes, the most powerful of which struck at the dead of night on Feb. 6, rose to 44,128 in Turkey. That took the overall number of deaths in Turkey and neighbouring Syria to more than 50,000.

More than 160,000 buildings containing 520,000 apartments collapsed or were severely damaged in Turkey by the disaster, the worst in the country's modern history.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdogan said that more than 600 people had been investigated in connection with collapsed buildings, speaking during a news conference in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir, which was among 10 provinces hit by the disaster.

Those formally arrested and remanded in custody include 79 construction contractors, 74 people who bear legal responsibility for buildings, 13 property owners and 18 people who had made alterations to buildings, he said.

Many Turks have expressed outrage at what they see as corrupt building practices and flawed urban developments.



Vote Count Starts After Tight Nigeria Election

LAGOS (Dispatches) - Vote counting started in Nigeria's tightly contested election, with three frontrunners vying to govern Africa's most populous democracy after a ballot hit by delays and isolated violence.

Nearly 90 million people were eligible to vote for President Muhammadu Buhari's successor, with many Nigerians hoping their new leader would tackle a widening security crisis, the sluggish economy and growing poverty.

For the first time since the end of military rule in 1999, a third serious candidate has emerged to challenge the dominance of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The race sees former Lagos governor and APC candidate Bola Tinubu facing PDP's Atiku Abubakar, a former vice president, and surprise third party candidate, Labour's Peter Obi. Crowds gathered to watch counting in some polling centers, where officials were observed by party representatives. Tallies were counted by hand before they were sent on electronically.

"We have to stay and watch," said Chinoso Ekpei, 27, a contractor, waiting with a crowd of dozens for the tally at their polling station in Ikoyi, Lagos. "We have to focus, we don't know what they did last time."

PDP's candidate Abubakar claimed fraud when he was beaten by Buhari in the 2019 vote before the Supreme Court dismissed his lawsuit.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) said vote counting started where the voting had ended but has not said when official results will be released.

Thugs disrupted polling at some voting stations, but the election was mostly peaceful in a country where attacks and ethnic tensions marred past votes.

But angry voters protested after INEC started late or problems with identification technology disrupted voting in several centres in Lagos, southern Port Harcourt and the northwest state of Kano.

"INEC didn't arrive on time and they're not organised. I want to vote. We are tired, we need change," said Chikezae Okafor, 41, a health and safety officer in Port Harcourt.

Protest in Berlin Over Arming Ukraine Against Russia Draws Thousands

BERLIN (Dispatches) - A demonstration against supplying Ukraine with weapons for war with Russia attracted 10,000 people, drawing criticism from top German government officials and a large police presence to maintain order.

Organized by a prominent left-wing German politician, the protest comes a day after the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which drew promises of more weapons from western allies, fresh sanctions against Russia and shows of support for Kyiv across the globe.

"We call on the German chancellor to stop the escalation of arms deliveries. Now!...Because every day lost costs up to 1,000 more lives - and brings us closer to a 3rd world war," the protest's organizers said on their website.

The "Uprising for Peace" was organised in part by Sahra Wagenknecht, a member of Germany's left-wing Die Linke party.

Germany, along with the United States, has been one of the biggest suppliers of weapons for Ukraine.

"Negotiate, not escalate" one sign held by a demonstrator said, while a banner in the crowd read "Not our war".

A police spokesperson said 10,000 people gathered around Germany's symbolic Brandenburg Gate in central Berlin.

Police mobilised 1,400 officials to keep the peace and to enforce bans on military uniforms, Russian and Soviet flags, Russian military songs and right-wing symbols.

The police spokesperson said there was no sign of right-wing groups attending and that the protest, which German Finance Minister Christian Lindner said must be "clearly opposed", was peaceful.

"Whoever does not stand by Ukraine is on the wrong side of history," Lindner said on Twitter.



UK, EU Inching Towards Northern Ireland Deal

DUBLIN (Dispatches)

- Britain and the European Union are inching towards concluding talks on revising post-Brexit trade rules for Northern Ireland and an agreement is possible, but by no means guaranteed, in the coming days, Ireland's prime minister said.

Momentum has been building for weeks towards a deal to ease checks on trade that were introduced under the Northern Ireland Protocol - the arrangements agreed to avoid a hard border with EU member Ireland when Britain exited the EU in 2020.

Lawmakers in British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative party have been told to be in parliament on Monday, in a sign that a deal could be imminent.

"I think the talks on reforming the protocol are inching towards a conclusion. Certainly the deal isn't done yet, but I do think we are inching towards a conclusion," Leo Varadkar told reporters.

"There is the possibility of agreement in the next few days but by no means guaranteed ... There's still a gap to be closed," Varadkar said, adding there is ongoing engagement between the UK government and European Commission.

Varadkar, who played a key role when the protocol was agreed in 2019, encouraged London, Brussels and Northern Irish politicians "to go the extra mile" to help reach an agreement, saying the benefits would be "huge".

While an agreement would mark an end to a two-year standoff between Britain and the EU, Sunak could face a battle with pro-Brexit Conservative lawmakers and pro-British Northern Irish politicians to make the deal work.

Opinion polls have consistently shown a majority of Northern Irish voters - who opposed Brexit - favour the idea of the protocol, however the province's assembly and power-sharing government have not sat for a year due to unionist opposition.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the region's largest pro-British party, has said it will not end its boycott of the assembly unless all checks on goods bound for Northern Ireland from Britain are removed.



Every Two Minutes, A Woman Dies During Pregnancy or Childbirth

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Maternal health setbacks in many parts of the world have contributed to the worrying finding that a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth around every two minutes, UN agencies said on Thursday.

According to a new report from the World Health Organization (WHO), maternal deaths have either increased or stagnated nearly everywhere, from 223 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, down from 227 in 2015 and 339 in 2000.

