

The Islamic Republic of Iran Football Federation (IRIFF) President Mehdi Taj Said on Tuesday That FIFA President Gianni Infantino Will Visit Iran in Future to Follow Up on Related Issues

IRAN NEWS

TEDPIX, the Main Index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Gained 37,690 Points to 2.518m on Tuesday And as reported, Over 23.078b Securities Worth 175.058 Trillion Rials (About \$416.8m) Were Traded

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Raisi's Strategic Visit To Syria Aims to Reinforce Resistance Axis

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Iranian administration's spokesman says a planned visit by President Ebrahim Raisi to Syria will focus on boosting bilateral relations and reinforcing the Axis of Resistance.

Speaking at a weekly press conference on Tuesday, Ali Bahadori Jahromi described as "strategic" Raisi's two-day trip starting tomorrow.

"Tomorrow, the president will travel to Syria upon an official invitation by [Syrian President] Bashar al-Assad. The visit will take place after 13 years in continuation of the administration's neighborliness diplomacy. It will focus on strengthening economic and political ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria, as well as the resistance axis," he said.

"Bashar al-Assad had visited Iran twice. Raisi's trip is the first after internal tensions and war-mongering by Daesh terrorists with the sponsorship of some global and regional supporters of terrorism." *See Page 7*

Leader Urges Teachers to Promote Iranian, Islamic Identity

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei called on Iranian teachers to promote the Iranian and Islamic identity among children.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in an address to a group of teachers and academics on Tuesday on the occasion of the National Teachers' Day, which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, who was martyred by Forqan Group soon after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The Leader commemorated Ayatollah Motahhari, saying he was a true teacher as he possessed all the characteristics expected of teachers in Iranian schools and universities.

"He had knowledge; he had committed; he was precise; he had discipline and order in his work. And thank God, his martyrdom was also a blessing for the country," he noted.

"He himself reached high positions (martyrdom) and his works gained a place in the hearts of the society as a result of this martyrdom. I recommend that his writings and prepared lectures be read carefully, especially by teachers," he added.

"Our dear teachers should raise the children of this nation in the same manner that they wish their own children to be raised, [that is,] as happy, proud, wise, educated individuals who display respectable behavior. This important matter will be realized not only through teaching, but also through the behavior and actions of teachers."

The Leader said reviving the feeling of "Iranian-Islamic identity and national personality" in the intelligent youths of the country is a "fundamental" duty.

Ayatollah Khamenei added that strengthening the Iranian identity and teaching the Islamic-Iranian way of life are among the main things required in the country's education system.

The Leader emphasized that all Iranian officials and decision-makers and people from all walks of life must understand the significance of education.

Ayatollah Khamenei called on the authorities to make a revision in the current path of education and evaluate its productivity for the country.

"The main policy of education should be based on teaching useful science and meeting the current and future needs of the country," the Leader stated.

The Leader said that teachers and academics are educators of the precious jewel of the "teenage and young generation" and the future architects of the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that it is not possible to make progress without the assistance of the education system. Elsewhere in his remarks, he called for measures to strengthen public schools, so that those who do not have enough financial resources would be able to receive proper education.

The Leader also praised the country's teachers for their efforts in educating children despite difficulties.

Foreign Pressures Unable To Hinder Iran Progress

TEHRAN (IP) - The IRGC commander reiterated that the enemies are doing what they can to stop Iran's progress, stressing that the Islamic Republic will not retreat from the path of progress it has stepped on since the 1979 revolution.

Major General Hussein Salami made the comments at a ceremony held in Tehran to appoint the new commander of IRGC Khatam al-Anbia Construction Base.

"Today, the enemy has brought all the pieces on its political chessboard altogether with all their might against the holy Islamic Republic of Iran and the glorious [Islamic] Revolution. The pieces of this chess are all working together and this means that this nation has grown too magnificent, strong, and resistant that it's standing firm on the battlefield victoriously," the IRGC commander said.

General Salami added all the plots that the enemy had designed against Iran, have come out to be failed. "None of the enemy's dreams about us came true and what it thought about us returned to itself. In defiance of all, the Iranian nation has shone [in different fields] and this shining continues," he added.

He also urged for further independence and relying on internal resources instead of looking toward the West, saying since the Islamic revolution, Iran has relied on its own capabilities and this path will continue with might to gain more achievements.

No Need for Extra-Regional Forces to Ensure PG Security

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - A senior commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says there is no need for extra-regional forces to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf given that Iran and neighboring countries are cooperating to guarantee the security of the strategic waterway.

"The Islamic Republic's security umbrella has been expanded across the region, and we have cooperation with other neighboring states in this regard," commander of the third naval zone of the IRGC Rear Admiral Amrollah Nozari said.

Pointing to a Sunday naval parade in Bandar-e Mahshahr in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province on the occasion of National Persian Gulf Day, he said the IRGC Navy is responsible to maintain national and shipping security in the region.

The commander further said that the IRGC Navy has an active and strong presence in the region to ensure the security of the Persian Gulf for the Iranian nation and other neighboring states. *See Page 7*

Iran Takes Delivery of 50 Aircraft Despite Sanctions

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has purchased and taken delivery of some 50 used aircraft and helicopters over the past 18 months, Head of the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran (CAO) Mohammad Mohammadi Bakhsh announced.

Twenty of those planes have already joined the Iranian civil aviation fleet after undergoing various stages of technical examination, Mohammadi Bakhsh said.

Iran's aviation industry, which remains under US sanctions, needs some 550 passenger planes to function properly, he pointed out.

However, he said a portion of the country's fleet of passenger aircraft has been grounded over the years due to aging and a lack of spare parts.

Mohammadi Bakhsh emphasized that his organization's priority to overcome the sanctions has been to try to return some of the grounded planes back to service. *See Page 7*

Iran Posts Trade Surplus of \$558m

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Iranian customs office (IRICA) has posted a trade surplus of \$558 million for the country in the calendar month to April 20.

IRICA figures published showed that Iran had exported \$3.645 billion worth of goods and commodities in the month to late April, down 12.93% compared to same period in 2022.

That comes as imports into Iran reached \$3.087 billion in the same calendar month, down by 13% year on year, showed the figures.

The customs data showed that Iranian overseas shipments had risen by 17.76% in volume terms year on year in April to reach 10.471 million mt.

Main exports from Iran over the calendar month to late April included liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) with \$523 million worth of sales, followed by liquefied propane at \$302 million and liquefied butane at \$169 million, said IRICA, adding that Iran had exported \$169 million worth of steel and iron products and some \$167 million of methanol over the same period.

China was the largest buyer of Iranian export shipment in April with some \$1.14 billion worth of purchases, followed by Iraq at \$609 million, Turkey at \$550 million, United Arab Emirates at \$320 million and India at \$120 million, showed IRICA figures.

Iran-Brazil Trade Likely to Burgeon Under Lula

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Brazil is a major importer of Iranian urea, a petrochemical product used as fertilizer.

Trade between Iran and Brazil is robust despite U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic, but prospects for better economic relations are rising as President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is seeking to reset the South American country's relationships with allies.

