

An Iranian Court Ruled That the U.S. Gov't, as Well as Some American Institutions and Officials, Must Pay Some \$312m as Damages To the Families of the Victims of a 2017 Twin Terrorist Attack in Tehran

IRAN NEWS

Vice President for Executive Affairs Mohsen Mansouri Says That Three New Oil Projects Will Be Launched in Khuzestan Province In the Impending Trip of President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi to the Province

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Iran to Launch 6 Satellites By March 2024

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's deputy defense minister and CEO of Iran Electronics Industries (IEI), Amir Rastegari, announced that Iran was preparing six satellites for launch by March 2024.

Rastegari expressed hopes that IEI would be able to launch two CubeSats and the homegrown Earth observation satellite Tolou-3 into low Earth orbit by that time.

Tolou-3, weighing 150 kilograms, is Iran's first miniature satellite, capable of taking black-and-white photos with a 5-meter spatial resolution and colored photos with a 10-meter resolution.

Rastegari noted that IEI had cooperated well with the Iranian Space Agency and Russia and is negotiating with the Aerospace Industries Organization of Iran's Defense Ministry and Russia to expedite the launch of Iranian satellites.

In August 2022, Iran successfully launched the Khayyam satellite into space from the Baikonur space station in Kazakhstan using Russia's Soyuz satellite carrier rocket.

Iran Obtains Fingerprints Of Enemy's Electronic Military Equipment

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Brigadier General Amir Rastegari said that the Iranian forces are using the technology that enables them to detect all the dimensions of electromagnetic waves transmitted by the enemy's fighter jets and attack them accordingly.

"We have the fingerprints of the enemy's electronic equipment. Fingerprints are unique in humans. This is also the case regarding electromagnetic systems, and we have achieved the technology for several years," he told Tasnim news agency.

"For example, if the radar of an F-35 begins operation and surveillance, it emits waves that are different from those of another F-35's radar. Today, we are capable to recognize it, i.e. we can receive and analyze telecommunication, radio and magnetic signals and find out the warplane they belong to. If the same fighter jet starts operating later, we will immediately find out."

Also in his remarks, Rastegari, who heads a company that is a state-owned subsidiary of Iran's Ministry of Defense, said the firm has designed seekers for ground combat missiles. **See Page 7**

Kazakh PM in Tehran To Boost All-Out Ties

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Alikhan Smailov was officially welcomed in Tehran by Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber in the Saadatabad Complex on Wednesday afternoon.

Mokhber and Smailov were to hold a meeting to discuss issues of mutual interest, ways to expand Iran-Kazakhstan bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues.

Smailov's trip to Tehran is aimed at expanding the economic and commercial relations between Iran and Kazakhstan. The Kazakh prime minister is set to hold meetings with high-ranking Iranian officials during the upcoming visit. Smailov is to meet Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi as well.

The Kazakh Prime Minister is visiting Iran amid the ongoing 3rd Trade and Economic Mission of Kazakhstan in Iran, which brought together 20 domestic producers of food, chemical, construction, light industry, and metallurgy products.

The talks were expected to result in the signing of a number of intergovernmental and commercial documents. Iran-Kazakhstan trade volume in the first 10 months of 2022 reached \$450 million. During this period, Iran's exports to Kazakhstan increased by 26.5% to \$167 million and imports from Kazakhstan to Iran increased by 15% to \$283 million.

On Tuesday and before the arrival of Smailov, the Iran-Kazakhstan Business Forum was held with presence of a large trade delegation from Kazakhstan.

Smailov's visit was aimed at enhancing all-out relation with Tehran as both countries are considered as the major powers in their regions.

Tehran and Astana in recent years have tried to expand their ties despite the U.S. sanctions and they have boosted their trade exchange while they enjoy an amicable political tie.

Apart from the talks on the latest situation of bilateral ties aimed at implementing the agreements inked previously in the presence of presidents of the two countries, the two sides were going to explore avenues for the all-out expansion of bilateral ties in the fields of economy, trade and politics.

Coordination for the promotion of cooperation between Tehran and Astana in the fields of transport, exports, technical and engineering services, transit, energy and banking relations are of the main topics which will be discussed during the Kazakh prime minister's upcoming visit to Tehran.

Tehran UNSC Silence on Israeli Crimes Against Palestinians

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the UN has denounced the silence of the Security Council regarding Israeli violations of Palestinians' rights, arguing that the practice has rendered the UN resolutions ineffective and subjected Palestinian people to constant aggression.

"It is regrettable that the Security Council has remained silent, rendering UN resolutions ineffective and leaving the Palestinian people to suffer ongoing atrocities," Amir Saeed Irvani said in an address to a UN Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, in New York.

"The absence of accountability has emboldened this despicable regime to continue violating all UN resolutions, including those adopted by the Security Council," Irvani said.

He lamented the fact that for the last 75 years, the Palestinian people have been victims of the Israeli regime's unrelenting aggression, violence, and injustices, saying the occupation of their land continues, with cities being blockaded, property and farmlands being destroyed and confiscated, and people being forced to evacuate their homes.

"Since the beginning of the year, Palestinians have been subjected to excessive violence, suppression, and terror by both illegal Israeli settlers and armed forces. This has resulted in the detainment and assassination of civilians, and the killing and martyrdom of 100 Palestinians, including 21 children," Irvani said.

The Iranian diplomat noted that almost 5,000 Palestinians, including 31 women and 170 children, are currently being illegally and arbitrarily held in Israeli jails where they are subjected to inhumane treatment.

"These horrific acts are part of a larger pattern of systematic violations of the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people by the Israeli regime. They represent a clear violation of international law and established principles and norms of human rights," he said.

Irvani also expressed Tehran's deep concern over repeated assaults and incursions by extremist Jewish settlers, with the support of Israeli occupation forces, into the holy al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City of occupied al-Quds.

"The brutal attacks on worshippers, including women and children, as they perform their prayers and rituals in the courtyards of al-Aqsa Mosque are reprehensible and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. The OIC and the Arab League strongly condemn repeated Israeli assaults against Muslim and Christian sanctities in the occupied Old City of al-Quds. **See Page 7**

ViewPoint De-Dollarization the Best Way To Punish the U.S.

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

For decades many independent politicians and economists have emphasized the best way to punish the U.S. and to fight the U.S. unipolarization is to cut dependency on the U.S. currency dollar which is currently dominating in the world and it has helped the U.S. to exercise pressure on other nations' economies and in recent years many countries have turned to their national currencies in international trade and this is something that has enraged Washington.

After the U.S. stepped up its sanctions and economic pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran decided to exchange trade with other countries in their national currencies and this was a good idea which is currently pursued by many countries.

The Russia-Ukraine war and imposition of sanctions on Russia by the West made other countries take trade in national currencies seriously and now many countries have started trade in their national currencies, something which pushes the U.S. more towards decline or at least losing its power and grandeur in the world.

In recent months Russia, China, Brazil and India as four big global economic powers have switched to trade with yuan, rouble, real and rupee and this is a policy which is pursued by many other countries who dislike the U.S. hegemony.

On Monday it was announced that India finally joined hands with Bangladesh to do cross-border trade in their own currencies, the Indian rupee (INR) and the Bangladeshi taka (BDT), making Bangladesh the nineteenth country to ditch the US dollar.

After months of intense discussions and meetings, a delegation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the State Bank of India (SBI) visited Dhaka to discuss and finalize the mechanism to engage in cross-border trade in local currencies.

In order to set into motion the initiative, two of Bangladesh's banks, Sonali Bank and Eastern Bank Limited, are expected to open accounts in two Indian banks, the State Bank of India and ICICI Bank.

The two Indian banks are also going to do the same by opening similar accounts with two Bangladeshi banks, according to news reports.

The opening of these accounts, known as vostro and nostro accounts in global accounting, will require the approval of respective central banks, according to bank officials. **See Page 7**

Foreign Military Presence Costly, Disruptive for Region

MUSCAT (Dispatches) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian considers foreign military presence in the region to be counterproductive for the issue of regional security.

Amirabdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi in Muscat.

The Iranian top diplomat has traveled to the Omani capital at the head of a ranking political delegation at the invitation of the Omani official.

Amirabdollahian identified inclusive and indispensable security to be an important necessity for the region. In the same context, he considered the foreign military presence to be costly and disruptive for regional security.

He also condemned the acts of aggression that had been committed by the Israeli regime against the Palestinian people, especially the oppressed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian worshippers at the al-Aqsa Mosque's compound in the holy occupied city of al-Quds' Old City.

The Iranian foreign minister considered Muscat's position of support for the Palestinian nation to be worthy of appreciation. **See Page 7**

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Erdogan Honors Iran's IRCS Over Earthquake Relief Efforts

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Turkish president honors the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) over the body's relief efforts during the hugely deadly and devastating earthquake that hit Turkey and neighboring Syria in February.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan awarded the IRCS chief, Pir-Hossein Koulivand, with a "Badge of Sacrifice" during a ceremony held on Tuesday that was also attended by Mohammad Farazmand, the Islamic Republic's ambassador to Ankara.

The Turkish head of state expressed gratitude towards the IRCS over its "expeditious and proper" relief and rescue efforts aimed at the people of Turkey during the natural disaster, the IRCS reported in a tweet.

Iranian Diplomat Jailed In Belgium to Be Freed

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The spokesman for Iran's Judiciary says an Iranian diplomat who has been illegally imprisoned in Belgium will soon be released in a prisoner swap, after the two sides finalized a swap deal over a Belgian spy.

Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, Massoud Setayeshi said Tehran has made a request regarding the transfer of Assadollah Assadi after the Belgian side submitted a request for the exchange of a prisoner detained in Iran.

An agreement between Iran and Belgium has been finalized, he said, adding that the agreement came after both Belgium and Iran asked for a prisoner swap.

In February 2021, a Belgian court sentenced Assadi to 20 years in prison after accusing him of planning an alleged attack against the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO).

In line with the deal, Iranians convicted in Belgium would be allowed to serve their sentences at home and vice versa. The treaty paved the way for the release of Assadi.

The so-called "National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)," an umbrella group of anti-Iran outfits such as the MKO, has been trying to pose some legal challenges to it, alleging that Assadi should remain in prison.

Belgium's parliament ratified the treaty back last July.

Referring to some suspicions surrounding the initial verdicts issued regarding the Ukraine plane crash, the spokesman of the judiciary said: "Acting against security" and "intentional murder" have not been proven for the judges of the document.

Setayeshi in response to the question said: "We have legal restrictions on announcing the names, they will be announced after the verdict will be finalized."

He noted: The judges of this case found the case to be semi-intentional murder and



the maximum punishment is three years in prison. Additional punishments are also provided for the criminals.

In another part of the press regarding the employment plans of prisoners in the new year, Setayeshi said: Holding training courses for 95,000 people, planning to issue an industrial card for 2,400 people, developing productive job opportunities 7 percent more than last year and planning to increase the wages of working prisoners compared to last year are among the plans of the judiciary.