Unless progress is made on global targets for reducing maternal deaths – most of which are preventable – the lives of over one million more women by 2030 could be at risk, the WHO warned.

“Pregnancy ... is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world who lack access to high quality, respectful health care,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General.

Tedros highlighted stark disparities in healthcare access in many regions and the urgent need “to ensure every woman and girl has access to critical health services before, during and after childbirth, and that they can fully exercise their reproductive rights”.

Furthermore, as the world slowly emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic which has highlighted that coronavirus infections can increase risks during pregnancy, the report’s authors stressed that more research will be needed to show the true impact of the global health emergency on maternal deaths.

The WHO-produced report, Trends In Maternal Mortality, tracked maternal deaths nationally, regionally and globally from 2000 to 2020.

It calculated 287,000 maternal deaths worldwide in 2020, which represented “only a slight decrease” from 309,000, in 2016.

This was the case despite countries’ pledges in 2015 to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), whose target is less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Although the report indicated “some significant progress” in reducing maternal deaths between 2000 and 2015, gains largely stalled, or in some cases even reversed, after this point, its authors said.

Responding to the report’s findings, the UN Population Fund’s (UNFPA) Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem expressed alarm that “so many women continue to die needlessly in pregnancy and childbirth. Over 280,000 fatalities in a single year is unconscionable.”

Dr. Kanem added: “We can and must do better by urgently investing in family planning and filling the global shortage of 900,000 midwives so that every woman can get the lifesaving care she needs. We have the tools, knowledge and resources to end preventable maternal deaths; what we need now is the political will.”

Maternal care services are close to a standstill in Haiti.

Among the report’s key findings: that maternal deaths remain largely concentrated in the poorest parts of the world and in countries affected by conflict.

In 2020, about 70 per cent of all maternal deaths were in sub-Saharan Africa. And in nine countries facing severe humanitarian crises, maternal mortality rates were more than double the world average (551 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to 223 globally).

The leading causes of maternal death are severe bleeding, high blood pressure, pregnancy-related infections, complications from unsafe abortion and underlying conditions that can be aggravated by pregnancy – such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

“These are all largely preventable and treatable with access to high-quality and respectful healthcare,” the report’s authors stressed.



Musk’s Challenge: Stay Ahead of The Competition

DETROIT (Dispatches) - Elon Musk will confront a critical challenge during Tesla’s Investor Day on March 1: Convincing investors that even though rivals are catching up, the electric-vehicle pioneer can make another leap forward to widen its lead.

Tesla Inc was the No. 1 EV maker worldwide in 2022, but China’s BYD and others are closing the gap fast, according to a Reuters analysis of global and regional EV sales data provided by EV-volumes.com.

In fact, BYD passed Tesla in EV sales last year in the Asia-Pacific region, while the Volkswagen Group has been the EV leader in Europe since 2020.

While Tesla narrowed VW’s lead in Europe, the U.S. automaker surrendered ground in Asia-Pacific as well as its home market as the competition heats up.

The most significant challenges to Tesla are coming from established automakers and a group of Chinese EV manufacturers. Several U.S. EV startups that hoped to ride Tesla’s coattails are struggling, including luxury EV maker Lucid, whose shares plunged 16% on Thursday after disappointing sales and financial results.

Over the next two years, rivals including General Motors Co, Ford Motor Co, Mercedes-Benz, Hyundai Motor and VW will unleash scores of new electric vehicles, from a Chevrolet priced below \$30,000 to luxury sedans and SUVs that top \$100,000.

On Wednesday, Mercedes used Silicon Valley as the backdrop for a lengthy presentation on how Mercedes models of the near-future will immerse their owners in rich streams of entertainment and productivity content, delivered through “hyperscreens” that stretch across the dashboard and make the rectangular screens in Teslas look quaint. Executives also emphasized that only Mercedes has an advanced, Level 3 partially automated driving system approved for use in Germany, with approval pending in California.

In China, Tesla has had to cut prices on its best-selling models under growing pressure from domestic Chinese manufacturers including BYD, Geely Automobile’s Zeekr brand and Nio.

China’s EV makers could get another boost if Chinese battery maker CATL follows through on plans to heavily discount batteries used in their vehicles.

Musk has said he will use the March 1 event to outline his “Master Plan Part 3” for Tesla.

In the nearly seven years since Musk published his “Master Plan Part Deux” in July 2016, Tesla pulled ahead of established automakers and EV startups in most important areas of electric vehicle design, digital features and manufacturing.

Tesla’s vehicles offered features, such as the ability to navigate into a parking space or make rude sounds, that other vehicles lacked.

Tesla’s then-novel vertically integrated battery and vehicle production machine helped achieve higher profit margins than most established automakers – even as bigger rivals lost money on their EVs.

Fast-forward to today, and Tesla’s “Full Self Driving Beta” automated driving is still classified by the company and federal regulators as a “Level 2” driver assistance system that requires the human motorist to be ready to take control at all times. Such systems are common in the industry.

Tesla earlier this month was compelled by federal regulators to revise its FSD software under a recall order.

Tesla has established a wide lead over its rivals in manufacturing technology – an area where it was struggling when Musk put forward the last installment of his “Master Plan.”



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Boeing Temporarily Halts Deliveries of 787 Dreamliner Jets

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Boeing Co has temporarily halted deliveries of its 787 Dreamliner jets as the U.S. planemaker conducts additional analysis on a fuselage component, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said on Thursday. Deliveries will not resume until the FAA is satisfied that the issue has been addressed, the agency said. "The FAA is working with Boeing to determine any actions that might be required for recently delivered airplanes," the agency said. Boeing said in reviewing certification records it "discovered an analysis error by our supplier related to the 787 forward pressure bulkhead. We notified the FAA and have paused 787 deliveries while we complete the required analysis and documentation."