Last year, trade between the two countries stood at \$6.5 billion, Iranian Ambassador Hossein Gharibi told the ministry of petroleum's Shana news agency.

Brazil is a major importer of Iranian urea, a petrochemical product used as fertilizer.

"Urea fertilizer was the biggest export item of Iran to Brazil last year, while Iran's imports from the South American country were corn, soybeans and meat," Gharibi said.

Brazil is an oil-producing country, whose daily output is put at 2.9 million barrels. The country, however, is faced with many problems in its downstream refining and products sector.

Last week, Brazil imported \$6 billion worth of gas last year. It is also dependent on imports in its petrochemical sector.

"Brazil needs to import up to 80 percent of its need for chemical fertilizers, where consumption stands at about 8-10 million tons a year," Gharibi said.

There is also a good market for Iranian polymers in Brazil. According to the ambassador, the country imported \$6 billion of plastic polymers last year, but there is a market for up to \$11 billion for the materials.

Iranian traders, however, are faced with challenges in the Brazilian urea market.

"While we are a large urea producer and have a large consumer market in Brazil, we do not have traders who can supply the product from origin to destination," Gharibi said. *See Page 7*

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Iran to Hold Expo 2023 in Tehran Next Week

TEHRAN (IP) - The fifth exhibition of Iran's export capabilities, Iran Expo 2023, as the country's largest export event, will be held at the Tehran permanent international fairground next week.

It is expected that more than 1000 foreign traders and about 800 top Iranian exporters will be present in this exhibition from May 17th to 20th.

With the aim of displaying export capabilities, over 15 high-ranking political delegations and 40 big foreign companies will participate within 4 days. Considering Iran's exports increase, due to the Raisi administration's good neighborly policy, holding this exhibition will greatly contribute to the promotion of Iran's trade with other countries.

Iran, India Can Play Role In New World Order

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says the Islamic Republic and India can influence the changes caused by the new world order that is currently emerging.

Raisi made the remark in a Monday meeting with the visiting National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval.

During the meeting, Raisi emphasized that global conditions are changing and a new world order is emerging.

"In the course of the ongoing global changes, regional and international organizations, especially the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS [group of countries] can be very effective in view of their remarkable power and resources," Iran's president said.

"As two influential regional countries, Iran and India can promote their relations to a new level and play a more effective role in [setting the course of] changes caused by the establishment of the new world order," Raisi added.

He emphasized that further strengthening of cooperation between Iran and India can not only help them meet their mutual interests, but also enable them to play a constructive role in resolving regional issues, including the issue of Afghanistan.

Doval, for his part, affirmed that the world is witnessing major changes, saying, "India believes that to have a positive impact on these changes, it needs to deepen and expand relations with its neighboring countries, especially Iran."

Meanwhile Iran and India issued a joint statement, reaffirming their commitment to continue fighting terrorism and help establish regional peace and security.



The statement was signed by Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani and his Indian counterpart, Ajit Doval, in Tehran on Monday.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms in order to help establish regional peace, stability and security.

They also vowed to boost cooperation in confronting regional and global challenges, while emphasizing the need to review new global developments in order to bolster multilateralism.

Further strengthening of cooperation between Tehran and New Delhi at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels was another important highlight of the statement.

The two sides also mentioned transportation routes as a main element of regional integration and collective welfare of regional people, while mentioning the development project for the Iranian port city of Chabahar as a symbol of their cooperation.

Another important point covered by the statement was the need to boost joint efforts with Russia and other countries in Central Asia and Caucasus to promote the existing transportation corridors, especially the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and other transportation routes.

Tehran Denies Arresting Azerbaijani Nationals in Qom

TEHRAN (IRNA) - An informed security source has dismissed reports that two citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan have been arrested in Iran.

"The government of Azerbaijan has made accusations regarding its nationals in Iran. Addressing these accusations requires further investigation," the source told.

The individuals are under surveillance while an investigation is being carried out, the source added.

Media reports in recent days suggested that two Azerbaijani activists with a Shia movement called the "Husseiniyun Brigade" had been arrested in the holy city of Qom in central Iran.

FM Calls for Expanding

Tehran-New Delhi Regional, Int'l Cooperation

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian met with National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval, expressing hope that the two countries further expand their cooperation on key regional and international issues.

The top Indian security official was in Tehran on a one-day trip during which he met with senior Iranian officials including President Ebrahim Raisi.

Amirabdollahian and Doval discussed a range of issues including Tehran-New Delhi cooperation, with the Iranian foreign minister expressing hope that the two countries further expand their cooperation on key regional and international issues including fighting against terrorism and drug trafficking.

The Iranian minister also called for boosting economic and trade relations that matches existing potentials of the two countries.

The Indian official on his part said that the existence of a wide range of potentialities for cooperation between the two sides is of paramount importance with regard to the current developments taking place in the international arena.

He said that transit cooperation is a key pillar in Iran-India relations, and stressed the importance of advancing the Chabahar port project that would lead to enhanced integration between central Asian and Caucasus countries as well as Russia.

Iran, Russia to Jointly Manufacture Research Satellite

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Russia and Iran will kick start a project in two weeks to manufacture scientific research satellite, an Iranian academic has said.

Chancellor of the University of Tehran Mohammad Moghimi said on Monday that aerospace departments of the University of Tehran and University of Moscow are planned to launch the joint projects in two weeks.

He said the two universities reached an agreement on the issue during a visit by an Iranian academic delegation to Moscow last week.

Home-Made Syngas Reactor Installed In Iranian Petrochem Plant

BUSHEHR (IRNA) - A first home-made ultra-heavy reactor for synthesis gas has been installed at an Iranian petrochemical plant in Asaluyeh, in southern Iran.

CEO of Iran's Dena Petrochemical Industries Company Hossein Hashemi said on Tuesday that the company had ordered the construction of the reactor to a domestic company after it faced difficulties in importing the equipment because of foreign sanctions on Iran.

Synthesis gas (syngas) production is the cornerstone of operations in many industries including in petrochemicals. Syngas is produced by steam reforming or partial oxidation of natural gas or liquid hydrocarbons, or coal gasification.

Hashemi said five syngas reactors have been installed at the Dena petrochemical plant and another seven will be supplied by domestic manufacturers until the end of the Iranian calendar year in March.

He said construction works on Dena petrochemical plant, which will focus on methanol production with a capacity of 1.65 million metric tons per year, is 80% complete.

Riyadh Seeking Flights Between Saudi, Iranian Shia Cities

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Saudi Arabia is seeking direct flights between its shia-majority city of Dammam and Iran's Mashhad as part of efforts to improve relations between the two countries, according to an aviation industry official in Iran.

Maghsud As'adi, who leads Association of Iranian Airlines, said on Monday that launching flights to Iran's second largest city of Mashhad, located in northeast of the country and home to a major shia shrine, is a priority for Saudi Arabia.

As'adi said the flight route could serve Saudi Arabia's shia community which is based in the eastern city of Dammam.

He said the route could also lead to increased tourism visits by Saudis to other Iranian cities, especially to natural resorts in northern Iran.