The spokesman of the judiciary also in response to a question about the law on observing hijab in society highlighted: Cultural institutions have duties in this field and the judiciary will also fulfill its responsibilities. We expect all the organizations to compensate for the previous deficiencies.

The spokesman of the judiciary in response to a question about when the final decision of the prosecutor's office on the case of those caught in last year's unrest, said: Regarding the various crimes that are committed, the cases should be processed in the courts in the shortest possible time and sent to the authorities to issue a legal verdict.

Elaborating on Elaha Mohammadi and Niloufar Hamidi, two journalists who were arrested in the past year's unrest, he said: These cases include an indictment that has been served. The accusation of these two people is cooperation with the hostile government of the US and consensus and collusion against national security and propaganda activity against the regime.

Iran, Russia Set to Link Banking Messengers

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has said that Iran and Russia have begun pilot linking of their banking messengers and will finalize the scheme soon.

Speaking at a subsidiary panel of the 22nd International Exhibition for Equipment and Technologies for Oil and Gas Industries in Moscow on Tuesday, Jalali said that the scheme will link Iran's Shetab banking system and Russia's MIR interbank system.

He also referred to the resolve of Tehran and Moscow to ditch the dollar in their trade ties with other nations, and said that an upcoming visit to Tehran by the governor of the Central Bank of Russia will pave the way for the linkage of banking messengers of the two countries.

Member of Assembly of Experts Assassinated

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Ayatollah Abbasali Soleimani, a member of the Assembly of Experts and also a former representative of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in the southeastern Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchistan, died in hospital on Wednesday after being shot at a bank in the city of Babolsar, Mehr news agency reported.

General Governor of Mazandaran Province, Seyyed Mahmoud Hosseinipour, told the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN) television news channel that an investigation is underway to find out the circumstances surrounding the deadly incident and the motive behind the assassination.

Ayatollah Abbasali Soleimani, a member of Iran's Assembly of Experts, (2nd R), was assassinated in the country's northern city of Babolsar on April 26, 2023. (Photo by Mehr news agency)

The Assembly of Experts elects and oversees the activities of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and is in a position of authority to either appoint or dismiss the Leader.

Members are directly elected to office by the people for an eight-year term. The body holds biannual meetings to review major national issues and every other year to appoint a new chairman.

Annual Home Appliances Export Up 12%

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Annual export of Iran's home appliances rose 12 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), the director-general of the Home Appliances Office of the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced.

Mohsen Shokrollahi said that the value of the country's annual home appliances export was \$440 million in 1401, while the figure was \$393 million in 1400.

He said 64 percent of the total exports of household appliances was related to refrigerators and freezers, 16 percent to heating and cooling equipment, and seven percent to small household appliances in the previous year.

"Iraq, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Central Asia have been the top destinations for the export of Iran's household appliances. The products of China and Turkey are among our competitors in the target markets", the official added.

In terms of the plans of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade to increase the export of home appliances in 1402, Shokrollahi said the plan of the ministry is to increase the quality and lower the price of household appliances in order to compete with foreign brands.

Mentioning the solutions for the sustainable export of household appliances, he said: "This year, apart from the export of the final product, we can contribute to the sustainable export of household appliances by joint production with the target countries and by complying with the standards of the importing countries."

As previously stated by the official, about 65-70 percent of the parts required to manufacture home appliances are domestically produced.

Shokrollahi said: "But for some items and products, such as refrigerators and washing machines, this is even higher than 90 percent, and we plan to reach 100 percent."

The home appliance industry is one of the industries that faced significant production growth in the past Iranian calendar year, so it can be said that Iranian manufacturers were able to take a significant share of the market in the production of refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, evaporative coolers, and TV sets, and even in small household appliances, the production status is outstanding.

Iran, Russia to Sign Oil And Gas Deal in Tehran

TEHRAN (IP) - Oil Minister says that next month at the sideline of Iran Oil Show 2023 Iran and Russia will sign documents for expanding bilateral trade in oil, gas, Petrochemical, and related industries.

Javad Owji on the sidelines of weekly cabinet meeting in response to a question said that a high-ranking Russian delegation will attend in Tehran in the Month of May to sign documents for expanding bilateral trade in oil, gas, Petrochemical and related engineering industries and Services.

Iran Oil Show 2023, which will be held at Tehran International Permanent Fairground from May 17-20, is to host more than 1,500 Iranian and foreign oil, gas, and petrochemical companies, knowledge-based firms, start-ups, and universities including a high-ranking delegation from Russia.

The Russian delegation also will attend business-to-business (B2B) meetings coinciding with the 27th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition. The heads of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission - Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak held phone talks today, Shana cited as he said.

Iranian Oil Minister added that the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission will be comprised of working groups for trading oil, gas, and petrochemical products, investment and export of technical and engineering services, manufacture, supply, and repair of oil equipment and technological and knowledge-based cooperation and will exchange views on boosting bilateral trade ties.

Javad Owji also told reporters that no gas price hike would be on the agenda of the Oil Ministry.

Free Zones, Tariffs, Transport to Boost Iran-Syria Trade Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) - Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash said that activating free zones, reducing transit tariffs, and developing transportation and tourism corridors to expand trade ties between the two countries were the main topics discussed in his meeting with the Syrian officials.

In a meeting between Bazrpash and the entrepreneurs of Syria, participated by Syrian Minister of Public Works and Housing Suhail Abdul Latif, Transport Minister Zouhair Khazim, and Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammad Samer al-Khalil, the two sides explored the ways for strengthening bilateral economic relations, and the Iranian minister announced the increase of interactions between the two countries in various fields, including the activation of free zones and the reduction of transit tariffs, giving priority to the field of tourism and the development of transportation corridors.

Bazrpash arrived in Syria on Tuesday morning at the head of a high-ranking delegation and was welcomed

by Syrian Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammad Samer al-Khalil.

During the two-day stay in Syria, the two countries' officials discussed the ways for the expansion of economic relations between the two countries.

Bazrpash and Samer al-Khalil co-chair Iran-Syria Joint Economic Committee.

Emphasizing the strengthening of economic relations between Iran and Syria, the Iranian minister announced the talks between the officials of the two countries to expand economic relations in the maritime and rail sectors, facilitate bank transactions and reduce free trade tariffs.

Iran and Syria have been taking major steps for the expansion of their mutual trade ties. The two sides have exchanged numerous trade delegations and Iranian private companies are investing in various fields of the Syrian economy like providing construction materials especially cement and working on several reconstruction projects.

Iran Supports Initiatives on Yemen Ceasefire, End to Saudi-Led Siege

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has reaffirmed Iran's stance on preserving Yemen's territorial integrity and support for a political solution to the Yemeni crisis, emphasizing the need for a ceasefire and an end to the Saudi-led war and siege on the impoverished Arab nation.

Amirabdollahian made the remarks at a meeting with Mohammed Abdul-Salam, spokesman for Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement and the chief negotiator of Yemen's National Salvation Government, in the Omani capital of Muscat on Tuesday, where the two sides discussed the latest developments in Yemen.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes any initiative, plan and action that would lead to the lifting of the all-out blockade on Yemen and the establishment of a comprehensive ceasefire and understanding between Yemeni political groups," he said.

The top Iranian diplomat also hailed the recent simultaneous prisoner exchanges between the warring sides in the war-racked Arab country.

Abdul-Salam also thanked Iran for its support, saying Yemen will continue its dialog with Saudi Arabia until it reaches an agreement that will ensure the rights of all Yemeni people.

He said that the Yemeni negotiating team has already spoken out on the need for foreign military forces to leave Yemen, receiving war compensation, and assistance in the reconstruction of Yemen.

"Our other demands included ending the aggression, complete lifting of the siege, and payment of the wages of the entire Yemeni employees from the oil and gas revenues," he added.

Saudi Arabia invaded Yemen in March 2015 in collaboration with a number of its allies and with arms and logistical support from the United States and several other Western states.

APG Collection Facility to Be Launched Within Days

SHANA (Ahvaz) - The managing director of the Persian Gulf Hoveyze Gas Refining Company announced on Tuesday that an associated petroleum gas (APG) collection plant in Khuzestan Province, southwestern Iran, will become operational within days.

Talking to reporters, Afshin Kiani estimated that the two phases of the refinery's annual revenues would be around 500 million dollars. He said the project operations started in 2013 and the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) was in charge of implementing the project, adding the responsibility was handed over to the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) in 2016, when it saw 21 percent progress.

The project, Kiani continued, is aimed at protecting the environment and collecting associated petroleum gases from Yadavaran, South and North Azadegan, South and North Yaran, Darkhoein, Sohrab, Jofeir, Sousangerd, and Band-e Karkheh fields.

According to him, the project comprises two phases, with each phase having a daily APG processing capacity of 250 million cubic feet.

All sections of the first phase of the project are ready for operation and will be inaugurated in the presence of high-ranking officials within the next days.

The CEO of the Persian Gulf Hoveyze Gas Refining Company said products with further added value will be produced after gathering associated petroleum gases.

The official stated 97,000 barrels of liquefied natural gas (LNG) will be transferred to Bandar Imam Petrochemical Company (BIPC) through a 185-kilometer pipeline and 360 million cubic feet of sweet gas will be injected into the national grid daily.

Iran Ranked 21st Worldwide in Terms of Number of Active Vehicles

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran is ranked 21st in the world in terms of the number of active vehicles and 48th in terms of active vehicles per capita, says a new report.

According to the latest figures released by the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA), the number of active vehicles in Iran between 2015 and 2020 has increased by 2%.

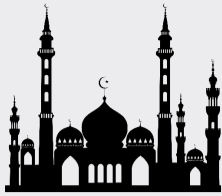
It said there are some 16 million vehicles in Iran, which means 183 vehicles per thousand people. The figure is higher than the average -143 cars per thousand - in Asia and Oceania.

The report also said that there are 1.59 billion vehicles in the world, with China having the largest fleet with 318 million.

Meanwhile, an earlier report by the OICA ranked Iran sixth in the world in terms of car manufacturing growth in 2022.

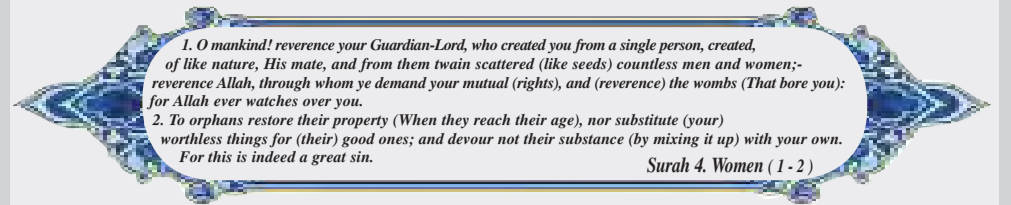
According to the report, car manufacturing in Iran increased by 19 percent in 2022, when 1.064 million vehicles were manufactured in the country.





PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:02
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:06
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:43
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:15



Tehran, Astana Urged To Resolve Refrigerated Transport Problem

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafei in meeting with Kazakhstan's Vice-Minister of Trade and Integration Mr. Kairat Torebayev called for resolving the problem of refrigerated transport which affects the trade between the two countries.

On the sidelines of Iran-Kazakhstan Business Forum in Tehran, Shafei met with Torebayev and during the meeting both sides explored ways to remove hurdles for broadening trade ties.

Shafei said that although Kazakhstan is considered as a good market for Iran's agro products, it faces the problem of refrigerated transport that both countries are struggling which should be resolved soon.

He also emphasized special position of Kazakhstan as a trade partner for Iran and said that the presence of both countries in Eurasia and Shanghai Cooperation Organization have opened new horizons for broadening economic relations that the private sectors of both countries should make most of it.

He then pointed to easing visa process and revoking visa for a two-week visit by both countries and termed it an action which is effective in enhancing trade cooperation and he expects in the near future both countries issue visas for longer times for their traders.

Shafei also said that attention to the rail, sea and transport infrastructures should be prioritized by both countries, adding that the most important problem for boosting bilateral trade between the two countries is the issue of transport. He reiterated that



resolving this problem demands strong determination of their statesmen. He added that in the future transit between the two countries via connection of Kazakhstan to China and Iran's access to the free waters and Southeast Asia can be brilliant provided that infrastructures are ready for taking advantage of this opportunity.

He then pointed to the requirements of Kazakhstan market to Iran's fruits and vegetables, reiterating that Kazakhstan is a good market for Iranian agro products but there is problem in refrigerated transport and this should be resolved as soon as possible.

Then Kazakh Vice- Minister Torebayev, for his part, emphasized that his country seeks to improve its trade ties with Iran, adding that Iran is the main route of Kazakhstan for connecting to Turkey and the Middle East. He added that the goal behind the forum was to increase the amount of trade exchanges.

He went on to say that Kazakhstan is to broaden its cooperation with Iran especially in agro and fishery products. He then pointed to the problem of logistics between Iran and Kazakhstan and said that Kazakh truck drivers face problems when they passing Iran and if they can define a suitable insurance for the drivers of containers and transit, then they will achieve greater successes in broadening trade ties.

Torebayev added that he thinks in the near future the financial and banking problems between the two states will be resolved and soon both sides will see materialization of their \$3b trade volume target.

\$1b of Agreements Expected To Be Signed in IRAN EXPO 2023

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization says according to the predictions of the organizers of the fifth IRAN EXPO 2023 in Tehran, some agreements and export contracts are to be signed on the sidelines of the event.



Mr. Alireza Payman-Pak pointed to holding of the fifth exhibition on Iran's exporting capabilities IRAN EXPO 2023 and said that according to the plans, this exhibition will be a good opportunity for introducing export opportunities of the country to international traders in a certain period and place.

He reiterated with efforts of the Foreign Ministry and especially the Trade Promotion Organization they expect to hold one of the biggest international trade event in the country in recent years.

He noted that confronting with Iranophobia, depicting an efficient picture of the country and progresses of the Islamic Revolution in the world public opinion through international talks and media production are on the agenda of this event.

He added that IRAN EXPO 2023 will be held in Tehran on May 7-10 in 12 specialized sections, adding that these sections will be food industries, fisheries, industry, home appliances, textile, leather, apparel, chemical products, cosmetics, tourism and construction industry.

Payman-Pak further said that the event will be held with participation of over 700 companies and more than 70 trade delegations and over 1000 traders from other countries which is aimed at creating international exporting markets focused on East Asia, Eurasia, Africa and Latin America as well as diversification of exporting goods of the country for boosting the resistance of the national economy.

The Iran Expo exhibition will be held from May 7 to 10, 2023 at the permanent location of Tehran International Exhibitions.

Considering the importance of this event and the important effects that the successful holding of this exhibition can have on the development of our country's exports, all economic activists, businessmen, companies, government institutions and the private sector related to Iran's foreign trade have been invited to the exhibition.

Cooperation in Chabahar to Boost Tehran-Jakarta Ties

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



TEHRAN – Ambassador of Indonesia to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro believes resolving sanctions, developing barter and increasing cooperation in Chabahar Port are three grounds for cooperation between Indonesia and Iran which will lead to increase in the bilateral trade ties.

Mr. Yuliantoro met the caretaker of the international affairs of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Trade (ICCIMA) Ms. Niloofar Asadi and during the meeting both sides explored ways for broadening economic ties.

Considering the halt in trade relation between the two countries because of the sanctions and COVID pandemic, Indonesian Ambassador suggested a trade delegation from ICCIMA to be dispatched to Jakarta and to have some B2B meetings and sideline programs for getting acquainted with the capacities of Indonesia for resumption of trade ties between the two states.

Yuliantoro then pointed to three important fields for cooperation between the two countries and said that resolving legal issues of sanctions, developing barter trade and activities in Chabahar Port are the grounds for cooperation between Tehran and Indonesia.

He noted that Chabahar Port because of its geographical position and its commercial nature is very important and it can be a bridge between Indonesia and India and the Central Asia.

He stated that the economic section of Indonesian Embassy demands identifying executive mechanisms and education of "how to trade with Iran and identify the target market" that ICCIMA play an important role in this regard through cooperation with the embassy.

The Indonesian diplomat also welcomed broadening ties between Iran and Indonesia in the field of halal trade and emphasized that medical equipment and medicines, palm oil, tourism, petrochemicals especially disinfectants are of the grounds that can help to broaden bilateral trade because of huge needs of Indonesia to them.

Then Ms. Asadi, for her part, pointed to the letter of Head of ICCIMA to his Indonesian counterpart for visiting Iran which has gone unanswered and said that due to the needs for primary co-ordinations it is better some online meetings under the webinars will be held between the chambers of the two countries with participation of Indonesian Embassy. Regarding the resumption of bilateral trade despite sanctions she suggested that the trade relations in the non-sanctioned fields like agriculture, medicines and food to be reinforced between Tehran and Jakarta.

Heads of ICC, JICA Meet

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

(Corrected Version of our Tuesday issue)

TEHRAN – The president of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), in a meeting with the president of the JICA office emphasized the importance and priority of education and stated: Considering the extent of the cooperative sector and the necessity of training the latest technology in various fields, the training of managers and colleagues of the cooperative sector is one of the highest issue of the cooperative sector.

Bahman Abdollahi, the president of the ICC met Mr. "Tanaka", the president of the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) office in Tehran and emphasized the importance of education in various sectors.

While welcoming the president of JICA office in Tehran, the capabilities of the cooperative sector in Iran were introduced and he added: "Cooperatives have an important and effective position in Iran and many products are produced by the cooperative sector."

He said: "One of our main demands is training managers and colleagues of the cooperative sector in various fields." and "In order to increase the productivity, quality and production of products, we urgently need to familiarize ourselves with modern technologies and knowledge."

He admitted: Cooperatives in the fields of agriculture, livestock and poultry, petrochemicals have an active role in the country and training in these sectors has a special priority. to the necessity of holding training courses in



other provinces of the country, the president of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives said: The recent JICA courses were held in Tehran, and we hope that these courses will be held in other provinces as well.

Tanaka, while expressing his satisfaction at the presence in the ICC, said: JICA's focus and attention is on job creation for small and medium-sized (SMEs) companies in various industries.

He said: Currently, JICA is active in the field of tourism in Tabriz, fisheries in Hormozgan and in the field of agriculture in the north of Iran, and we are interested in expanding these activities and interacting more with other non-governmental organizations.

In other part of this meeting, the president of the ICC emphasized the importance of holding various face-to-face and online courses in Iran and Japan and suggested shortening the process of holding in-person training courses in Japan.

The head of the JICA office in Tehran also announced the interest of this organization to hold training courses and interact more with the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives in various sectors such as agriculture, knowledge-based and other sectors.

Abdollahi pointed out the importance of knowledge-based cooperatives in Iran: We have more than 210 knowledge-based cooperatives in the country operating in different sectors which have special importance in the country and receive special facilities and support for their activities.

Hydroelectric Output to Increase by 30%

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Energy Ministry expects its hydroelectric output to increase by some 30% in the year to March 2024 amid better precipitation that has led to increased water levels in reservoirs in the country.

A deputy head of Iran's Water and Energy Resources Development Company said on Tuesday that electricity generation from hydroelectric dams in southwestern Khuzestan province would increase this calendar year with a rise in water levels in two main reservoirs in the region.

Vahid Izadi said that water levels at Gotvand Olya and Karun 4 dams had reached 85% of the capacity of the reservoirs, adding that power generation from the two hydroelectric stations would reach 2 gigawatts (GW) this calendar year.

Iran has four other hydroelectric dams with a total electricity generation capacity of 1.3 GW.

Izadi said a new hydroelectric station in Chamshir dam, a large reservoir located in southern Iran, would come on line in July with a capacity of 55 megawatts.

Iran has experienced better rainfalls in the water year that started in late September.

Energy Ministry figures released on Tuesday showed that water levels in dams across Iran had increased by 26% year on year in the seven months to late April to reach 30.8 billion cubic meters.

The Ministry said water reservoirs in Iran were 62% full in late April, a slight increase from a 61% figure reported in late March.

Iran Launches Exports to S. Arabia After Agreement

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iranian industry minister has said that trade has started between Tehran and Riyadh after their bilateral agreement.

Speaking to Iranian media, the Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Reza Fatemi-Amin said that the trade between Iran and Saudi Arabia has started after the two sides reached an agreement to resume their diplomatic relations earlier this year.

The Iranian minister said that after the agreement, the exports

of Iranian goods into Saudi Arabia are on Tehran's agenda.

Fatemi Amin further said, "Our colleagues in the industry ministry have started the process of exporting goods."

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, met in China on April 6 a month after the two countries agreed to restore diplomatic relations under a China-brokered deal. That was the first meeting between the top diplomats of the two countries since 2016.

11.4m Tons Commodities Traded on IME Last Month

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) in the last Iranian calendar month of Farvardin witnessed trade of 11,429,496 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$2.5b on its physical market.



According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor, trade of 9,646,113 tons of commodities valued at more than \$1.5b.

On this floor the IME sold 5,109,245 tons of cement, 2,398,000 tons of iron ore, 1,546,964 tons of steel, 550,600 tons of sponge iron, 88,450 tons of zinc, 28,675 tons of aluminum, 25,560 tons of copper, 600 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 500 tons of cast iron and 60 tons of precious metals concentrate.

Furthermore, the exchange saw trade of 1,661,569 tons of commodities worth more than \$872m on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor.

Items traded on this floor included 437,457 tons of bitumen, 434,000 tons of vacuum bottom, 393,840 tons of polymeric products, 186,000 tons of lube cut, 148,735 tons of chemicals, 40,080 tons of sulfur, 15,868 tons of oil, 5,268 tons of petroleum products, 790 tons of gas feedstocks and 550 tons of insulation. Last was the IME's side market on which the exchange traded 121,814 tons of commodities.