Economists Urge China to Think Beyond GDP to Head Off Climate Risks

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - A team of influential economists has urged China to adopt a new development model based on "wellbeing" rather than GDP growth in order to fulfil its 2060 net-zero emissions goals and head off the mounting threats of climate change.

In a report published on Thursday, the team - which includes two former chief economists of the World Bank - also called on China to cap total fossil fuel consumption and establish a detailed "pathway" for reducing emissions.

The report and its recommendations have already been submitted to the Chinese government. Co-author Nicholas Stern, chair of Britain's Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, told reporters he hoped it would play a constructive role in China's 2026-2030 "five-year plan".

The old development model drove rapid growth in China over the last four decades, but is putting the world at "grave risk", the report said.

China is aiming to bring emissions to a peak by 2030, though it currently remains unclear at what level they will peak. Stern said it needed to set a specific numerical target in order to bring "clarity" to its decision-making.

The report also called on China to give greater prominence to public transport and set a timetable for the elimination of fossil-fuel vehicles. China should also promote low-carbon agriculture, including plant-based meat and dairy, it said.

China began experimenting with "green GDP" in 2005 as concerns mounted about the environmental damage done by rapid industrialisation. A 2006 government report concluded that environmental losses amounted to 3% of total GDP, but critics believed the actual figure was much higher.

Though the green GDP project was cancelled in 2009, China promised in 2013 to abandon a "growth at all costs" model and said GDP would no longer be the sole criteria on which officials would be assessed.

Some provinces have recently resumed efforts to create new indicators reflecting the environmental costs of development, with central China's Hubei using a pilot "gross ecosystem product" that can be applied to individual districts, rivers or development projects.

China is home to 16 of the 20 global regions most vulnerable to climate change, data showed last Monday.

Gas Shortage Exposes Fragile South Asian Economies to More Pain

LAHORE (Dispatches) - With a little over a month to go for peak shopping season during Ramadan, the head of Pakistan's retail industry body is shuttling between meetings, pressing officials to relax orders that forced malls to shut by 8.30pm to save energy.

More than 40 per cent of annual retail sales occur in the 30 days of the holy month, and malls are packed between 8 pm and 10 pm, Tariq Mehboob, also the chief executive of Pakistani menswear franchise Royal Tag, said in a letter to the government. "Early closure could result in job losses for 3-4 million people," Mehboob wrote.

Fear in the retail sector highlights how a shortage of imported gas has cut power output and hit the economy in Pakistan, just as it reels from soaring inflation and a sliding currency. Bangladesh faces the same issues.

Both countries are scrambling to avoid a repeat of massive power cuts they faced last year, but industry officials and analysts say the crisis is likely to worsen this year because of a sharp drop in imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Pakistan and Bangladesh are heavily dependent on gas for power generation, but have had to slash their imports of LNG after prices rocketed on a surge in Europe's demand to replace Russian supplies following the Ukraine war.

"High spot LNG prices and dwindling domestic production will mean that Pakistan will continue facing issues with ramping up gas-fired power generation," said Poorna Rajendran, LNG consultant at FGE.

"We expect power outages to worsen in 2023," he said.

Despite LNG prices LNG-AS having fallen from last year's record highs, the superchilled fuel is still expensive for South Asian buyers as their currencies have weakened sharply, making it hard for them to boost LNG imports this year.



U.S. Plans \$550m Aid for Ukraine, Moldova Energy Security

SAINT PAUL (Dispatches) - The United States plans to announce \$250 million in aid to shore up Ukraine's energy infrastructure in the face of Russian attacks and \$300 million for Moldova, partly to help Chisinau wean itself from energy dependence on Russia.

The aid, described in draft documents seen by Reuters, is expected to be announced by U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Samantha Power on the anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides have been killed and millions have fled their homes since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, triggering Europe's biggest land war since World War Two.

Russia, which failed to secure a quick victory in what it calls a "special operation" to demilitarize and "denazify" its neighbor, has repeatedly attacked Ukrainian energy infrastructure in what Western officials see as an effort to weaken Ukrainian morale in the grinding ground war.

"The United States government remains committed to helping the Ukrainian government maintain the stability and operation of its electricity system amid relentless and brutal attacks on critical infrastructure by Russian forces," said one draft document that described the \$250 million in aid for Ukraine.

The \$300 million for Moldova includes \$80 million in budget support to offset high electricity prices, \$135 million for electric power generation projects and \$85 million to improve its ability to obtain energy supplies from alternative sources, according to a second draft document.

UAE Spends Billions on Home-Grown Arms at Defense Fair

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates splashed out billions on arms from home-grown firms at a defense fair in Abu Dhabi this week, underlining a shift away from Western suppliers.

As of early Friday, the Gulf state had signed 44 deals worth \$5.7 billion, including at least \$4.3 billion with local firms, at the International Defense Exhibition (IDEX) and the Naval Defense and Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX).

The figure was expected to rise before the end of the five-day show, which features a host of international exhibitors.

It highlights the UAE's strong support for domestic firms including EDGE, a consortium that was set up in 2019. The oil-rich monarchy also focused on local companies when it spent \$5.7 billion at the biennial arms show's previous edition in 2021.

The UAE has reduced arms imports by more than 40 percent over the past decade, taking it from the third to the ninth largest importer globally, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

The UAE was the second largest recipient of US arms between 2012 and 2016 but dropped to eighth place between 2017 and 2021, SIPRI said.

During this period, with Sandhurst-trained air force pilot Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan holding the reins of power since 2014, the US ally dubbed "Little Sparta" has fought in Yemen, trained troops in Somalia and backed forces in Egypt and Libya.

The latest deals signal the UAE's "growing emphasis on local programmes rather than foreign ones", said Jean-Loup Samaan, a senior research fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

"The UAE sees its defense industry as an instrument to strengthen self-sufficiency," Samaan said, explaining it wants to "decrease its reliance on Western security partners" and diversify its economy away from oil.