The remarks come weeks after Iran's transportation ministry said it had received an official request from Saudi Arabian authorities for three regular flights between the two countries.

The ministry said last month that the flights will be launched regardless of arrangements existing between Tehran and Riyadh about flights carrying Iranian pilgrims to hajj ceremony in Saudi Arabia.

The announcement came amid a joint plan by Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore their diplomatic relations some seven years after the two countries cut their official ties.

The plan is based on an agreement brokered by China in early March which stipulated that the two Muslim countries should reopen their embassies by May 9.

Majlis, Expediency Council Seek Synergy to Solve Issues

TEHRAN (IP) - Majlis Speaker says the parliament and Expediency Council seek to coordinate in order to solve the country's basic problem.

Majlis held a joint meeting with the Expediency Council and Judiciary on Monday with the presence of Majlis Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, Judiciary Chief Golamhossein Mohseni-Ejei and Chairman of Expediency Council Sadegh Amoli Larijani.

Majlis Spokesman Nezamoldin Mousavi said that the parliament has had coordination meetings with other power branches of the country that have led to desired results.

The meeting between the parliament and expediency council today is aimed at solving the people's problems.

Meanwhile Head of Expediency Council said that meetings with Parliament to address the people's problems must be held continuously.

Sadegh Amoli Larijani Chairman of the Council said that holding such a meeting enhances social capital in the country and people will be ensured that the country's entities are coordinated to solve their problems.

Amoli Larijani noted that the parliament and the expediency council try to be much more coordinated and synergized to this aim.

The head of the expediency council told Iran Press that it was decided today that the meetings will be regularly held. He appreciated the efforts made by various legislative bodies to solve the people's problems.

Hydrography Available Across Persian Gulf

TEHRAN (IP) - Director General of the National Cartographic Center reported the activation of coastal and offshore hydrography platforms in the Persian Gulf.

Ali Javidaneh said at the 27th National Conference and Exhibition on Geomatics Engineering (Geomatics 2023) was held on May 1, 2023: "We can improve the capabilities of the country with minimal effort, so, we used the capacity of UAVs for mapping through the

interactions we had with the Geographical Organization of the Armed Forces."

Referring to the cooperation of the National Cartographic Center with the Space Agency, Javidaneh said: "Khayyam satellite images are used in line with the mapping organization's missions."

He also said that the hydrography of the Persian Gulf has been fully implemented based on the standards.

Envoy Calls Iran-Russia Deal a New Version of Previous Agreements

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali has reiterated that the 20-year Iran and Russia had a 20-year cooperation agreement which was approved by the Iranian parliament in 2001 and was extendable for another five years, adding, however, that the two countries have decided to update the agreement and add new terms to it.

Jalali said that officials of Iran and Russia believe that the provisions, which were mentioned in the previous accord, are not applicable to the current international situation, so high-ranking authorities have reached a consensus to discuss and review the deal.

According to the envoy, the new accord between Russia and Iran is a comprehensive one which covers cooperation on political, regional, international, economic, security, intelligence, cyber-space, defense, and other issues.

Asked about any similarity between Iran-Russia strategic agreement a long-term cooperation deal between Iran and China, Jalali said that the accord with China is a type partnership agreement while the agreement with Russia is a binding document which should be approved by parliaments of both countries.

However, he said, growing relations between Tehran and Moscow face opposition from certain states and powers.

The ambassador described the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 21, 2022, to March 20, 2023) as the golden year of the expansion of ties between Iran and Russia, adding that presidents of the two countries met four times and had several phone conversations over the year.

He said that the volume of economic and trade ties between the two countries rose from \$1.65 billion in the Iranian calendar year 1398 (March 21, 2019, to March 20, 2020) to around \$5 billion in year 1401.

Iran Universities Hosting 40k Afghan Students

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Iranian deputy minister of science, research and technology says the country is hosting around 40,000 university students, and that three Iranian universities are ready to give admissions to female Afghans, who are denied of the right to higher education at home.

Vahid Haddadi-Asl told ISNA that the Ministry is working to solve the financial issues facing Afghan students in Iran.

He added that many Afghan students are also interested in virtual education at Iranian universities.

After restrictions were imposed by the interim Taliban government on Afghan girls and women, three Iranian universities who solely admit female students announced readiness to take in female Afghan students, he added.

The Taliban-run higher education ministry announced in December 2022 that female students would not be allowed access to the country's universities until further notice, drawing harsh criticism from Iran and the world community.

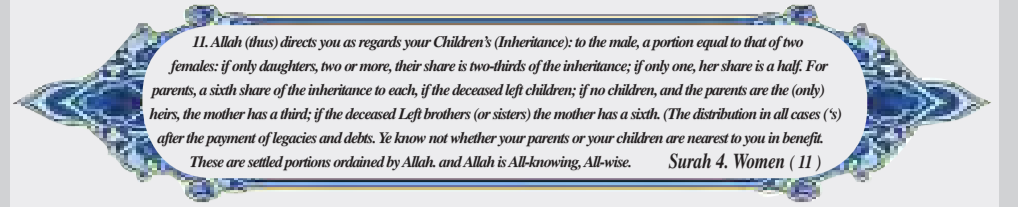
Iran is hosting around four million Afghan refugees.

The number of refugees and migrants has witnessed a sharp hike since the rise of the Taliban to power in 2021.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:01
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:11
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:35
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:09



Iran Petchem Industry Reaches \$50 Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The CEO of Iran Social Security Investment Company (SSIC), also known by its Persian acronym SHASTA, announced a 50 billion dollar trade in the country's petrochemical industry in the last five years.

Referring to the value creation of the petrochemical industry in the country's economy, Ebrahim Bazian, the CEO of SSIC, at the 14th International Iran Petrochemical Forum (IPF) in Tehran, said that the industry aided Iran's economy at the height of the sanctions.

Bazian stated: "Today the maximum capacity of Iran's petrochemical industry has reached 92 million tons, which is expected to reach 95 million tons by the end of the current year."

"This capacity can be increased to one and a half to two times in a middle perspective in order to bring about a balanced development in the upstream, midstream, and downstream sectors," Bazian added.

Despite imposed sanctions on Iran's industry, the localization of equipment has always been a concern of Iran's oil industry, and 44 years after Iran's Islamic Revolution, this sector, making a significant trend in exporting these products, has reached 85% self-sufficiency in manufacturing equipment needed by the oil, gas, and petrochemical industry.

Meanwhile on Monday, the document on the development and completion of the value chain of the petrochemical industry was unveiled in the presence of Iranian Oil Minister Javad Oji and National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Managing Director Morteza Shahmirzaei.

The document was unveiled on Monday evening on the sidelines of the 14th Iran Petrochemical Forum (IPF).

As reported, all petrochemical companies and holdings should adjust their development plans in line with this document.

According to the NPC officials, if necessary, the document on the development and completion of the value chain of the petrochemical industry will be updated with the coordination of the NPC. In this way, according to the information in this document, investors can invest in Iran's petrochemical sector with more confidence.