TIC Plans 80% Increase In IP Network Capacity

TEHRAN (IRNA) – The Telecommunication Infrastructure Company (TIC) of Iran has announced that the Internet Protocol (IP) capacity in the country will expand by 80% until the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024).

In a report released on Tuesday, the TIC also pointed to a 57% progress in efforts to launch Iran's National Information Network (NIN), a service also known in the country as the domestic internet.

The report said Iran's IP capacity will increase by 20 terabits per second (Tbps) this calendar year by relying on domestic resources and by another 15 Tbps through improving the existing network infrastructure. TIC 's report also referred to a 50% increase in the active capacity of internet bandwidth in Iran over the last calendar year.

It said, however, that reducing dependence on foreign services and expanding the reach of the NIN will remain a top priority of the TIC in the year to late March.

Turkey Detains 126 Pro-Kurdish Suspects Ahead of Vote

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey detained 126 pro-Kurdish activists, journalists and lawyers in raids conducted just three weeks before a knife-edge vote that could extend President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's two-decade rule.

Police said their "counter-terror" operation was staged across 21 provinces, including Diyarbakir, the Kurdish minority's unofficial capital in Turkey.

State media said police held people suspected of financing the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) or roping new members into the outlawed group. The PKK has been proscribed as a terrorist organization by Ankara and its Western allies for waging a decades-long armed struggle for greater autonomy in Turkey's southeast.



Sweden Expels Five Russian Diplomats

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Sweden's foreign ministry said it was expelling five Russian diplomats for conducting activities incompatible with their diplomatic status, saying the government took the security threat posed by Russian intelligence gathering very seriously.

Russia's embassy in Sweden declined to comment on the development. Russia and Western countries have engaged in tit-for-tat expulsions since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February last year. Russia calls the invasion a "special military operation".

"Five people who are employed at the (Russian) embassy have been asked to leave (Sweden) as a result of activities that are incompatible with the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations," a Swedish foreign ministry statement said.



Ukraine Stages Raids Across Dnipro River



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian forces based on the western side of the River Dnipro are frequently carrying out raids on the eastern bank near the city of Kherson to try to dislodge Russian troops, a regional official said.

Russian forces have held the eastern side of the Dnipro near Kherson since retreating from the southern city in November after months of occupation, but Ukraine is expected to launch a spring counteroffensive to try to recapture more territory.

Yuriy Sobolevskiy, deputy head of the Kherson regional administration, said the raids were intended to reduce the combat capability of Russian troops who have been shelling Kherson city since being forced to retreat.

"Our military visit the left (eastern) bank very often, conducting raids. The Ukrainian armed forces are working, and working very effectively," Sobolevskiy told Ukrainian television.

"The results will come as they did on the right bank of the Kherson region when, thanks to a complex and long operation, they were able to liberate our territories with minimal losses for our military. The same thing happens now on the left bank."

Russia seized the Kherson region soon after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine 14 months ago, and has continued since then to hold all of the region's territory east the Dnipro.

Military analysts say Ukraine is likely soon to launch a counteroffensive, and that one of the main goals could be breaking through a southern land corridor between Russia and the Russia-annexed Crimea region. Retaking all the Kherson region would be an important step towards achieving this goal.

The U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War said last week that Russian military bloggers had posted enough geolocated footage to confirm that Ukrainian troops have established a foothold on the eastern bank of the Dnipro.

Sobolevskiy gave no further details, saying a military operation requires "informational silence".

Meanwhile Russia has begun using its new T-14 Armata battle tanks to fire on Ukrainian positions "but they have not yet participated in direct assault operations," the RIA state news agency reported on Tuesday, quoting a source close the matter.

RIA said that the tanks have been fitted with extra protection on their flanks and crews have undergone "combat coordination" at training grounds in Ukraine.

The T-14 tank has an unmanned turret, with crew remotely controlling the armaments from "an isolated armoured capsule located in the front of the hull."

The tanks have a maximum speed on the highway of 80 kilometres (50 miles) per hour, RIA reported.

In January, British military intelligence reported that Russian forces in Ukraine were reluctant to accept the first tranche of the tanks due to their "poor condition."

It also said that any deployment of the T-14 would likely be "a high-risk decision" for Russia, and one taken primarily for propaganda purposes.

"Production is probably only in the low tens, while commanders are unlikely to trust the vehicle in combat," the British military said.

"Eleven years in development, the program has been dogged with delays, reduction in planned fleet size, and reports of manufacturing problems."

The Kremlin ordered production of 2,300 of the tanks - first unveiled in 2015 - by 2020, but this was later stretched to by 2025, according to Russian media reports.

The Interfax news agency reported in December, 2021, that the state conglomerate Rostec had started production of some 40 tanks, with an anticipated delivery after 2023.

Sudan Lab Seizure Poses Biohazard Risk During Lull in Battles

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - Fighting in Sudan eased and more foreigners and locals fled the capital Khartoum, where marauding combatants created what a U.N. agency said was a "high risk of biological hazard" by seizing a laboratory.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said one of the warring parties had taken control of a national health facility that stores measles and cholera pathogens for vaccinations, and ejected the technicians.

It gave few details and did not say which of the two sides - the army or the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - had captured the lab, which also contains a major blood bank.

An exodus of embassies and aid workers from Africa's third largest country has raised fears that civilians who remain will be in greater danger if an alternative to hostilities is not found before a shaky three-day truce ends on Thursday.

The clashes have paralysed hospitals and other essential services, and left many people stranded in their homes with dwindling supplies of food and water. The WHO has reported 14 attacks on health facilities and is relocating staff to safety.



Germany Arrest Syrian Suspected of Planning Islamist Attack

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German authorities have arrested a Syrian man on suspicion of planning to carry out an explosives attack motivated by Islamic extremism, officials said Tuesday.

Federal police said officers arrested the 28-year-old man early Tuesday in the northern city of Hamburg based on a court-issued warrant for suspected terrorism financing offenses. Investigators say the man is suspected of trying to obtain substances online that would have allowed him to manufacture an explosive belt "in order to carry out an attack against civilian targets."

Police say the man was encouraged and supported in his action by his 24-year-old brother, who lives in the southern town of Kempten. German news agency DPA reported that the younger man was also detained.

The brothers, whose names weren't immediately released, were described by federal police as being motivated by "radical Islamist and jihadist" views.

Authorities said they had no information indicating a concrete target for the planned attack. Police searched properties in Hamburg and Kempten, seizing large amounts of evidence including chemical substances, officials said. Some 250 officers were involved in the operation.

Germany's top security official thanked police, saying their actions "have prevented possible Islamist attack plans."

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said the case showed that the danger of Islamic extremism remained high and pledged that German security agencies would continue to take all information about such threats seriously.

"Germany remains a direct target of Islamist terrorist organizations," she said. "Islamist-motivated lone perpetrators are another significant threat."

In a separate case, authorities in western Germany said Tuesday that they are investigating a possible extremist motive in an attack at a gym in Duisburg last week. A 26-year-old Syrian was arrested days after the attack, in which four men were seriously wounded and one of them remains in life-threatening condition.

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Duesseldorf prosecutors said a review of the suspect's cellphone indicated that "there may have been an Islamist motive" behind the attack, but declined to elaborate. The man is currently being held on suspicion of attempted murder and other offenses.



Biden Makes 2024 Presidential Run Official

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - President Joe Biden launched his re-election bid with a promise to protect American liberties from "extremists" linked to former President Donald Trump, who he beat in 2020 and might face again in 2024.

Biden made his announcement in a slickly produced video released by his new campaign team that opens with imagery from the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by Trump's supporters.

"When I ran for president four years ago, I said we're in a battle for the soul of America, and we still are," Biden said. "This is not a time to be complacent. That's why I'm running for re-election."

"Let's finish this job. I know we can," he said.

He described Republican platforms as threats to American freedoms, vowed to fight efforts to limit women's healthcare, cut Social Security and ban books, and blasted "MAGA extremists."

MAGA is the acronym for the "Make America Great Again" slogan of Trump, who is the early frontrunner in the Republican primary race. If he wins, he will face off against Biden again in the November 2024 election.

Biden, 80, must overcome Americans' concerns about his age in order to win re-election, with 44% of Democrats saying he is too old to run, a Reuters/Ipsos poll completed on Monday found.

Trump, 76, also faces concerns about his age with 35% of Republicans saying he is too old.

The poll showed that a majority of registered voters don't want either Biden or Trump to run again.

While Biden's approval rating is relatively low, his aides are confident he can beat Trump again. The Reuters/Ipsos poll showed him with a lead of 43% to 38% over his Republican rival among registered voters.

In his campaign video, Biden squarely targeted Trump and his allies.

"Around the country, MAGA extremists are lining up to take on those bedrock freedoms, cutting Social Security that you paid for your entire life, while cutting taxes for the very wealthy, dictating what healthcare decisions women can make, banning books, and tell people who they can love, all while making it more difficult for you to be able to vote," Biden said.



Why the 155 mm Round Is So Critical To the War in Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The 155 mm howitzer round is one of the most requested artillery munitions of the war in Ukraine. Already the U.S. has shipped more than 1.5 million rounds to Ukraine, but Kyiv is still seeking more.

A look at why this particular munition is so commonly used, and why it's been so critical to the war in Ukraine.

WHAT IS THE 155 MM?

Essentially, the 155 mm round is a very big bullet, made up of four parts: the detonating fuse, projectile, propellant and primer.

Each round is about 2 feet (60 centimeters) long, weighs about 100 pounds (45 kilograms), and is 155 mm, or 6.1 inches, in diameter. They are used in howitzer systems, which are towed large guns that are identified by the range of the angle of fire that their barrels can be set to.

The 155 mm shells can be configured in many ways: They can be packed with highly explosive material, use precision guided systems, pierce armor or produce high fragmentation. Past variants have included smoke rounds to obscure troop movement and illumination rounds to expose an enemy's position.

"The 155 mm round and the similar Soviet-era 152 mm rounds are so popular because they provide a good balance between range and warhead size," said Ryan Brobst, a research analyst at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. "If you have too small a shell, it won't do enough damage and go as far. If you have a larger shell, you can't necessarily fire it as far. This is the most common middle ground, and that's why it's so widely used."

155 MM HISTORY

The French first developed the 155 mm round to respond to World War I's extensive trench warfare, and early versions included gas shells, Keri Pleasant, historian for the Army's Joint Munitions Command, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

As World War I continued, the 155 mm gun became the most common artillery piece used by the Allies, Pleasant said, and the U.S. Army later adopted it as its standard field heavy artillery piece.

The U.S. military fielded its own version, the M1, for World War II. After the war, the new NATO alliance adopted the 155 mm as its artillery standard.

By the Korean War, the round had been modified again, with a cluster munition variant. "The round contained 88 submunitions, which were dispersed over a wide area to destroy vehicles, equipment, and personnel," Pleasant said.