The UAE is now the 18th largest global arms exporter and the third top supplier in the Middle East behind Israel and Turkey, according to SIPRI.

In 2019, EDGE became the first Arab country to enter SIPRI's list of the top 25 largest arms-producing and military services companies.

However, the UAE remains reliant on outside companies for much of its military hardware. In December 2021, it spent about 17 billion euros (\$18 billion) on 80 Rafale fighter jets from France.

OECD Says Global Economic Outlook Slightly Better for 2023

PARIS (Dispatches) - OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said the global economic outlook is "slightly brighter" this year but inflation challenges remain.

"The outlook for the world is slightly brighter at the beginning of 2023 than what we thought it would be just two or three months ago," he told CNBC's "Street Signs Asia".

"Indeed, energy and food prices are substantially lower than what they were at their peaks," noted the OECD chief, ahead of a G-20 financial leaders meeting this week in Bengaluru, India.

Energy prices have fallen significantly because Europe was able to "successfully" diversify its sources of energy, Cormann noted. In addition, a "benign winter" helped to reduce energy demand which kept gas prices low, he said.

In November, the OECD said "Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has provoked a massive energy price shock not seen since the 1970s."

"The global economy is projected to grow well below the outcomes expected before the war - at a modest 3.1% this year [2022], before slowing to 2.2% in 2023 and recovering moderately to a still sub-par 2.7% pace in 2024," it added.

That report further highlighted Asian emerging-market economies are expected to account for close to three-quarters of global GDP growth in 2023, as Europe and the U.S. slow down sharply. Still, inflation risks continue to persist and need to be tackled well, said the OECD chief.

"Inflation is starting to tick down, but we are not on top of the inflation challenge yet. There is more work to be done to tackle inflation and that comes with risks," noted Cormann. "And these are risks that will need to continue to be managed well over the weeks and months."

The OECD chief highlighted the U.S. Federal Reserve took "aggressive action last year," in terms of hiking interest rates to rein in surging price pressures.

Now the Fed continues to fight inflation in "a more steady fashion allowing the data to come through and allowing... the measures that are in the pipeline to take effect," Cormann noted. "That is what we expect central banks around the world to do, to continue to monitor the data and to continue to adjust the decisions."

In early February, the U.S. central bank raised its benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point and gave little indication it is nearing the end of this hiking cycle.

Last month, the OECD chief highlighted China's reopening is "overwhelmingly positive" in the global fight to tackle surging inflation. In early December, Beijing suddenly shifted away from its zero-Covid policy.

"Over the medium to longer term, this is a very much a positive in terms of making sure that the supply chains function more efficiently and more effectively, making sure that demand in China and indeed trade more generally resumes in a more positive pattern," Cormann told CNBC at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Nearly Half of Japan Firms Want BOJ To Revise Negative Rate Policy



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Nearly half of Japanese firms say that new leadership at the central bank should revise its negative interest rate policies, while more than a quarter say its price target should be changed, according to a Reuters monthly poll.

The government nominated academic Kazuo Ueda to head the Bank of Japan as the decade tenure of Governor Haruhiko Kuroda nears its close. All eyes will be on Ueda when he speaks in parliament today and Monday, looking for hints at how he may unwind the BOJ's unprecedented monetary easing without throwing financial markets into turmoil.

Among nearly 500 major companies polled, 47 per cent said the BOJ should modify policies that allow interest rates to go negative. In the next most common response, 28 per cent said the central bank should revise its 2 per cent inflation target.

"A sudden change in monetary policy could be very damaging to both firms and individuals, so it would be good to aim for a soft landing," said a manager at an information services firm, who commented on condition of anonymity.

Only 9 per cent said the BOJ should scrap its yield curve control (YCC) policy, a trading band for bond maturities that has come under increasing attack by speculators. Even so, a majority of companies, 62 per cent, said a normalisation of monetary policy would not have a good or bad impact on their business.

Asked to rate Kuroda's legacy at the central bank, respondents gave him middling to positive grades, overall. On a scale of 0-100, 46 per cent of respondents, the biggest cohort, put Kuroda in the middle quintile of 41-60 points.

Kuroda was rated in the top two quintiles by 40 per cent of managers, compared with 14 per cent who put in the bottom ranks.

Iran Basketball Team Advances to World Cup

TEHRAN (MNA) – Australia beat Kazakhstan to give Iran an assist for the last ticket to the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023. Iran claims the last FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 qualification spot as Australia defeats Kazakhstan 98-53. FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023 is slated to be held from Fri, Aug 25, 2023, to Sun, Sep 10, 2023.

This will be Iran’s fourth consecutive appearance at the World Cup in as many total appearances in FIBA’s flagship men’s competition. In the last World Cup, Iran was the highest-placed team from Asia at 23rd place. Iranian players’ best performance was at World Cup 2010 in Turkey where they finished 19th among all teams.



War in Europe and Its Impacts on Dollar, Energy and Food Prices

LONDON (Dispatches) - Russia’s war with Ukraine has disrupted economies and markets around the world, from energy and food prices to European banks, emerging market stocks and the Russian currency.

Below are five charts that show how Europe’s biggest conflict since World War Two has shaped global financial markets in the last 12 months.

There are many reasons why king dollar reigned supreme in the past year and one is its status as the ultimate safe haven at times of uncertainty. The economic fallout of the war, which hit currencies such as the euro hard, also lifted the dollar.

The greenback is down from September’s two-decade highs, but it’s still up 8% against a basket of currencies since the conflict began .

The impact on other safe havens such as governments bonds is complicated, however. Yes, U.S. and European bond prices rose in the days following Russia’s invasion as investors sought safety in top quality assets.