The 14th Iran Petrochemical Forum (IPF) kicked off at IRIB International Conference Center (IICC) in Tehran on Monday.



Focusing on "Value Chain, New Opportunities", the two-day forum revolves around eight topics, including: "Feedstock, products and supply chain", "Solutions and advanced optimization technologies", "Integration and coordination between petrochemical and refining complexes", "Production process and market", "Methanol market and its roles", "Global energy crisis and future of the petrochemical industry", "Investment and financial supply opportunities", and "Energy optimization and production without pollution".

As stated by the managing director of National Petrochemical Company (NPC), "Our today's important objective of completing the production chain in the country's petrochemical sector highlights the significance of holding this conference".

Morteza Shahmirzaei has expressed hope that IPF can pave the way to achieve all strategic petrochemical products in the world.

As reported, 15 countries, including the members of the BRICS countries (five leading economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) as well as some European countries, are participating in IPF, which is a famous scientific conference in the world, and the latest products and achievements of the petrochemical industry are being presented and introduced in the two-day event.

TPO Hosts Iran-Iraq Industrial Cooperation

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) hosted an Iran-Iraq industrial cooperation conference on Monday evening.

The conference was held in line with the development of commercial and industrial relations between the two countries.

Referring to the objectives of holding this conference, Mohammad-Sadeq Qanadzadeh, the TPO deputy head for the promotion of international businesses, said: "Expansion of economic and trade relations with countries is one of the priorities of economic and trade diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and since Iraq has been always one of our strategic partners, we are trying to maintain and increase the role we have played in the economic and industrial development of this country."

Stating that currently Iran's exports to Iraq is about \$10.5 billion, he said: "Although the export of \$10.5 billion is a new record, there is the capacity to increase trade between the two countries to \$20 billion. Therefore, we are trying to quickly cover this delay with the help and cooperation of the private sector and reach commercial targets."

In the end, he said: "The target figure for trade with Iraq, which has been calculated from different sectors, is \$20 billion, and we are trying to reach it, which was also mentioned in the meeting between the presidents of the two countries."

As announced by Head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Ale-Es'haq, the value of trade between Iran and Iraq increased by 20 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target, Ale-Es'haq has previously emphasized.

Annual Export of Mining Products Stands at Over \$12.2b

TEHRAN (MNA) - The export by Iran's large mining companies stood at \$12.239 billion in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20), registering a 3.5-percent rise in weight, while a 7.6-percent drop in value, year on year.

As reported, the steel chain with an export of \$5.76 billion stood in the first place. Export from this chain saw a 22-percent drop in value and a six-percent decrease in weight.

The copper chain is ranked second with export of \$1.577 billion, witnessing a decrease of 27 percent.

Last year, the aluminum chain managed to export \$973 million, which is 29 percent more than the export in 1400 in terms of value, and has a favorable situation compared to other products.

According to Amir Sabagh, the director for economic affairs and investment development in the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), natural gas and electricity cut-offs in the country were among the factors related to the reduction of steel chain exports.

Meanwhile, as previously reported, the total sales of Iran's large mining companies through the stock market has reached \$22.4 billion in the past Iranian year, registering an 18-percent rise year on year.

While Iran's stock market has developed noticeably in recent years, especially since the two past Iranian calendar years, the performance of the minerals and mining industry sectors in this market has been very outstanding.

Mahyapoor Appointed as New CEO of Gohar Zamin Co.



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - In the meeting of shareholders and some of members of board of directors, Mohammad Mahyapoor was appointed as the new CEO of Gohar Zamin Iron Ore Company.

According to the reports, in the meeting first the head of board of directors of Gohar Zamin Iron Ore Company Mr. Mohammad Jalal Maab gave a short report about the performance of the company and hailed the outgoing CEO of the company and other senior for their endeavors.

Then the outgoing CEO Mohammad Fallah briefed the participants in the meeting of the actions and activities of the company in the recent two years.

Then the newly appointed CEO of the company Mr. Mahyapoor pointed to the future plans of the company and said that the priority of the company is to meet the interests of the town of Sirjan and in fact the real capital of the company is its human resources and the issue of indigenization.

Then in the meeting Mr. Fallah as well as the outgoing deputy head chairman of board of directors Seyed Mohsen Mirmohammadi and a member of board of directors Mr. Abutorab were honored for their actions and performance.

MAPNA Group Source of Honor and Pride for Country



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Concurrent with May 1 and commemorating the International Labor Day, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi came up at MAPNA Turbine Engineering and Manufacturing Company (TUGA) and during his presence he visited the power station screening center, exhibition on technological achievements of MAPNA Group, full Iranian-made Class F advanced turbine MGT-75 and the operation of testing jet engines on the fully indigenized testing platform.

According to reports, concurrent with President Raisi's visit at MAPNA Group, one of the most useful types of jet engines for passenger planes that some of its parts have been made by Iranians were tested successfully on the fully-domestic made testing platform.

The motor which was tested in the presence of the President was known motor CFM-56 that some of its parts have been made in the country and have been designed and tested by MAPNA group which was tested.

During this visit, President Raisi emphasized meeting the national needs to locomotive with prioritizing the domestic products as well as using the capacity of locomotive driving education center of MAPNA.

President Raisi after visiting different sections of MAPNA Group met some of workers of the country and hailed the efforts and hardworking of workers in production and termed the achievements of MAPNA Industrial Group as source of honor and the cause for improving the power of the country.

The President hailed the staff of MAPNA Group and said that they can do more by increasing efforts. During his visit of the exhibition on the achievements of MAPNA Group, the President said that one can be proud of this group by visiting its achievements which are source of pride for the country.

He also called for indigenization of products and called also for standardization of domestic products.

In The Name of God Message of Mohammad Kamalzadeh, CEO of Iran Alloy Steel Company, on the Occasion of Int'l Labor Day



and such statements of the elders actually draws the attention of the society to this hardworking layer. The industry has a wide scope and the steel industry, especially the alloy steel, is one of the special industries that does not open its arms to every human being and requires men of steel who can carry the heavy burden of this industry with their strong arms and make the wheel of the huge steel industry move and play an important role in the progress of dear Iran. As an activist of the country's steel industry sector, I shake the warm hands of all the activists in this field, and from the bottom of my heart, I congratulate all the workers of this land, especially the hardworking workers of Iran Alloy Steel Company, and I clearly declare that the technical staff and management body of the company know the value of your efforts and they have a correct understanding and analysis of the work situation of the workers, and by the grace of God, they are trying with all their might to continuously improve and improve various indicators, including human resources.

In the end, I thank Almighty God for having capable colleagues and caring personnel and I hope that the year ahead will be a year full of blessings for shareholders, engineers, administrative staff and workers with prudence and planning and careful implementation of the plans.