ITS USE IN UKRAINE

Howitzer fires can strike targets up to 15 to 20 miles (24 to 32 kilometers) away, depending on what type of round and firing system is used, which makes them highly valued by ground forces to take out enemy targets from a protected distance.

"Adversaries don't have much warning of it coming. And it's harder to hide from incoming rounds that are arcing in from the top, which makes it highly lethal," Brobst said.

In Ukraine, 155 mm rounds are being fired at a rate of 6,000 to 8,000 a day, said Ukrainian parliamentary member Oleksandra Ustinova, who serves on Ukraine's wartime oversight committee. They are eclipsed by the estimated 40,000 Russian variant howitzer rounds fired at them, she told reporters at a recent Washington event sponsored by the German Marshall Fund.



The Pitfalls of Alzheimer's Genetic Testing

CHICAGO (Dispatches) - Wendy Nelson watched her mother slowly die of Alzheimer's disease, unable to move or swallow at the end. "All her pleasures of life were gone," Nelson said.

Grief-stricken, terrified of facing the same death, Nelson ordered 23andMe DNA test kits for Christmas 2020 for herself and three adult daughters.

A Boston-based biotech executive who is now 52, Nelson hoped the kits would provide reassurance. They delivered the worst possible result. Nelson has two copies of the APOE4 gene variant that increases the risk of Alzheimer's, which means her risk of developing the disease is eight to 12 times higher than people with the most common version of APOE.

"It totally backfired," she said.

Millions of Americans are expected to test for Alzheimer's in the coming years - some like Nelson, with at-home test kits, others at labs, as new drugs for people with early Alzheimer's from partners Eisai Co Ltd (4523.T) and Biogen Inc and Eli Lilly and Co usher in sweeping change in approaches to treatment of the disease.

Testing for the APOE4 gene variant among Americans being treated for Alzheimer's has more than doubled from a year ago, an exclusive analysis of medical records for Reuters by health data firm Truveta found. The increase was driven by the new treatments that promise to slow the progression of the disease, but also carry risks, especially for people like Nelson carrying two copies of APOE4.

Yet few support services are available to help people deal with the implications of APOE4 testing, according to interviews with more than a dozen neurologists and genetic counselors. Alzheimer's patients and caregivers face a shortage of genetic counselors to explain the tests and help them navigate the psychological, medical, financial and legal consequences.

Eisai and Biogen's Leqembi, which arrived on the market in January, costs \$26,500 a year and is not covered by Medicare outside of clinical trials. Medicare has said it will expand coverage if the drug is granted full U.S. approval, expected this summer.

"When you learn that information, you're potentially learning information about your siblings, about your children," said Emily Largent, a bioethicist and health policy expert at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine.

"People describe feeling existential dread."

As a scientist, Nelson understood intellectually what her APOE4 results meant, but they created emotional havoc for her family.

She had inherited one copy of APOE4 from her mother and the other from her father, who was showing no symptoms of Alzheimer's at the time.

When her father's memory began to fail a year later, one of her two sisters doubted it could be Alzheimer's, Nelson said. Nelson knew he had to have the disease, because of her genetic test results.

The tests also showed that each of Nelson's three adult daughters had one copy of APOE4, which triples or quadruples the risk of developing the disease - confronting them with their own Alzheimer's risks along with their mother's.

Nelson's daughter, Lindsey, 22, and a fourth year nursing student at New York University, said she was traumatized when, even before testing, Nelson talked about exploring assisted suicide rather than suffer her mother's fate.



Manufacturers Hope for AI Revolution to Boost Factories



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Manufacturers eagerly anticipate the advancements in artificial intelligence to be applied in their factories, envisioning using robots to repair and maintain intricate machinery.

There has been an explosion of interest in using AI across many sectors since the launch last year of chatbot ChatGPT from U.S. startup OpenAI.

And at last week's Hanover Fair on industrial technology in Germany, the potential for artificial intelligence in the manufacturing sector was firmly in focus.

Via the tablet in his hands, a young employee of American IT services provider HPE chatted with an AI-equipped virtual assistant, asking it to operate a robot's arm.

To solve a technical problem, "factory workers no longer need to get a qualified expert on site: the artificial intelligence takes charge" of guiding the repairs, said Thomas Meier, a data analyst from HPE presenting the prototype.

The U.S. firm, which has some 60,000 employees, has been working for the past year with Aleph Alpha, a German startup with some 50 staff, seen as one of OpenAI's leading European rivals.

The innovation communicates with factory workers who can, for example, send a photo of a machine for the program to detect any problems or check that it is correctly installed.

Aleph Alpha's resources are modest compared to those available to OpenAI, which has received major financing from Microsoft.

But the German startup believes it has at least one major advantage - it will keep customer data in Europe.

Fast-Warming Europe Risks More Summer Droughts

PARIS (Dispatches) - A fierce drought melted glaciers during Europe's hottest recorded summer last year, a phenomenon that could repeat as the continent warms at nearly twice the global rate, the EU's climate observatory said.

Two-thirds of Europe's rivers fell below average levels and five cubic kilometers of ice disappeared from Alpine glaciers, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said in its yearly update.

With human-caused emissions heating the planet, Europe is warming around twice as quickly as the world average - 2.2 degrees Celsius over the past five years compared to the pre-industrial era.

In 2022 it saw its second-hottest year and its hottest summer since comparable records began in the 1950s, said Copernicus, which monitors numerous climate indicators via satellites plus land- and sea-based instruments.

The forecast for 2023 remains uncertain but "with higher concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the probability of more warm years continues to increase," said Samantha Burgess, deputy director of C3S.

With soils in southern Europe still "incredibly dry", impacts will be felt this year "unless we have significant spring rainfall," she added.

"Unfortunately, the impacts are probably already in place for growing season. So we're likely to see reduced crop production this year because of the dry winter and spring period."

Copernicus had earlier announced that the past eight years have been the hottest on record.

It found 2022 "another record-breaking year in terms of greenhouse gases concentration, temperature extremes, wildfire and precipitation, which have all had a notable impact on both ecosystem and community all over the continent," said C3S director Carlo Buontempo.

"We are really moving into uncharted territory."

The continent had less snow and rain than average in winter 2021-2022, followed by prolonged heatwaves in the summer which hit the agriculture, river transport and energy sectors.

River levels were the second-lowest on record with nearly two-thirds of Europe's rivers below their average level.

The heatwaves drove wildfires, with carbon emissions from such summer blazes the highest since 2017 across the EU.

"The lack of winter snow and the high summer temperatures resulted in a record loss of ice from glaciers in the Alps, equivalent to a loss of more than 5km³ of ice," the report said.

Southern Europe experienced a record number of days with "very strong heat stress" on the human body.

Copernicus said satellite measurements of major greenhouse gases in the atmosphere reached their highest level on record in 2022.

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, countries have pledged to slash their use of fossil fuels with the aim of reaching "net zero" emissions of these gases to limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5C.

Global temperatures in 2022 were 1.15C above the pre-industrial average, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

Copernicus meanwhile calculated that Europe in 2022 received its highest amount of surface solar radiation in 40 years - a boon for renewable electricity production.



Spain's Tourism Sector Revenue To Post Record in 2023



MADRID (Dispatches) - Despite high inflation, Spain's tourism industry is seen hitting record revenue in 2023 for the second year in a row, the Exceltur tourism association said.

It predicted tourism earnings will reach 172.2 billion euros (\$189 billion) after a "very good start of the year" and the "positive expectations" of the sector.

This would be an 8.3% increase over the record 159 billion euros registered in 2022, and a 9.4% increase over 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the tourism sector in Spain.

"This central scenario is based on the continuation of strong domestic demand and the consolidation of the recovery," in the European countries from which most foreign tourists come, the group said in a statement.

Spain's tourism industry should also benefit this year from an increase in visitors from further away such as Asia and North America as pandemic travel restrictions have been lifted, it added.

Spain, the world's second most popular tourist destination after France, welcomed 2022 some 71.6 million foreign visitors, mainly from Britain, France, and Germany.

While this was up from the 31.1 million who visited in 2021, it was still below the record 83.7 million foreign visitors who arrived in 2019 before the pandemic hit the sector.

Tourism accounts for some 12% of Spain's gross domestic output and the drop in arrivals hit the eurozone's fourth-largest economy hard.

Exceltur groups Spain's hotels, resorts, transport companies, car rentals, and entertainment businesses.

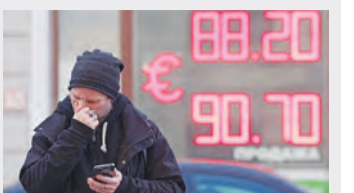
Russian Rouble Firms With Tax Revenue

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - The rouble firmed today, supported by the prospect of favorable tax payments this week, but restrained by lower oil prices and a general negative outlook as the Russian market looks ahead to Friday's central bank rate decision.

The rouble was 0.5 per cent stronger against the dollar at 81.33 and had gained 0.4 per cent to trade at 89.39 versus the euro. It had firmed 0.4 per cent against the yuan to 11.77.

The rouble is set to see support as this month's relatively high oil prices boost export revenue, although prices have dipped back towards \$80 per barrel in recent sessions from highs above \$87.

Weaker oil prices and talk of a near-total ban on exports to Russia by Group of Seven (G7) countries are among the factors creating a negative external backdrop on Monday, Otkritie Research analysts wrote in a note.



Constitutional Reform to Propel Further Development In Uzbekistan State And Society

BY: F. TAHERPOOR



TEHRAN – Ambassador of Republic of Uzbekistan to Tehran Bakhodir Abdullaev believes the upcoming April 30 referendum on changes of the Uzbekistan Constitution opens a move towards further development and improvement of welfare of the Uzbek people.

Speaking to IRAN NEWS, Abdullaev said at the present stage, Uzbekistan is steadily moving along the path of large-scale reforms aimed at further development of the country and improving the welfare of the people. One of the significant events in the history of the country will be the upcoming referendum on the Constitution on April 30 this year. A package of amendments, which should change the Basic Law by more than half, will be put to vote.

He further said "In the current version the Constitution has existed since 1992. The number of articles in the Basic Law is to be increased from the current 128 to 155, and the number of norms from 275 to 434, which will respectively change the content by 65%. Thus, the number and content of these changes and additions demonstrate the need to adopt a new version of the Constitution."

The Uzbek diplomat noted "The necessity of the Constitution reform was pointed out by President Mirziyoyev in his inaugural speech in November 2021, specifying that such a proposal came from the people of the country. In 2022, at a meeting with members of the Constitutional Commission, the President proposed adopting amendments to the Constitution through a referendum. In the preparation of the document, more than 220 thousand proposals were received from the citizens of the country, and every fourth proposal was taken into account in the draft of the new Constitution. The amendments to the Constitution are being made in the context of the advancement of large-scale reforms in the country. In February 2017 the President of Uzbekistan approved the Strategy of actions on five priority areas of the country's development in 2017-2021, which was successfully implemented in five stages, each of which provided for the approval of a separate annual state program for its implementation."