But they soon fell and yields soared as the war triggered an energy shock and inflation surged, while central banks responded with aggressive rate hikes. Germany’s 10-year Bund yield has risen to 2.4% from just 0.2% on Feb. 23, 2022. .

The war in Ukraine brought with it an energy crisis like no other. Post-COVID-19 reopening had already sent prices for anything from oil to coal to natural gas higher. But when Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine in late February, European natural gas prices rocketed by almost 400% in two weeks. By August, they were 700% higher than a year earlier.

Pre-war, Russia supplied over 30% of Europe’s gas, most of it through a network of pipelines, thousands of kilometres long. Once Western sanctions hit, the flows of gas dried up. Energy prices soared, bringing the threat of blackouts, recession and a worrying switch back to dirtier sources of fuel.

Thankfully, winter has proven mild and Europe has found other suppliers, bringing the gas price back to around 50 MWh, its lowest since August 2021. But, there’s a lag of around 6-9 months between what happens on the wholesale market and what happens to consumers’ bills, meaning last August’s punishing spike to almost 350 MWh - equivalent to an oil price of over \$200 a barrel - hasn’t even begun to bite.

Food prices, which were already on a tear in 2021 after COVID-19, leaped again after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on fears of shortages and disruptions to Black Sea trade.

Last year the U.N. food agency’s average price index hit its highest level on record, up 14.3% from the previous year. The index had already gained 28% in 2021.

Higher energy and input costs, adverse weather and continued strong global food demand are adding to pressure from significant market disruptions. Over the whole of 2022, four of the five food sub-indexes - cereals, meat, dairy and vegetable oils - reached record highs.

Food price pressures are easing, but that does little to soften the blow for many developing nations, where food and energy prices make up a larger share of spending. Shocks related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine mean the world is unlikely to meet a longstanding goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030, the World Bank has warned.



The past year has seen wild swings for Russia’s currency - a more than 50% tumble following the invasion to record lows in March, followed by a more than 200% rise to a multi-year high in June thanks to soaring energy prices, FX restrictions and the central bank ramping up interest rates. Twelve months on, the rouble is broadly back to its pre-war 12-month average.

Russia wants a weaker rouble to boost hydrocarbon revenues, which is helping plug a widening budget deficit and soaring domestic spending due to the ballooning cost of the Ukraine war. But it is also attempting to shore up its finances by selling its foreign currency reserves, and started interventions for the first time in almost a year in January. Moscow burned through \$38 billion of its rainy-day fund, the National Wealth Fund, in December alone to cover its deficit.

Fresh pressure on the currency could come from sanctions: EU members are expected to approve a 10th package around the anniversary.

European banks took a drubbing when Russia invaded Ukraine. Since then, those that have slashed links have outperformed and those that have not continue to see their shares take a hit.

Raiffeisen Bank International’s (RBIV.VI) shares suffered their worst daily drop since the onset of the war on Monday, as the Austrian lender drew the attention of U.S. sanctions officials over its Russian business. Shares of Raiffeisen, deeply embedded in Russia’s financial system, have slumped over 40% since the start of 2022.

France’s Societe Generale sold its Russia business Rosbank in May, taking a 3 billion euro (\$3.18 billion) hit. Italy’s UniCredit cut its cross-border exposure to Russia by two thirds, but still owns one of Russia’s top 15 lenders. It has pledged to cut its presence, which has reassured investors. SocGen and UniCredit shares have rebounded from the post-invasion hit.

IMF Lays Out Crypto Action Plan



LONDON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund has laid out a nine-point action plan for how countries should treat crypto assets, with point number one a plea not to give cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin legal tender status.

The global lender of last resort said its Executive Board had discussed a paper, “Elements of Effective Policies for Crypto Assets,” that provided “guidance to IMF member countries on key elements of an appropriate policy response to crypto assets.”

Such efforts have become a priority for authorities, the fund said, after the collapse of a number of crypto exchanges and assets over the last couple of years, adding that doing nothing was now “untenable”.

The top recommendation was to “safeguard monetary sovereignty and stability by strengthening monetary policy frameworks and do not grant crypto assets official currency or legal tender status.”

The IMF had hit out at El Salvador in late 2021 when the central American country became the first to adopt bitcoin as legal tender, a move that has since been copied by Central African Republic.

Other advice on Thursday’s list, which comes as G20 decision makers meet in India, included guarding against excessive capital flows, adopting unambiguous tax rules and laws around crypto assets, and developing and enforcing oversight requirements for all crypto market actors.

Countries should also establish international arrangements to enhance supervision and enforce regulations, the IMF added, as well as set up ways to monitor crypto’s impact on the stability of the global monetary system.

Outlining its Executive Board’s assessment, the IMF said directors welcomed the proposals and agreed the widespread adoption of crypto assets “could undermine the effectiveness of monetary policy, circumvent capital flow management measures, and exacerbate fiscal risks.”

Malaysia’s Anwar Tightens Spending, Taxes the Rich

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia unveiled plans to scale back spending for the year and tax the wealthy as Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim focuses on narrowing the budget deficit while supporting a slowing economy.

Three months into the job, Anwar is facing a sharp moderation in Malaysia’s export-driven economy, lower revenue and growing calls to address higher costs of living.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, vowed to maintain subsidies and other government support for lower-income groups, while broadening the revenue base through taxes targeting luxury goods and capital gains.

“Given that the income and wealth of the country is concentrated among the wealthy and elites, it is appropriate that the distribution of national revenue is focused on low and middle income groups,” Anwar said in parliament as he presented the 2023 budget.

He asked for the wealthy to take “joint responsibility”.

Anwar forecast the deficit to narrow to 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) this year from 5.6% last year. The estimate is more ambitious than his predecessor’s earlier target of 5.5%.