Mohammad Kamalzadeh, CEO of Iran Alloy Steel Company

Calendrical occasions are wonderful opportunities that open the chapter of human thinking and contemplation on various elements and phenomena. The Ordibehesht 11 (Second month of Iranian year, coinciding with May 1) is registered in the country's official calendar as the International Labor Day, and it has created an opportunity to think about the great blessing of God, which is work and the activists of the country's industry, that is, workers. Work is the essence of man and the worker is a noble person who got his weighty title from the beautiful name of work. In our religious teachings, work and workers have a noble position to the extent that the beloved Messenger of Islam (PBUH) has clearly spoken about kissing the hands of the worker,

U.S. Envoy Heads to Brazil After Ukraine War Rift



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A senior U.S. envoy was heading to Brazil in hopes of restoring a budding relationship with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who drew a rebuke by appearing to blame Washington in part over the Ukraine war.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, will meet senior officials in Brasilia on Tuesday, with U.S. officials insisting she will focus on broad cooperation between the Western hemisphere's two most populous nations rather than dwelling on Lula's remarks. She will travel Wednesday to Salvador, the heart of the Afro-Brazilian community, to highlight work to build racial equality in the two multiethnic nations.

Palestinian Hunger Striker Dies in Israeli Prison



BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Khader Adnan, who was affiliated with the Palestinian militant Islamic Jihad group, died in an Israeli prison on Tuesday after an 87-day hunger strike, Israeli prison authorities said.

Israel said Adnan "refused to undergo medical tests and receive medical treatment" and "was found unconscious in his cell" early on Tuesday morning. "Our fight is continuing and the enemy will realise once again that its crimes will not pass without a response. Resistance will continue by all might and determination," Palestinian Islamic Jihad said in a statement.

Shortly after, sirens rang out in Israeli Gaza border communities sending residents running for shelter, and the Israeli military confirmed that three rockets fired from the Gaza Strip toward Israeli territory fell in open areas.

World's Workers Rally as France Rocked by Pension Protests



PARIS (Dispatches) - People squeezed by inflation and demanding economic justice took to streets across Asia, Europe and the Americas to mark May Day, in an outpouring of worker discontent not seen since before the worldwide COVID-19 lockdowns.

French police charged at radical protesters and troublemakers smashing bank and shop windows and setting fires as unions pushed the president to scrap a higher retirement age. South Koreans pleaded for higher wages as did others around Latin America. Spanish lawyers demanded the right to take days off. Migrant domestic workers in Lebanon marched in a country plunged into economic crisis.

While May Day is marked worldwide as a celebration of labor rights, this year's rallies tapped into broader frustrations. Climate activists spray-painted a museum in Paris, and protesters in Germany demonstrated against violence targeting women and LGBTQ+ people.

Celebrations were forced indoors in Pakistan, tinged with political tensions as in Turkey, as both countries face high-stakes elections. Russia's war in Ukraine overshadowed scaled-back events in Moscow, where Communist-led May Day celebrations were once massive affairs.

Across the globe, this year's May Day events unleashed pent-up frustration after three years of COVID-19 restrictions. Across France, some 800,000 people marched, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said. They mobilized against President Emmanuel Macron's recent move to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64. Organizers see pension reform as a threat to hard-fought worker rights, while Macron argues it's economically necessary as the population ages.

While marchers were largely peaceful, violence by radicals, an ever-present reality at French marches, marred the message, notably in Paris. A Paris police officer was seriously injured by a Molotov cocktail, among 108 officers injured around France, Darmanin said. It wasn't known how many protesters were potentially injured. Clashes also marked protests in Lyon and Nantes.

"Violence is increasingly strong in a society that is radicalizing," the interior minister said on BFM-TV news station, blaming the ultra-left. He said some 2,000 radicals were at the Paris march.

Tear gas hung over the end point of the Paris march, Place de la Nation, where a huge black cloud loomed high above the trees after radicals set two fuel cans afire outside a building renovation site, police said.

French union members were joined by groups fighting for economic justice, or just expressing anger at what is seen as Macron's out-of-touch, pro-business leadership. Labor activists from abroad were present, among them Hyrwon Chong of the South Korean Metal Workers' Union.

In Northern Macedonia's capital Skopje, thousands of trade union members protested a recent government decision granting ministers a 78% raise. The minimum monthly wage in one of Europe's poorest countries, is 320 euros (\$350), while the hike will put ministers' wages at around 2,300 euros (\$2,530). "We are here, not only (to mark) Labor Day, but also to warn that if there is no social justice, there will be no social peace either," said union leader Jakim Nedelkovski.

In Turkey, police prevented demonstrators from reaching Istanbul's main square, Taksim, and detained around a dozen of them, independent television station Sozcu reported.

The square has symbolic importance for Turkey's trade unions after unknown gunmen opened fire on a May Day celebration at Taksim in 1977, causing a stampede that killed dozens. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has declared Taksim off-limits to protests, though small groups were allowed to enter to lay wreaths at a monument.

Protests in Paraguay as Losing Candidates Calls for Recount



ASUNCION (Dispatches) - Supporters of a right-wing candidate who came third in Paraguay's presidential election clashed with police outside the electoral court on Monday, amid complaints of fraud in a vote that the ruling Colorado Party won comfortably.

Police put up fences around the court's headquarters and fired rubber bullets at young protesters who were throwing stones, authorities said, after hundreds of supporters of Paraguayo Cubas gathered. Elsewhere, demonstrators blocked roads with burning tires and destroying billboards with the photo of President-elect Santiago Pena, a 44-year-old economist who won 43% of the vote on Sunday compared with 27% for runner-up Efrain Alegre.

Cubas, who surprised observers by winning nearly 23% of the vote, called in a post on Instagram for a recount and asked his supporters to protest. "We are not satisfied. The elections were stolen from us. It's that simple," Yolanda Paredes, a senator-elect and the wife of Cubas, told reporters.

Cubas was due to travel from his stronghold in Ciudad del Este, on the border with Brazil, to the capital, Asuncion.

Runner-up Alegre said on Twitter that he too was calling for the electoral court to do a recount and for an international audit of the computer programs used in electronic ballot boxes.

Interior Minister Federico Gonzalez called for "sanity". "A procedure is being followed and that must be respected," he said, referring to the work of the electoral court.

Meanwhile Paraguayans were mixed about the prospects of another five years of conservative Colorado party rule, but hoped President-elect Santiago Pena could reboot the country's farm-driven economy.

Pena, a 44-year-old economist, secured a 15-point lead over his opposition rival with 42.7% of the vote, cementing another five-year term for the ruling Colorado Party.

Voters also handed the Colorados a greater majority in both houses of Congress, with a bigger number of seats than in the previous 2018 election. Fifteen, or nearly all of the country's 17 governorships are held by the party.

Kuwait Parliament Dissolved by Royal Decree Again

KUWAIT CITY (Dispatches) - Kuwait's parliament has been dissolved by royal decree, state news agency KUNA said, having only been reinstated in March based on a Constitutional Court ruling after a previous dissolution.

The decree, which was reportedly signed on Monday, comes after Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said last month that the legislature would be dissolved and that new parliamentary elections would be held in the coming months. The Persian Gulf Arab state, a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has seen prolonged bickering between the government and the elected parliament that has hampered fiscal reforms.

The parliament first elected in 2020 was dissolved last year in a bid to end the feuding, and a vote was held in September in which the opposition made gains. But the Constitutional Court in March annulled those results and restored the previous assembly.