The five-year period of implementation of the Strategy of actions was marked by a new stage of development of our republic, he stated, adding "Within the framework of the Strategy of actions on five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021 for the past period about 300 laws, more than 4 thousand decisions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were adopted, aimed at radical reforming all spheres of life of the state and society. As a result of reforms in the country the political-legal, socio-economic and scientific-educational foundations necessary for the construction of the New Uzbekistan were created."

In 2022 the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 was adopted to identify priority areas of reforms aimed at further improving the well-being of people, transforming economic sectors, accelerating the development of entrepreneurship, unconditionally ensuring human rights and interests, and forming an active civil society. The implementation of measures under this Strategy will contribute to the further development of the state and society, Abdullaev reiterated.

In this regard, the updated Constitution unifies the people of Uzbekistan around the idea of building a developed state - New Uzbekistan, which takes into account the interests of all segments of the population. The broad public, political parties, public organizations, representatives of expert and scientific circles, and intellectuals took an active part in the drafting process, the Uzbek diplomat mentioned.

Abdullaev then highlighted a number of important factors in the new edition of the Constitution, which contribute to the further development of the state and society and mark a historic stage in the development of New Uzbekistan:

First, as a solid legal basis and a reliable guarantee of the long-term development of the state and society, it is indicated that Uzbekistan is a "sovereign, democratic, legal and social state", and these principles cannot be changed. The new version emphasizes that "the Republic of Uzbekistan pursues a peace-loving foreign policy aimed at the full development of bilateral and multilateral relations with states and international organizations," which will further enhance Uzbekistan's image in the international arena.

Secondly, the draft law includes issues of improving the system of state power and administration, the separation of representative and executive local authorities. The powers of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate are considerably expanded, duplication in the work of the two chambers is eliminated, and their area of responsibility is clearly defined. There are also plans to give mahallas (neighborhood self-governed institutions) independent decision-making powers to solve everyday problems of the population and to create the organizational and financial capabilities to do so. All this will serve to increase transparency and effectiveness of decision-making by the state power.

Third, strong social protection is envisaged, in particular, the state will assume a number of new obligations to reduce poverty, ensure employment, and protect against unemployment. Overall, the norms containing the state's social obligations are tripled.

Fourth, changes are associated with the consolidation at the constitutional level of such issues as the organization of high-quality and qualified medical care, the development of education, the guarantee of the inviolability of private property, and the status of civil society institutions. Comprehensive environmental protection measures are envisaged as a mandatory condition for improving the quality of life and health of the population.

Fifth, in the field of competitiveness of the economy and private entrepreneurship a norm is being established according to which the state guarantees the protection of property rights and related rights, and the restriction of property rights shall be carried out only on the basis of a court decision. Free movement of goods, services, labor and financial resources is guaranteed in Uzbekistan.

Sixth, the freedom of the media, their right to seek, receive, use and disseminate information is guaranteed. For the first time the Basic Law includes a separate chapter on civil society institutions and guarantees of their activity, which will serve as a solid basis for strengthening the atmosphere of openness, transparency and legality in society, the dialogue between the state and society, the establishment of a strong public control.

In general, all these constitutional norms correspond to the priorities of the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan. So the upcoming referendum on the amendments to the Constitution of Uzbekistan will contribute to the continuation of large-scale reforms in the country, which create a solid foundation for the development of the state and society for the benefit of the present and future generations of Uzbekistan citizens, Abdullaev concluded.

Turkey Yearend Inflation Seen at 46%

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Turkish inflation will dip to 46.4% by end-2023, a Reuters poll showed on Monday, while the policy rate is seen rising to 24% next quarter after upcoming

elections that pose the greatest challenge to President Tayyip Erdogan's 20-year rule.

Turkey's consumer price index surged in the wake of a currency crisis sparked by an unorthodox easing cycle in late 2021. Interest rate cuts were part of Erdogan's policy of prioritizing growth, investment and low borrowing costs. The inflation surge, to above 85% last year, hit Erdogan's popularity and polls show him trailing his main challenger. Economists expect a move towards more orthodox policies after the May 14 election.

All 21 economists in the poll expect the central bank (CBRT) to keep its benchmark rate steady at 8.5% this week, its last monetary policy committee meeting before the vote.

"We expect the CBRT to stay on hold at 8.5%," JP Morgan said in a note, adding that policy uncertainty for future meetings remained high.

After this week's meeting, the monetary policy committee will next convene on May 25. However the outcome of the presidential election may not become clear until after a potential second round vote on May 28.

Turkey's policy rate was seen rising to 24.0% in the third quarter, medians showed. It was seen rising to 25.0% in the fourth quarter before falling to 16.5% by end-2024.

Despite expected interest rate hikes, inflation was seen remaining elevated through the year and falling only to 46.4% at end-2023, the poll found, compared to 50.5% in March. It was seen declining to 28.8% by end-2024 and 19.3% by end-2025.

While slashing its policy rate from 19% at the end of 2021, the central bank has said price stability will be achieved when Turkey flips its chronic current account deficit to a surplus.

Ankara says this will be achieved through its import-boosting economic plan. But the war in Ukraine and a decline in foreign demand dashed those hopes in 2022.

The current account deficit in 2023 is expected to be 4.4% of Turkey's gross domestic product (GDP), the median showed, compared to a government forecast of 2.5%.

The deficit was seen at 3.4% in 2024 and 2.5% in 2025, compared to government predictions published in September of 1.4% and 0.9%, respectively.

GDP growth was seen at 2.6% this year, according to the median estimate of 34 economists. The government had forecast growth of 5% before massive earthquakes in February that are expected shave up to 2 percentage points off economic growth. The median growth forecast stood at 3.0% for 2024 and 3.8% for 2025 in the poll, compared to the government's 5.5% forecast for both years.



German Economy Likely Grows in Q1

FRANKFURT (Dispatches) - The German economy is likely to have expanded in the last quarter on a rebound in industrial production, the Bundesbank said in a monthly report on Monday, revising its previous prediction of a small contraction.

The euro zone's biggest economy has struggled for much of the past year as sky-high energy prices weighed on its vast industrial sector, but a modest rebound has been under way since gas prices fell back, boosting hopes that a recession can be avoided.

"The German economy did better in the first quarter of 2023 than expected a month ago and activity is likely to have picked up again somewhat," the Bundesbank said. "Industry recovered more strongly than expected."

The Bundesbank's mild optimism is consistent with a recent string of survey data, which point to a mild recovery after a 0.4% contraction in the fourth quarter, even if growth could remain below trend for some time.

Falling gas prices supported energy intensive industries while supply bottlenecks continued to ease, car demand picked up and construction also got a boost, even if that was partly due to mild weather.

Industrial orders also surged recently, which may suggest that demand for manufactured goods has passed its cyclical bottom, the central bank said.

High employment should also keep supporting consumption, and unemployment is likely to fall slightly in the coming month, the bank added. But the outlook is still mixed as inflation continues to weigh on consumption and the reversal in underlying price pressures has yet to work its way through to consumers.

China Guides Banks to Further Cut Deposit Rates

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China nudged banks this month to cut deposit interest rates further, seven people with knowledge of the matter said, in the latest effort to channel the country's vast savings pool into spending and more productive investments.

Members of China's "interest rate self-regulatory mechanism," mostly banks, met this month and were urged to reduce deposit rates, according to two attendees and two other bank sources who were closely briefed on the meeting.

China's central bank does not set bank rates directly but guides them through the market-based mechanism, which comprises banks big and small. The guidance comes as banks and the economy groan under the weight of huge inflows of savings and deposits.

Activity in the world's second-largest economy has gained momentum since the lifting of stringent zero-COVID policy in December, but investors remain cautious as businesses grapple with debt risks, structural woes and a slowing global economy.

"The message is that banks need to collectively bring down deposit rates," one person with knowledge of the directive said. Money is being injected into the banking system, but "what's the point if people save every cent they get, instead of spending, or investing?" he said.

One of China's "big four" state lenders plans to cut some personal and corporate rates next week, another person briefed on the plans told Reuters. Products to be affected include "call deposits" and "agreement deposits".

Other people familiar with the meeting said the mechanism asked for a roughly 10-basis-point cut to weighted average term deposit rates in the quarter from a year earlier, and some banks were urged to dial back high-yield deposit products.

All agreed to speak on condition of anonymity as they are not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The People's Bank of China did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment.

Several small and mid-sized Chinese lenders lowered their deposit interest rates this month, after larger rivals did so last year. The latest guidance will likely trigger a fresh round of cuts.

While the benchmark one-year loan prime rate (LPR) has been slashed by 60 basis points since 2019 to 3.65%, deposit rates have lagged behind as banks compete for accounts. The one-year certificates of deposit rate has stayed unchanged around 2.26% during the period, according to data from Rong360 Digital Technology Institute.

That's drawn vast flows to the banking system at a time when Beijing is trying to encourage spending, and it has squeezed bank margins while credit demand remains subdued.

Household savings surged 9.9 trillion yuan for the first quarter, after record growth of 17.8 trillion yuan last year. Net interest margins, a key measure of banks' profitability, hit a record low of just 1.91% during the fourth quarter of 2022. Bankers said they were also under pressure to lower yields and cut back on structured deposits, while analysts said oversight on deposits had become tougher under new rules published earlier this month.

"The market adjustment mechanism of deposit rates has turned 'rigid' from 'soft'," Golden Credit Rating International Co said in a report.

With margins at record lows, "banks have no choice but to appropriately lower deposit rates as the government continues to push financing costs steadily lower to aid the real economy."

Structured deposits, which combine traditional deposits with higher-yielding investments to pay a better rate - albeit with withdrawal restrictions - grew 558.5 billion yuan, or 12% in the first two months of this year to 5.12 trillion yuan.

Brazil Woos Skeptical Foreign Investors With New Fiscal Plan



LONDON (Dispatches) - Brazil's business and political leaders are pressing the case in Europe for investment in the Latin American oil producer as they seek to quell concerns over leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's high-priced spending wishlist.

Rebounding commodity prices and a hawkish, independent central bank made Brazil an emerging market investor darling last year. But its economy, flattened like other emerging market oil producers by the COVID-19 pandemic, has only limped out of recession. The International Monetary Fund predicts tepid 0.9% economic growth this year.

At the Lide Brazil investment conference in London on Friday, investors and political leaders said the fiscal framework that President Lula sent to congress last week quelled concerns that his ambitious social spending goals would balloon the deficit, and boosted its appeal to investors.

"This is a positive mood," Joel Virgen Rojano director of Latin America strategy at TD Securities told Reuters. "There are clear anchors, clear rules."

Lula himself also began a five-day tour in Lisbon to woo wary investors, vowing to restore stability and promoting opportunities in renewable energy and other sectors.

His long-awaited fiscal framework would allow expenses to grow up to 70% of the increase observed in recurring revenues, aiming to keep public debt sustainable.