The government will introduce a luxury goods tax this year for items such as luxury watches and fashion goods. Income tax will be raised by up to 2% for some high income individuals, Anwar said.

Malaysia will also consider implementing a capital gains tax “at a low rate” for the disposal of unlisted shares by companies from 2024, he said, adding that a broad-based consumption tax was out of the question for now.

The government plans to provide up to 64 billion ringgit (\$14.44 billion) in subsidies, aid and incentives this year.

The budget is the first big policy announcement by Anwar, who was elected in November. His predecessor had presented a budget plan for 2023 in October, but it was not passed in parliament due to the election.

The prime minister, who heads a coalition government that includes former rivals, stuck to his reformist roots and promised to clean up government finances, minimize leakages and strengthen governance to shore up the deficit.

Government agencies were investigating various corruption cases, including those linked to the Pandora Papers leaks, he said.

He faces a challenge in the economy, which is expected to grow 4.5% in 2023 compared to 8.7% last year -- the highest in 22 years. Export growth is expected to moderate to 1.6% this year, down sharply from 25% last year.

In parliament, Anwar said he was confident Malaysia would exceed the 4.5% target.

The government proposed to spend 386.1 billion ringgit this year, lower than last year’s preliminary spending estimate of 395.2 billion ringgit.

Revenue is expected to drop to 291.5 billion ringgit from 294.4 billion ringgit. State oil company Petronas is expected to pay a dividend of 40 billion ringgit, higher than the previous government’s projection of 35 billion ringgit.

Anwar’s government has also said it would gradually reduce debt, which increased in recent years to fund a massive stimulus program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Government debt is seen at around 62% of GDP in 2023, up from 60.4% last year. The debt ceiling was at 55% before the pandemic.

U.S. Has Already Spent...

FROM PAGE 1

Russia began its “special military operation” in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 with a declared aim of “demilitarizing” Donbas, which is made up of the Donetsk and Luhansk self-proclaimed republics. Back in 2014, the two republics, which are predominantly Russian-speaking, broke away from Ukraine, prompting Kiev to launch a bloody war against both regions. The years-long conflict has killed more than 14,000 people, mostly in the Donbas.

Since the onset of the conflict between the two countries, the United States and its European allies have unleashed an array of unprecedented sanctions against Russia and poured numerous batches of advanced weapons into Ukraine to help its military fend off the Russian troops, despite repeated warnings by the Kremlin that such measures will only prolong the war. The US invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, despite the fact that no Afghan national was involved in the attacks. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans died in the US war of aggression on the country.

American forces had occupied the country for about two decades on the pretext of fighting against the Taliban. But as the US forces left Afghanistan, the Taliban stormed into the capital Kabul in August 2021, weakened by continued foreign occupation. The Taliban took over the capital Kabul on August 8, 2021, and declared that the war in Afghanistan was over. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans died in the US war on the country and its irresponsible withdrawal is also leading to a humanitarian crisis in the war-torn state.

Martyr Soleimani a Thorn in...

FROM PAGE 1

“I was able to continue research on science in light of the security that we get from them,” he said, adding, “I wouldn’t have defended my thesis without that.”

Asked whether he would present his thesis if university authorities ask him to put that lines away, Saadattalab answered, “I will never at all.”

The March 3 seminar has been removed from the calendar on the institution’s website.

Meanwhile, the Swedish outlet has quoted the head of the related department as saying that the acknowledgment section is “completely outside the scientific part” of the thesis and that the university has no say in that.

Iran’s prominent anti-terror commander General Soleimani was assassinated on January 3, 2020, upon the order of then-US president Donald Trump. He was admired by Muslim nations for eliminating the US-sponsored Daesh terrorist group in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria.

Ayatollah Motahhari was a prominent Muslim scholar and philosopher. Revered as one of the most influential contemporary Iranian clerics in explaining Islamic teachings, the great teacher has written more than 70 books in various fields including Islam, Iran, and history. He was assassinated a few months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Suppose this student wanted to criticize the Islamic Revolution or Martyr Soleimani, what would have been the reaction of this University? Definitely it would have supported this student under pretext of freedom of expression and this is the exact sign of double standard approach of the West regarding the human rights and freedom of express issues.

The West has its own definition and interpretation of freedom of expression and if someone or some nation does not obey it, it is immediately accused of violating freedom of expression or human rights.

Sweden for decades have turned to the den of terrorists especially Iranian anti-revolutionaries and even Turkey has accused Stockholm of giving shelters to terrorists. Sweden and most Western countries defend any act against Islam and Muslim personalities as freedom of expression and when someone defends Islamic principles and personalities he is immediately accused of supporting terrorism or acting against human rights.

Martyr Soleimani has done a great job in fighting terrorism and the West cannot deny his achievements even by closing the mouths of the freedom-seeking people under any label and this student is just a simple sign of love to Martyr Soleimani and exposing the double standard approach of the West regarding freedom of expression which is not even observed in their own lands.

Trans-Regional...

FROM PAGE 1

He further called for vigilance in the face of plots hatched to damage unity and solitary between the Iranian and Iraqi nations.

The Islamic Republic, he emphasized, believes in supporting Iraq’s unity and integrity and assisting the country with the process of consolidating its stability and security, development, and prosperity.

The presence of foreign-backed terrorist groups in Iraq, including in the provinces adjacent to the Islamic Republic, still poses a threat to the national security of the two countries, Ashtiani pointed out, underling the increasing need for Baghdad-Tehran military, intelligence, and security coordination.

He also expressed Iran’s readiness to provide Iraq with experience to achieve self-reliance in its defense industry.

Referring to the cowardly US assassination of Iran’s top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi companion Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), he said the legal purist of the case is still on the agenda.

In 2014, when Daesh unleashed its campaign of terror in Iraq, Iranian military advisers rushed to the aid of Iraqi armed forces at Baghdad’s request, helping them reverse Daesh’s gains and ultimately liberate their entire homeland from the US-sponsored terror outfit some three years later.