Sheikh Meshal, who signed Monday's Emiri decree, was handed most of the duties of the ruling emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in late 2021. The cabinet had submitted the decree to Sheikh Meshal earlier in the day, according to a previous statement by KUNA. Sheikh Meshal had said last month that the "will of the people" required new elections that would be "accompanied by some legal and political reforms to take the country to a new phase of discipline and legal reference". He did not go into detail on the reforms, however.

Kuwait bans political parties but has given its legislature more influence than similar bodies in other Persian Gulf monarchies, and political stability has traditionally depended on cooperation between the government and parliament.

The Persian Gulf state has strong fiscal and external balance sheets, but the infighting and political gridlock have hampered investment and reforms aimed at reducing its heavy reliance on oil revenues. Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah, the emir's son, had in January submitted his government's resignation due to friction with the parliament elected in 2020. He was renamed premier in March and a new cabinet was announced this month.

Tokyo, Seoul Resume Finance Dialogue Amid Geopolitical Tensions

INCHEON (Dispatches) - Japan and South Korea held their first finance leaders' meeting in seven years on Tuesday and agreed to resume regular dialogue, as tensions in the region and slowing growth prod them to increase co-operation and mend strained relations.

The resumption of bilateral financial discussions comes ahead of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's planned visit to South Korea next week for talks with President Yoon Suk Yeol.

It also came as Asian policymakers, gathering for the annual Asian Development Bank (ADB) meeting this week in the South Korean city of Incheon, discuss regional economic challenges and ways to beef up buffers against various shocks.

"Japan and South Korea are important neighbours that must cooperate to address various challenges surrounding the global economy, as well as the regional and international community," Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said at the meeting with his South Korean counterpart Choo Kyung-ho.

"As for geo-political challenges, we're experiencing incidents like North Korea's nuclear missile development and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Japan sees these as unacceptable, and something the two countries must address together," he said.

Choo said the two countries can strengthen private

and government partnerships in high tech industries such as semiconductors and batteries.

Japan and South Korea will resume regular finance dialogue, likely to be held annually, at "an appropriate timing," Suzuki told reporters after the bilateral meeting.

Choo is expected to visit Japan this year for another meeting with Suzuki, South Korea's finance ministry said.

Despite slowing growth in advanced nations, developing Asia is expected to achieve strong economic growth of 4.8% in 2023, faster than 4.2% growth in 2022 thanks to China's rebound, according to the ADB projections.

But various risks cloud the region's economic outlook.

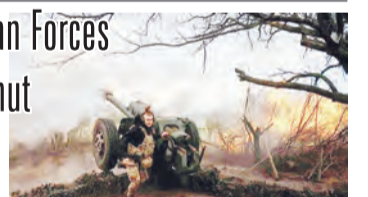
"Despite the close economic relationships among China, Japan, and Korea, we have observed a recent slowdown in economic relations, particularly in terms of trade in goods and services," the finance leaders of the three countries said in a statement issued after their trilateral meeting on Tuesday.

At the trilateral meeting, China's finance minister and the head of the People's Bank of China were not present and represented by their deputies.

The recent failures of two U.S. banks have alarmed policymakers about vulnerabilities in the global banking system and the possibility of market turbulence as a result of aggressive U.S. interest rate rises.



Ukraine Claims Ousting Russian Forces From Some Positions in Bakhmut



KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukrainian units have ousted Russian forces from some positions in Bakhmut amid fierce battles, a top Ukrainian general said, as the White House believes that more than 20,000 Russian fighters have been killed in Ukraine since December.

"The situation (in Bakhmut) is quite difficult," Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, the Ukrainian commander of ground forces, said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app.

"At the same time, in certain parts of the city, the enemy was counterattacked by our units and left some positions" in recent days, he said.

The 10-month-long battle for the eastern Ukrainian city has taken on a symbolic importance for both sides. It has become the fulcrum of a war that has seen little shift in front lines since late 2022, leaving both sides looking for a breakthrough.

On Monday, Russia unleashed a fresh volley of missiles on Ukraine overnight that killed two people in the east, set off huge blazes and damaged dozens of homes and other buildings.

The White House said on Monday that Russia has exhausted its military stockpiles and its armed forces with some 100,000 Russian troops killed or wounded in Ukraine in the past five months. Of the 20,000 killed, half have been from the Wagner Group.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of Wagner, said on Telegram on Monday that his fighters needed some 300 tonnes of artillery shells a day for the assault on Bakhmut, but were receiving only a third of that amount.

"Three hundred tonnes a day is 10 cargo containers - not a lot at all," said Prigozhin, who has often clashed with Russia's defence establishment over its conduct of the war in Ukraine.

In a separate posting on Monday evening, Prigozhin said his troops had advanced some 120 metres (400 feet) into Bakhmut at the loss of 86 of his fighters.

Syrskyi said that new Russian units are being "constantly thrown into battle for Bakhmut" despite taking heavy losses, Syrskyi said, adding: "But the enemy is unable to take control of the city."

Russian forces have steadily made incremental gains in Bakhmut, but Ukraine said on Sunday that it was still possible to supply the defenders with food, ammunition and medicine.

Qatar Spends Big to Beat Post-World Cup Blues



DOHA (Dispatches) - Months after hundreds of thousands of football fans packed into its hotels and stadiums, Qatar is seeking to remedy a bout of the post-World Cup blues by hosting more international events.

Along with the departed football crowds, thousands of foreign workers left the Persian Gulf state after Lionel Messi lifted the coveted trophy on Dec 18.

Many of those who stayed on are counting the cost.

Luxury hotels built for the tournament have laid off hundreds of staff as rooms costing thousands of dollars a night during the tournament can no longer be filled.

In a country normally hungry for labour, a shopping mall on the edge of Doha recently advertised 100 jobs and saw more than 1,000 people jostling outside for interviews.

Qatar estimates that the World Cup, which residents once dreaded, brought 1.4 million people to the state. Akhtar Patel, who runs a jewellery store in Doha's Souq Waqif market, said business in comparison is "quiet".

"We really miss those fans now," he said.

The Eid al-Fitr Muslim holiday brought back some shoppers, but the decline has been such that Sandeep Kumar, who runs a print workshop, sent two of his four staff back to India because he could no longer afford to pay them.

"We miss the vibe, but we miss the business even more," he said.

On Doha's seafront promenade, host to a World Cup fanzone, some jobless workers have been reduced to asking for cash handouts, leading the interior ministry to issue a public warning against "uncivilised" begging.

But Qatar's economy remains healthy.

After recording a trade surplus of nearly US\$100 billion in 2022, growth in 2023 – bolstered by its natural gas riches – is predicted by the World Bank to hit 3.4%, among the highest in the Middle East.

And a wave of newcomers has added nearly 100,000 to the population since the World Cup final, taking it to over three million, according to official figures.

Akbar al-Baker, head of Qatar's tourism agency and Qatar Airways, said hotel occupancy in the months after a World Cup is "always low". The tiny country has made investments in tourism and hosting more major events a focus, Baker added, predicting Qatar will welcome more than five million visitors this year – more than twice the number in pre-pandemic 2019.