Senate President Rodrigo Pacheco told the conference, the Lide group's first in-person international event since the pandemic, that legislators would move swiftly to approve the bill, which also seeks to curb a tendency for increased spending fuelled by uncertain extraordinary gains.

"We will be very quick to approve the essence of the bill, even if we will have a few changes," Pacheco said, adding lawmakers needed to quickly pivot to tax reforms that are core to the government's revenue targets.

Domestic Messengers Observe Privacy

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Information and Communication Technology said the domestic messengers would not have access to people's private information.

On the sidelines of the cabinet session on Wednesday, April 26, Issa Zarepour told exporters that the ministry will supervise the performance of the Iranian messengers.

Zarepour pointed to the interconnection of the domestic messengers as one of the new plans of the ministry, adding: "In the first phase, the preparations are made for sending texts, files, and stickers; this option has already been created in the latest versions of Gap, iGap, Bale, and Eitaa messengers." The interconnection of conversation forums between the messengers is on the agenda, he added.



India to Surpass China as World's Most Populous Country in April

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - India's population is expected to match China's by the end of April and then to surpass it as the world's most populous country, the United Nations said on Monday.

The announcement by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) comes days after the UN Population Fund said last week India would have 2.9 million more people than China by the middle of 2023.

India's population is expected to reach 1,425,775,850 by the end of this month, DESA said, based on the latest UN estimates and projections of the global population.

"China will soon cede its long-held status as the world's most populous country," it said, adding that "due to the uncertainty associated with estimating and projecting populations, the specific date on which India is expected to surpass China in population size is approximate and subject to revision."

Last year, some population experts had used UN data to project India's population would touch 1,425,775,850 on April 14, 2023.

But UN population officials had said it was not possible to pinpoint a date because of uncertainty relating to data from India and China, with India's last census held in 2011 and the next, which had been due in 2021, being delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"China's population reached its peak size of 1.426 billion in 2022 and has started to fall. Projections indicate that the size of the Chinese population could drop below 1 billion before the end of the century," DESA said.

"By contrast, India's population is expected to continue growing for several decades."

Between 2023 and 2050, the number of people aged 65 or over was expected to nearly double in China and to more than double in India, DESA said.



"Nevertheless, as a proportion of the total population, the growth of the older population in India will be much slower than in China," it added.

While there was no official reaction from India to the UNFPA report last week, China said dividends from population growth did not only depend on quantity but also on quality and that China's talent dividend was booming.

Indian analysts and economists said there was no cause for alarm in becoming the world's most populous country as India's growth in that regard has been slowing and its majority-young population could be a boon if it creates more opportunities for education and employment.

Writer, Adviser, Poet, Bot: How ChatGPT Could Transform Politics



PARIS (Dispatches) - The AI bot ChatGPT has passed exams, written poetry, and deployed in newsrooms, and now politicians are seeking it out -- but experts are warning against rapid uptake of a tool also famous for fabricating "facts".

The chatbot, released last November by US firm OpenAI, has quickly moved centre stage in politics -- particularly as a way of scoring points.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida recently took a direct hit from the bot when he answered some innocuous questions about healthcare reform from an opposition MP.

Unbeknownst to the PM, his adversary had generated the questions with ChatGPT. He also generated answers that he claimed were "more sincere" than Kishida's.

The PM hit back that his own answers had been "more specific".

French trade union boss Sophie Binet was on-trend when she drily assessed a recent speech by President Emmanuel Macron as one that "could have been done by ChatGPT".

But the bot has also been used to write speeches and even help draft laws.

"It's useful to think of ChatGPT and generative AI in general as a cliché generator," David Karpf of George Washington University in the US said during a recent online panel.

"Most of what we do in politics is also cliché generation." Nowhere has the enthusiasm for grandstanding with ChatGPT been keener than in the United States.

Last month, Congresswoman Nancy Mace gave a five-minute speech at a Senate committee enumerating potential uses and harms of AI -- before delivering the punchline that "every single word" had been generated by ChatGPT.

Local US politician Bary Finegold had already gone further though, pronouncing in January that his team had used ChatGPT to draft a bill for the Massachusetts Senate.

The bot reportedly introduced original ideas to the bill, which is intended to rein in the power of chatbots and AI.

Anne Meuwese from Leiden University in the Netherlands wrote in a column for Dutch law journal *RegelMaat* last week that she had carried out a similar experiment with ChatGPT and also found that the bot introduced original ideas.

But while ChatGPT was to some extent capable of generating legal texts, she wrote that lawmakers should not fall over each other to use the tool.

"Not only is much still unclear about important issues such as environmental impact, bias and the ethics at OpenAI... the added value also seems limited for now," she wrote.

The added value might be more obvious lower down the political food chain, though, where staffers on the campaign trail face a treadmill of repetitive tasks.

Karpf suggested AI could be useful for generating emails asking for donations -- necessary messages that were not intended to be masterpieces.

Tears, Protests 10 Years Since Bangladesh Factory Tragedy

SAVAR (Dispatches) - Hundreds of workers in Bangladesh shouted slogans for justice and survivors wept at the ruins of a factory that made clothes for Western shoppers and collapsed 10 years ago killing more than 1,130 people.

The Rana Plaza tragedy on April 24, 2013 was one of the world's worst industrial disasters, highlighting the global fashion industry's reliance on factories in developing countries where working conditions are often poor.

Early on Monday morning, survivors including some who lost limbs or were disabled placed wreaths at a memorial at the site of the former nine-storey Rana Plaza complex that made products for brands like Mango and Primark.

"Ten years have passed, but what happened to the killers?" the workers shouted as they slowly walked to the memorial in the industrial town of Savar outside the capital Dhaka.

"It is a scandal that 10 years have passed and yet the garment factory owners and the factory building owner have not been punished for the murders of 1,138 workers," Nilofa, a 32-year-old survivor, told AFP, as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I barely got anything. My leg was crushed and I can't work in factories. My husband left me five years ago as he does not want to bear my medical expenses," she said.

Shila Akhter, 42, showed the brace she has to wear permanently after the disaster ruptured her spinal cord.

"We want full compensation and lifelong medical treatment as we've lost the ability to work," she said.

"The government should know what we have been going through. Some survivors are forced to beg on the streets."

Union leaders acknowledged improvements in fire and factory safety across the world's second-largest apparel exporter after China, with fewer deadly accidents in recent years.

But they slammed the government for the slow pace of legal proceedings, including against Sohel Rana, the Rana Plaza owner who is one of 38 people indicted for murder over the tragedy.

He allegedly forced employees to work despite a crack appearing in the building a day before the collapse. His trial resumed last year but prosecutors say a verdict may take years.

"Fewer than 10 percent of the witnesses have been cross-examined," prosecutor Bimal Samadder told AFP.

Following the disaster, two watchdogs were set up to improve standards. Wages of the country's four million workers -- mostly women -- were also tripled.

Bangladesh garment factory owners, a powerful group as the sector accounts for around 84 percent of the country's exports, say they have invested some \$2 billion to make their plants safe.

Laura Bourgeois at advocacy organisation Sherpa warned however of factory managers' potential to influence worker interviews during safety inspections and of "rigged" factory audits.

Tehran UNSC Silence...

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"These atrocious crimes are a clear example of the Israel regime's illegal and apartheid actions, which exacerbate the suffering of Palestinian people and erode the foundations for the establishment of just and sustainable peace in the region," he said.

The Iranian envoy reaffirmed that the Islamic Republic remains steadfast in its belief that the Palestinian issue can only be resolved through cessation of the Israeli occupation and recognition of the inalienable rights of self-determination of Palestinians.

"This requires the full restoration and protection of these rights, leading to the establishment of Palestinian sovereignty over entire Palestine. However, such a resolution cannot be achieved if the Security Council fails to act," he said.

The Iranian diplomat then called on the Security

Council to fulfill its responsibility, take decisive actions to put an end to Israeli occupation and ensure the protection of Palestinians' rights as mere sympathy is no longer sufficient.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Iravani roundly dismissed the allegations made by Israel's envoy to the UN, Gilad Erdan, against Tehran, stressing that he "abused this chamber and resorted to lies and fabrications to make unfounded claims."

"It's not surprising or unexpected, given that deception and lies have long been part of this regime's toolbox."

"The purpose is clear: to divert attention away from the urgent matter on today's meeting agenda item; the atrocious crimes committed by this apartheid regime against the Palestinian people. Therefore, such false and unfounded claims do not merit a response," he stated.

Foreign Military...

FROM PAGE 1

Turning to the issue of the bilateral ties, Amirabdollahian also appreciated Muscat's policy of providing support for strengthening and reinforcement of relations with Tehran, saying upcoming visits by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to the Omani capital and the Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Tehran would serve as a turning point in the bilateral relations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian official appreciated Muscat and Baghdad's plans for hosting talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which agreed to mend their ties under China's auspices last month.

He stressed the importance of regional cooperation, and expressed delight over the favorable and hopeful course that the intra-regional relations had assumed thanks to the Iranian administration's policy of good-neighborliness.

Amirabdollahian finally expressed appreciation concerning the "very important step" that had been taken towards realization of peace in Yemen, especially simultaneous travel to the Yemeni capital of Sana'a by respective Omani and Saudi delegations, expressing hope that the negotiations that had taken place would pave the way for peace.

De-Dollarization...

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Out of the total worth of Indian exports to Bangladesh, \$2 billion worth of the exports are set to be traded in INR, and the rest would be paid in U.S. dollars. Meanwhile, exports from Bangladesh to India will be fully traded in rupee and taka, according to Indian media.



Such reports disappoint the U.S. administration and many analysts believe that de-dollarization is getting popular in the world and it will harm the U.S. economy and its global reputation.

Even the secretary of the US Treasury, Janet Yellen, has recently admitted that Washington's imposition of unilateral sanctions on countries around the world could weaken the dominance of the dollar.

"There is a risk, when we use financial sanctions that are linked to the role of the dollar, that, over time, it could undermine the hegemony of the dollar", Yellen said in an April 16 interview with CNN.

She also noted that Washington's use of economic warfare "does create a desire on the part of China, of Russia, of Iran to find an alternative" to the dollar.

Venezuela is another country which is trying to ditch dollar in its trade with other countries because the country has suffered the most because of its dependence on dollar and pressure of sanctions.

Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez recently lashed out at the United States for imposing crippling sanctions on her country, saying Caracas has lost \$232 billion since 2015 when the administration of then US President Barack Obama slapped sanctions against the Latin American nation.

"You could see the impact [of sanctions on the country] when the oil production was falling. Since 2015, the losses have amounted to \$232 billion. It is easy to say, but the losses of \$232 billion in the main revenue source meant back then 99 percent of the revenue in foreign currency," Rodriguez said.

She further noted that the US has imposed over 20,000 sanctions against 35 countries, adding that Washington has been "waging economic or military warfare against the entire world."

Rodriguez went on to say that the West has introduced 929 unilateral sanctions against Venezuela alone.

But recent move in the world for switching to other currencies will disarm the U.S. in imposing sanctions on other nations or threatening them and it seems dollar really is declining and in the near future the dollar will turn to a normal currency and it will be a big threat for the U.S. economy and its international power and influence.