Abbasi, for his part, said the Iraqi armed forces and nation are still fighting against terrorism, appreciating Iran’s assistance as a friendly and neighboring country in this regard.

A strong Iran will lead to a strong Iraq and vice versa, and following this path will resolve regional challenges and crises, he added.

The Iraqi defense minister called for the use of Iran’s capacity for technical, technological, and educational cooperation in the wake of Iraq’s decision to rebuild the country’s armed forces after a long battle with the Takfiri currents.

Asher-Smith Beats World Champion Jackson

BIRMINGHAM (Dispatches) - Britain’s Dina-Asher Smith dominated the 60 meters at the World Indoor Tour final, defeating domestic rival Daryll Neita and outdoor world 200m champion Shericka Jackson.

Asher-Smith clocked a time of 7.05 sec to win ahead of Neita’s 7.13 in Birmingham, having earlier broken her British record in the heats with 7.03.

Destiny Smith-Barnett of the United States was third in 7.15 with Jamaican sprinter Jackson fourth in 7.18.

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Merlier Wins Hectic UAE Tour Sprint

PARIS (Dispatches) - Tim Merlier won stage six of cycling’s UAE Tour, to guarantee he takes the green sprint jersey in a top class field.

The Belgian Quick-Step rider has been in the mix on all the big sprint stages, and won two of them -- while his team leader Remco Evenepoel remains in the overall lead with Sunday’s deciding mountain stage still to come. “It was another hectic finish today, but I was put into a great position with 500 metres to go and then went for a long sprint,” Merlier said. “Thankfully I was able to hold on and I am happy to win in the green jersey.”

Kings Edge Clippers 176-175 in 2OT

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Malik Monk scored 45 points off the bench and De’ Aaron Fox added 42 points and 12 assists as the visiting Sacramento Kings pulled off a 176-175 double-overtime victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Both teams set franchise records for points in a game while producing the second-highest scoring game in NBA history. The Detroit Pistons beat the Denver Nuggets 186-184 in triple overtime on Dec. 13, 1983.

Sacramento’s Domantas Sabonis had 20 points and 10 rebounds despite committing his fifth foul in the third quarter and fouling out with 3:09 remaining in the first overtime.

Kawhi Leonard scored 44 points and Paul George added 34 points and 10 rebounds for the Clippers. Russell Westbrook scored 17 points and dished out 14 assists in his debut with the team.

Bucks 128, Heat 99

Jrue Holiday scored 24 points and Bobby Portis added 18 in his first game since Jan. 23 as Milwaukee won its 13th consecutive game, taking down visiting Miami.

Giannis Antetokounmpo exited with 1:13 left in the first quarter due to a right knee injury. He finished with four points, four rebounds and four assists in just six minutes. Brook Lopez scored 17 and grabbed seven boards, Grayson Allen dropped 16, and Jae Crowder scored nine points in his Bucks debut and first game of the season. Meyers Leonard also made his Bucks debut, adding five points and six rebounds. Miami lost its third consecutive game despite getting 23 points from Jimmy Butler. Bam Adebayo added 18 and Caleb Martin scored 17 while new arrival Kevin Love grabbed eight rebounds and dished four assists but failed to score. Tyler Herro returned from injury and scored 14 points in a return to his hometown.

Warriors 116, Rockets 101

Klay Thompson bombed in 12 3-pointers during a 42-point performance as Golden State, despite going without three starters, overpowered Houston in San Francisco.

Thompson shot 12-for-17 from beyond the arc, accounting for all but six of his points as he matched his second-highest-scoring performance of the season. Donte DiVincenzo and Jordan Poole backed Thompson with 15 points apiece for the Warriors, while Patrick Baldwin Jr. added 11.

Kenyon Martin Jr. topped the Rockets with 22 points despite missing all three of his 3-point attempts. Houston shot just 11-for-35 (31.4 percent) from beyond the arc. TyTy Washington Jr. chipped in with 15 points in his first NBA start for the Rockets.

Krejciakova Stuns Swiatek for Dubai Title

DUBAI (Dispatches) - Barbora Krejciakova defeated Iga Swiatek to claim the Dubai WTA title, becoming just the fourth woman this century to defeat the top three players in the world at the same tournament

For former French Open champion Krejciakova, ranked 30 in the world, it was a sixth career title.

The 27-year-old Czech snapped world number one Swiatek’s six-match, 12-set winning streak with a 6-4, 6-2 result in one hour and 31 minutes, in front of a capacity crowd at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis stadium.

Krejciakova had also defeated second-ranked Australian Open winner Aryna Sabalenka in the quarter-finals and world number three Jessica Pegula in the semi-finals.

Only Venus Williams, Serena Williams and Sabalenka have managed to beat all top three players in a single tournament in the 2000s.

“It’s a huge achievement, what I was able to do this week. I was really enjoying all the matches, I definitely love playing on the big courts,” said Krejciakova, who will move up to 16 in the rankings on Monday.

It was a week of great escapes from Krejciakova -- who saved four match points against an eighth-ranked Daria Kasatkina in the second round and rallied back from 0-6, 1-3 down in her quarter-final against Sabalenka.

“This title definitely means a lot. It was a great week for me, I was improving every single game and today I showed my best,” said Krejciakova, who also defeated Swiatek in the Ostrava final last October.

They are now 2-2 head-to-head in career meetings.

“I have so much respect for Iga, to me she is a big inspiration, she motivates me every day. It was a great final and I’m definitely happy with the result,” she added.

A sharp-angled backhand from a nonchalant Krejciakova gave the Czech an opening service break that helped her to a 3-1 advantage. The 21-year-old Pole won Doha last week and arrived in Saturday’s final having dropped just 14 games in six matches in the Gulf.