Mechanical diggers are laying the ground for a six-month horticultural expo from October, which Qatar hopes will draw one million foreign visitors.

Concrete is also being poured at a new race track to host the second Qatar Formula One Grand Prix on Oct 8.

On Friday, Qatar was revealed as the host of the 24-nation basketball World Cup in 2027, despite having no tradition in the sport.

Culture minister Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad Al-Thani said that when Qatar first launched its Years of Culture series with other countries a decade ago it was a struggle to find candidates.

"Countries are now queuing to be part of the Years of Culture," he told an event for this year's partner, Indonesia.

New prime minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani took office in March and is expected to soon announce new economic initiatives, in part a response to growing competition from neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which has embarked on many reforms.

Indian Cough Syrup: Mystery Middleman May Be New Clue



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - An unnamed middleman in Mumbai provided a crucial raw material used in Indian-made cough syrups that have been linked to the deaths of more than 70 children in Gambia, a chemicals trader involved in the supply chain told Reuters.

The World Health Organization said last year the syrups, made by Indian manufacturer Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd, contained lethal toxins ethylene glycol (EG) and diethylene glycol (DEG) – used in car brake fluid. These ingredients can be used by unscrupulous actors as a substitute for propylene glycol (PG), which is a key base of syrupy medicines – because they can cost less than half the price, as Reuters reported in March.

The children who died were mostly under age 5 and died of acute kidney injury, some within days of taking the syrups.

India's drugs regulator told the WHO in December that the propylene glycol used in the syrups came from Goel Pharma Chem, a Delhi-based pharma-supplies company, and was "recorded to have been imported" from South Korean manufacturer SKC Co Ltd.

Sharad Goel, whose eponymously named company is based in north Delhi, said he had bought the ingredient in sealed barrels – but not directly from SKC.

"We bought the propylene glycol from an importer in Mumbai who bought it from SKC," Goel told Reuters in February, speaking out for the first time.

"I can't name the supplier - we have business links that we need to keep," said Goel, adding his company had "not done anything wrong." He said his business was "just a trader and we pass on sealed barrels that we get. We can do nothing with them."

Reuters could not independently confirm Goel's assertion. He said that after the Gambia poisonings, his company had stopped selling PG but continued to supply other products such as starch, and that he generally buys most of his products from 8-10 importers.

Goel subsequently stopped answering calls and when a reporter called at his business twice in April, it was locked. Workers at a neighbouring factory said they had not seen it opening in the past few months.

SKC told Reuters it had never supplied any PG either to Goel or to Maiden.

If true, Goel's claim would point to a missing link in investigations by Gambia, India and the WHO into the contaminated products. The clue comes as the WHO and Gambia's government say the search for a culprit has been stymied by a lack of information from India.

India's drugs regulator said in December its own tests found no toxins in the syrups, but its factory inspectors did earlier find that batches of medicine may have been incorrectly labeled, according to a notice it sent to Maiden seen by Reuters.

It has not made clear how, in light of that, it can be sure it tested the correct batch.

India's health ministry did not respond to questions about the alleged intermediary or about any of the other issues raised in this story.

Asked to comment on the claim there was a middleman in the supply chain, the WHO's lead investigator said inquiries have reached a "dead end" due to a lack of information from the Indian authorities and the drugmaker.

"If you ask and you don't get informed, it's a dead end," Rutendo Kuwana, the WHO's team lead for incidents with substandard and falsified medicines, told Reuters in an interview on March 31.

Clouds Carry Drug-Resistant Bacteria Across Distances

MONTREAL (Dispatches) - For a team of Canadian and French researchers, dark clouds on the horizon are potentially ominous not because they signal an approaching storm — but because they were found in a recent study to carry drug-resistant bacteria over long distances.

"These bacteria usually live on the surface of vegetation like leaves, or in soil," lead author Florent Rossi said in a telephone interview.

"We found that they are carried by the wind into the atmosphere and can travel long distances — around the world — at high altitudes in clouds," he told AFP.

The discovery was published in last month's edition of the journal *Science of The Total Environment*.

The researchers from Laval University in Quebec City and Clermont Auvergne University in central France searched for antibiotic-resistant genes from bacteria found in cloud samples.

The samples were taken from an atmospheric research station perched 1,465 meters (4,806 feet) above sea level atop the Puy de Dome summit, a dormant volcano in central France between September 2019 and October 2021.

An analysis of the retrieved mist revealed that they contained



between 330 to more than 30,000 bacteria per millilitre of cloud water, for an average of around 8,000 bacteria per millilitre.

They also identified 29 subtypes of antibiotic-resistant genes in the bacteria.

Drug resistance occurs when bacteria are exposed to antibiotics and develop an immunity to them over generations.

Health authorities have repeatedly warned these adaptations are becoming what the study described as a "major sanitary concern worldwide," making it harder — in some cases impossible — to treat certain bacterial infections as antibiotics use continues to rise in health care and agriculture.

The study offered no conclusions on the potential health effects of the spread in the atmosphere of antibiotic resistant bacteria — estimating that only 5 per cent to 50 per cent of the organisms could be alive and potentially active.

But Rossi suggested the risks are likely low.

"The atmosphere is very stressful for bacteria, and most of those we found were environmental bacteria," which are less likely to be harmful to humans, he explained. "So people shouldn't be afraid to go for a walk in the rain."

"It's unclear if those genes would be transmitted to other bacteria," Rossi added.

Atmospheric monitoring, however, could help pinpoint the sources of drug-resistant bacteria — similar to wastewater tests for Covid-19 and other pathogens — "in order to limit their dispersal," he said.

Astronomers Reveal What Ignites Quasars

PARIS (Dispatches) - Astronomers said on April 26 that for the first time they have confirmed what ignites quasars, the brightest and most powerful objects in the universe, which put galaxies in their "death throes."

These celestial behemoths form when two galaxies smash into each other, the astronomers said, warning that this could be the Milky Way's fate in a few billion years.

Quasars are one of the most extreme objects in the universe, some shining with the brightness of a trillion stars despite being packed into the space of our Solar System.

They sit in the heart of galaxies, powered by supermassive black holes, requiring a huge amount of gas to be so staggeringly bright. But exactly what creates quasars has been a matter of debate since their discovery in the 1950s.

In a new study, an international team of researchers said they have "clear evidence" that quasars are triggered by two galaxies colliding, which releases the vast amounts of energy needed.

Clive Tadhunter, an astrophysicist at the University of Sheffield in the UK and one of the study's authors, told AFP that this could be the fate of the Milky Way one day.

The nearby Andromeda Galaxy is "coming directly towards us at about 200 kilometers a second," he said.

It will collide with the Milky Way in roughly five billion years, and "we could get a quasar" as a result, he said.

Quasars push out all the gas from a galaxy, preventing any new stars from forming, he added.

The researchers compared observations of 48 galaxies with quasars at their center to 100

without them. Galaxies hosting quasars were three times as likely to have had collisions with other galaxies, the study said.