Awakening of nations is something that world arrogance does not like and the more people in the world awaken, the less the world hegemony will be able to dictate its demands on them.

So on Monday India and Bangladesh announced trade in their national currencies and tomorrow more countries may join the wagon for ditching dollar in their trades and it will help the formation of new order in the global economy and even political scene and the U.S. will be unable any more to impose itself on other nations, something that Americans have for years been busy with it.

Iran Obtains...

FROM PAGE 1

The seekers, he said, enable the missiles to select their targets in the diving phase and their operators to hit desired moving targets.

The general also said that in the ground combat field, Iranian forces have managed to make their ammunition smart and reach the capability of "one bullet, one target." He further pointed out that a missile that has been fired can be commanded to go around its target and attack it from behind.

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient.

Iranian officials have made clear that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never open for negotiations.

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PGA Tour Merges Canadian And Latin Circuits

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - The PGA Tour Latinoamerica and PGA Tour Canada will merge into a single circuit that will begin play in early 2024, the PGA Tour said as it offers a new pathway for golfers to move up the ranks.

The newly-branded PGA Tour Americas will stage 16 events across Latin America, Canada and the United States from February through September with 15 cards up for grabs on the developmental Korn Ferry Tour.

Cerny Surprises Tour of Romandie Prologue Hopefuls

LE BOUVERET (Dispatches) - Josef Cerny of the Soudal-Quick Step team was a surprise winner of the short, flat prologue of the Tour of Romandie raced on the shores of Lake Lemman.

World champion Tobias Foss of Norway was second and Remi Cavagna third in the five-stage race that has two hilly stages, one mountainous and one long individual time-trial remaining.

Surrounded by the stunning snowcapped Alps which await the peloton on Thursday's Queen stage, Cerny completed the 6.8km course in 7min 25sec.

IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

THURSDAY APRIL 27, 2023

Heat Leave Bucks On Brink of Elimination From Playoffs

MIAMI (Dispatches) - Jimmy Butler produced a scintillating 56-point performance as the Miami Heat scored a stunning come-from-behind victory to leave the top-seeded Milwaukee Bucks on the brink of elimination from the NBA playoffs.

In an electrifying battle at Miami's Kaseya Centre, Butler all but single-handedly led Miami to a 119-114 win that leaves the Bucks 3-1 down in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference first-round series.

Butler's points haul was the joint fourth-highest individual scoring performance in an NBA playoff game ever. Only Michael Jordan (63 points), Elgin Baylor (61) and Donovan Mitchell (57) have scored more in a postseason game.

Milwaukee, who welcomed Giannis Antetokounmpo back into their lineup after a two-game injury absence, had looked to be cruising towards victory after leading from the opening seconds and keeping Miami at arm's length throughout.

Milwaukee led by 14 points early in the fourth quarter and seemed to be poised to square the series at two games apiece after a ruthless shooting performance from Brook Lopez with Antetokounmpo providing scoring support.

But Butler led an astonishing late 13-0 run to transform the contest and with the crowd roaring him on, scored a jaw-dropping 21 points in the fourth quarter to leave the Bucks shellshocked in defeat.

"For my team to get this (win), in this way, in this atmosphere, in this city, is huge," an exhausted Butler said.

Butler is now relishing the chance of possibly eliminating the Bucks from the postseason in Milwaukee in game five tomorrow.

"To play basketball in Milwaukee, in front of their crowd, to be together, on the road — that's where championships are won. And we've got a shot," Butler said.

Miami coach Erik Spoelstra saluted Butler's basketball intelligence.



"He's one of the most intelligent basketball players in this association," said Spoelstra. "You can't do what he does on both ends of the court just by running around and trying to figure things out."

"He understands what we're trying to do and he understands what they're trying to do — and they're a very good team."

Butler's tally came from 19-of-28 shooting with three three-pointers.

Butler said his solo masterpiece was the result of a "complete team effort."

"I know everybody sees the 56 points, but if my team-mates aren't looking to get me the ball, or setting great screens, where I can get to my right or my left or the free throw line, this game's a lot different," Butler said.

"A lot of shots went in tonight. But my team-mates kept feeding me the ball and telling me to attack. When you've got team-mates like that, good things happen."

Crucially, Butler's haul included 22 points in the first quarter, a burst of scoring that helped Miami stay just in touch.

No other Miami player broke 20 points, with Bam Adebayo the next highest Miami scorer with 15 points. Only two other Miami players cracked double figures.

Milwaukee were left stunned at how victory had eluded them.

Lopez finished with 36 points and 11 rebounds while Antetokounmpo made a triple double on his return with 26 points, 10 rebounds and 13 assists.

"We had our opportunities in the fourth quarter but we didn't make enough plays at either end, and they did," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said.

Dembele Ready to Return for Barca on Saturday

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez confirmed winger Ousmane Dembele will return from injury on Saturday against Real Betis in La Liga.

The French forward, a key player for the league leaders this season, has been out since January with a thigh injury.

Dembele recently returned to training but was not included in the squad to face Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday at Vallecas, while Danish defender Andreas Christensen also missed out. "On Saturday he's back, don't worry, he's in perfect condition, Andreas will be back on Saturday too," Xavi told a news conference.

Barcelona have been badly hit by injuries in 2023 with midfielders Pedri and Frenkie de Jong out too, the pair making their return in the 1-0 win over Atletico on Sunday.

Barcelona kept their 23rd clean sheet of the season in the victory, which left them 11 points clear at the top of the table with eight games remaining.

Goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen made some impressive saves and Xavi sang the German's praises. "He's a perfectionist, I think that he's worked hard," said Xavi.

"He knew that he had to improve and he has done, this year he's at an extraordinary level. I think he's the best goalkeeper in the world, and more so for the way he fits our game."



Barcelona Raise €1.45b For Camp Nou Rebuild

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona said yesterday they had secured €1.45 billion in funding for a redevelopment plan and would start the renovation of the Camp Nou stadium on June 1.

The club said in a statement that the money had come from deals with 20 investors who would receive repayment over periods of between five and 24 years. Barcelona said they would start paying back the loans when the work was completed.

In addition to the football stadium the plan, called 'Espai Barca', includes spending on other club facilities. It includes €420 million earmarked for the Palau Blaugrana, home of the club's basketball and handball teams, and €20 million for the Johan Cruyff stadium where the men's reserve and women's football teams play.

The club said they expected the work on the Camp Nou to be completed by 2026. The men's first team will play at the Olympic stadium on Montjuic before returning in the 2024-25 season to a Camp Nou not yet at full capacity.

Barcelona are emulating their main Spanish rivals Real Madrid who began the latest renovation of their Bernabeu Stadium in 2019.

The club is emerging from a financial hole which led to losses of €481 million in 2020/21 which led to the departure of the club's all-time leading scorer Lionel Messi.

Last summer the club raised around €750 million by selling 25 per cent of their La Liga television rights for the next 25 years and 49 per cent of its Barca Studios.

James, Mount Ruled Out for The Remainder of the Season

LONDON (Dispatches) - Chelsea defender Reece James and midfielder Mason Mount will miss the rest of the season due to injuries, interim manager Frank Lampard said.

James has been ruled out with a hamstring injury while Mount has been sidelined with an abdominal problem, although he has an outside chance of returning for the last game of the season.

Tottenham Sack Interim Coach Stellini



LONDON (Dispatches) - Tottenham sacked interim manager Cristian Stellini after chairman Daniel Levy branded Sunday's 6-1 defeat at Newcastle "wholly unacceptable".

Stellini, who was only put in charge last month after his former boss Antonio Conte left the club, will be replaced by Ryan Mason with immediate effect.

Conte's long-term assistant won only one of his four games in charge, dealing what appears a fatal blow to Spurs' chances of Champions League football next season.

Tottenham still sit fifth in the Premier League but are six points adrift of the top four and have played at least one game more than the sides directly above them.

A difficult season hit a new low at St James' Park as Spurs were 5-0 down after just 21 minutes. "Sunday's performance against Newcastle was wholly unacceptable," said Levy in a club statement.

"Cristian will leave his current role along with his coaching staff. Cristian stepped in at a difficult point in our season and I want to thank him for the professional manner in which he and his coaching staff have conducted themselves during such a challenging time."

However, the decision to replace Conte with a member of his backroom staff in the first place has opened Levy up to more criticism from fans.

"We can look at many reasons why it happened and whilst myself, the board, the coaches and players must all take collective responsibility, ultimately the responsibility is mine," Levy added.

Russians, Belarusians Signed Declarations to Compete in Wimbledon

LONDON (Dispatches) - Several Russian and Belarusian players have already signed personal declarations that will clear them to compete as neutrals at this year's Wimbledon championships, the All England Club said.

Wimbledon announced last month that it had lifted its ban which prevented athletes from the two countries playing last year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Speaking at the club's pre-tournament Spring media conference, Club chairman Ian Hewitt said the U-turn had been the hardest decision of his four years in the job.

"This was an incredibly difficult decision," he told reporters. "I think our statement on March 31 set out the position as clearly as we could, namely that there were a combination of factors and it was a combination of factors and developments since last year which led to our decision."

Wimbledon and the other British grasscourt tournaments stood alone in barring Russian and Belarusian players such as former world number ones Daniil Medvedev and Victoria Azarenka last year. The decision resulted in ranking points being stripped from the events and the Lawn Tennis Association being hit with huge fines by the ATP and WTA.

To compete this year, Russian and Belarusian players must agree to compete as neutrals, not to make statements supporting the war or the regimes involved and not to receive funding from either nation or state-supported businesses.

"The development of the wording of the declarations is obviously based on government guidance, working with the Tours, the ITF and our partners at the LTA," All England Club CEO Sally Bolton said on Tuesday.



UEFA's New Football Board Seeks Clarity, Changes to Handball Law

LONDON (Dispatches) - The UEFA Football Board has urged more clarity on the handball law and recommended changes for next season after holding its inaugural meeting in Nyon at the headquarters of European soccer's governing body.

The board, which includes managers such as Carlo Ancelotti and Jose Mourinho plus former players like Paolo Maldini and Luis Figo, was approved by the UEFA Executive Committee to give independent opinions on soccer-related topics.

This week it issued recommendations after discussing the handball law, specifically the aspect which states that not every touch of the arm or hand with the ball is an offence.

"The Board recommends that UEFA should clarify that no handball offence should be called on a player if the ball is previously deflected from his own body and, in particular, when the ball does not go towards the goal," it said.

"On the same notice, the Board recommends that not every handball should automatically lead to a caution after every shot at goal, as anticipated by current guidelines."

The Board also said UEFA should contact soccer's law-making body, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), to amend the law on sending off players for handball decisions.

It suggested that a player should be sent off for denying a goalscoring opportunity only if they "deliberately and intentionally" touch the ball with their hand or arm.

"In case of other handball offences, the players should only be cautioned," it added.