Swiatek lost a WTA 1000 final for the first time in her career. She had won all five she previously contested coming in.



Knicks 115, Wizards 109

After struggling all night, Jalen Brunson hit the tiebreaking basket with 42.1 seconds remaining and visiting New York erased a 19-point deficit en route to a victory over Washington.

Julius Randle tied a career high with 46 points on 16-of-29 shooting from the floor as the Knicks won their fourth straight game. Brunson was held to 13 points and shot 6-of-20 after averaging 32.5 points in his final eight games before the All-Star break.

Kyle Kuzma and Kristaps Porzingis each had 23 points, with Porzingis scoring 19 of his total in Washington’s 38-point opening quarter. Bradley Beal added 16 and Delon Wright chipped in 15 off the bench for the Wizards.

Hawks 136, Cavaliers 119

Trae Young and Dejounte Murray combined for 59 points and Atlanta blitzed visiting Cleveland to win interim coach Joe Prunty’s debut. Prunty took over when Atlanta dismissed coach Nate McMillan during the All-Star break.

Young scored 34 points, going 14-for-15 from the foul line, and added nine assists. Murray had 25 points, nine rebounds and eight assists. Saddiq Bey scored 19 for his most points since joining the team at the trade deadline.

The Hawks scored 100-plus points for the 35th consecutive game, the longest such streak in the NBA. They surpassed the 100 mark midway in the third quarter. Cleveland entered the game allowing the fewest points in the league (106.3 per game). Darius Garland led the Cavaliers with 33 points.

Hornets 121, Timberwolves 113

LaMelo Ball recorded a game-high 32 points and 10 rebounds, Gordon Hayward added 27 points and a game-high 13 boards, and Charlotte defeated Minnesota in Minneapolis.

The Hornets have their first three-game winning streak of the season.

Anthony Edwards led Minnesota with 29 points but shot just 11 of 26 from the floor. Rudy Gobert added 17 points on 7-for-9 shooting and grabbed 10 rebounds, while Naz Reid came off the bench for 16 points and eight boards.



Chelsea Boss Potter Reveals Email Threats to Family

LONDON (Dispatches) - Under-fire Chelsea manager Graham Potter has received emails threatening him and his family.

Potter revealed yesterday he has been targeted by an anonymous account after Chelsea’s dismal season hit a new low with a 1-0 home defeat against Southampton last weekend.

Chelsea are languishing in 10th place and have won only two of their last 14 matches.

Supporters called for Potter to be sacked throughout the Southampton debacle, with personal attacks towards him on social media also increasing.

But worryingly for Potter, threats are now being sent directly to the former Brighton boss, who succeeded the sacked Thomas Tuchel in September.

“You could ask my family how life has been for me and for them. It’s been not pleasant at all. I understand supporters go home and they’re annoyed because the team aren’t winning,” Potter said.

“I’ve had some not particularly nice emails come through, that want me to die and want my kids to die.

“That’s obviously not pleasant to receive. If you’ve been asked for four months if you’re under pressure, because (the media) need to sell stuff — what do you expect, in the end? “You know there’s a problem when the email address it’s been sent from is ‘Potter bastard at Gmail dot com’.”

Medvedev Wins Qatar Open

DOHA (Dispatches) - Daniil Medvedev beat fellow former world number one Andy Murray 6-4, 6-4 in the Qatar Open final to win his second ATP title in a week.

The 27-year-old world number eight, who won in Rotterdam seven days earlier, convincingly ended his 35-year-old opponent’s comeback heroics that saw Murray fight four three-set battles and overcome eight match points to reach the final in Doha.

Medvedev broke Murray’s first serve in each set as he remained unbeaten in three encounters between the two.

“A very tough match, it was a little bit more windy today so both of us were struggling to find the rhythm,” Medvedev said on court in which he also complained about the balls.

“Honestly now I can say this now that the tournament is over, and also I won, I think that these balls are not good for hard courts.

“They changed something this year and I don’t like them. I heard a lot of other players are struggling with shoulders, elbows and wrists.

“Myself I had wrist problems in Australia. Generally I think I was struggling all week to find the perfect rhythm with these balls, but I am happy to win.”

Medvedev said both players had their “bad” patches in the match. The Russian fired down five aces but also committed five double faults.

Murray repeatedly shouted at himself and his support team after errors.

Medvedev had seemed to be cruising to victory in the second set until he was serving at 3-2 up with two game points. Murray fought back and produced a brilliant backhand winner to surge back into the clash at 3-3.



Arsenal Extend Premier League Lead

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal opened up a five-point lead at the top of the Premier League thanks to a 1-0 win at Leicester as Leeds beat Southampton 1-0 to give new boss Javi Gracia a winning start.

The Gunners snapped a four-game winless streak with two late goals at Aston Villa last week to take back control of the title race after briefly being usurped at the top of the table by Manchester City.

Mikel Arteta’s men needed no such drama at the King Power and should have run out far more convincing winners.

“For the amount of time we dominated ball possession, territory and the amount of situations we had in the final third, we should have created much more and scored more goals,” said Arteta.

“When you don’t, you have to be exceptional in your defensive work and we conceded one shot. Defensively we were outstanding.”

Arteta’s decision to start both Gabriel Martinelli and Leandro Trossard in the front three at the expense of Eddie Nketiah paid dividends.

Trossard had a brilliant first half strike into the top corner controversially ruled out by a VAR review for a foul by Ben White on Leicester goalkeeper Danny Ward.

But Martinelli was not to be denied one minute into the second period when he coolly slotted home from Trossard’s pass.

Bukayo Saka had a second goal ruled out for offside as Arsenal failed to turn their domination into a more convincing scoreline.

However, they did enough to pile the pressure on second-placed City ahead of their trip to Bournemouth later on Saturday.