While the theory that such collisions ignited quasars has been around for decades, it was difficult to prove.

Tadhunter said this was because observations had often been carried out with telescopes that were optimised to look at objects in the centre of galaxies, but were less effective at spotting the distorted features at their edges that indicate past collisions.

For example, these diffuse structures "get washed out" when observed by the Hubble Space Telescope, he said.

So the team used land-based observatories, such as the Isaac Newton Telescope on the Spanish island of La Palma.



Eni Sees No Major Energy Price Upsets in 2023

ROME (Dispatches) - The CEO of Italian oil and gas company Eni, Claudio Descalzi, has said he does not expect any "big shocks" on the energy markets this year. "European gas storages are full and, although the global economy has restarted, demand is not at its highest because China has not yet resumed full operations," Descalzi said in an interview with La Stampa newspaper. "Above all, in these months we have managed to diversify supplies, eliminating dependencies that are dangerous for the stability of supplies and prices," he added. He said imports of Russian gas had fallen to almost zero, thanks to supplies of liquefied natural gas from the United States and new contracts with a number of African countries.



China Factory Activity Unexpectedly Cools in April

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's manufacturing activity unexpectedly shrank in April, official data showed on Sunday, raising pressure on policymakers seeking to boost an economy struggling for a post-COVID lift-off amid subdued global demand and persistent property weakness.

The official manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) declined to 49.2 from 51.9 in March, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, below the 50-point mark that separates expansion and contraction in activity on a monthly basis.

That missed expectations of 51.4 tipped by economists in a Reuters poll and marked the first contraction since December, when the official manufacturing PMI was at 47.0.

The world's second-biggest economy grew faster than expected in the first quarter thanks to robust services consumption, but factory output has lagged amid weak global growth. Slowing prices and surging bank savings are raising doubts about demand.

The Politburo, a top decision-making body of the ruling Communist Party, on Friday stressed that restoring and expanding demand is the key to a durable recovery and cautioned the current improvement is mainly restorative "with weak momentum and insufficient demand".

"A lack of market demand and the high-base effect from the quick manufacturing recovery in the first quarter" were among factors that led to the contraction in April, said senior NBS statistician Zhao Qinghe.

New export orders edged down to 47.6 from 50.4 in March, the PMI showed.

The manufacturing sector, which employs about 18% of China's workforce, remains under pressure due to slack global demand. Some exporters told Reuters at the country's biggest trade fair they have frozen investments and some have cut labor costs in response.

To boost trade and employment, the cabinet last week unveiled plans, including supporting auto exports, facilitating visas for overseas businesspeople and providing subsidies to firms that hire college graduates.

Confidence in the property sector, for years a pillar of China's growth, remains fragile. Multiple crises since mid-2020 have included developers' debt defaults and stalled construction of pre-sold housing projects.

While policy support measures have helped improve conditions in the industry, pockets of weakness remain and a full recovery appears some way off.

Despite the recent strength in consumption, the non-manufacturing PMI edged down to 56.4 versus 58.2 in March.

Data this month showed retail sales growth quickening in March to near two-year highs, but that was off a low base and economists are cautious on the sustainability of such strength.

The composite PMI, which includes manufacturing and non-manufacturing activity, dropped to 54.4 from 57.0.

The PMI readings, along with other mixed economic signals, including robust holiday travel and muted property market activities, "will likely keep the pressure on the government to continue its supportive fiscal and monetary policies in Q2", said Zhiwei Zhang, chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.

Singapore Urged to Avoid Economic Contraction

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Singapore is expected to post slower economic growth this year but it "should avoid an outright contraction", Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said.

The Southeast Asian city-state's economic performance is often seen as a barometer of the global environment because of its reliance on trade with the rest of the world.

The financial center also has one of the busiest ports in the world which serves as a key link between Asia and the rest of the world.

In his annual May Day message, Lee said there is hope inflation will let up in the second half of the year and that retrenchment numbers "remain manageable".

"But our external environment remains volatile, fraught with serious geopolitical tensions," Lee warned, pointing to the risk of recession in the West, where interest rates continue to be hiked to tame inflation.

Singapore's economy expanded 3.6 percent in 2022, slowing from the 8.9 percent growth in 2021.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore has said the financial hub's GDP is expected to grow between 0.5 percent and 2.5 percent this year.

The city-state will have to adapt to the economic disruption of emerging industries and technologies, Lee added.

"Singapore's survival depends on us staying open and doing business with the world," he said.

"This means continually transforming our industries, enhancing existing capabilities and building new ones as we move into growth markets."



Fitch Cuts France's Rating to 'AA-'

PARIS (Dispatches) - Fitch cut France's sovereign credit rating by one notch to 'AA-', saying a potential political deadlock and social unrest posed risks to President Emmanuel Macron's reform agenda.

Responding to the decision, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Fitch was underestimating the positive impacts of the government's plans to reform and strengthen the economy, and reaffirmed France's commitment to cutting its debts.

Fitch, which also revised up the country's outlook to stable from negative, said France's economy - the euro zone's second-biggest - would expand by 0.8% this year, in line with the euro zone average but below the agency's 1.1% growth forecast in its last review in November.

"Social and political pressures illustrated by the protests against the pension reform will complicate fiscal consolidation," the global credit ratings agency said. The French economy grew by 0.2% in the first quarter despite a series of strikes against the government's pension bill, but inflation remained stubbornly high.

Fitch forecast that inflationary pressures will ease during the second half of 2023 due to base effects, and that inflation will average at 5.5% in 2023, before slowing to 2.9% in 2024.

Inflation in France rose to 5.9% year-on-year in April from 5.7% in March. Statistics agency INSEE said the increase was partly due to higher energy prices. Fitch added that France's fiscal metrics are weaker than its peers and it expects general government debt/GDP to remain on a modest upward trend, reflecting relatively large fiscal deficits and only minor progress with fiscal consolidation.

Japan's JERA Sees More LNG Going to Asia

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan's JERA, one of the world's biggest buyers of liquefied natural gas (LNG), expects to divert more of its LNG trade volume to other Asian countries in the long run, as demand weakens at home, an official said.

On Friday, JERA reached a fresh LNG purchase deal with a U.S. company and predicted a jump in 2023/24 net profit to 300 billion yen, boosted by lower fuel costs. Its LNG transaction volume came to 37 million tons in the 2021/22 fiscal year.

Looking ahead, the company's transaction volumes "may decline or may stay the same," Yukio Kani, JERA's new global chief executive officer and chairman, told Reuters in an interview.

"Japan may not need LNG for 20 years ... but other Asian countries need to replace coal with something and LNG will play an important role," he said, adding that JERA could supply fuel to those countries likely to need it.

Japan's biggest utility and top LNG buyer, JERA bought a stake of 27% in Aboitiz Power of the Philippines in 2021 and Aboitiz is considering using ammonia in existing coal power plants, just as JERA is doing, Kani said.

"We don't view LNG demand just for Japan, but for Asia as well," he said.

Last December, JERA signed a key deal with Oman LNG to buy up to 12 cargoes, or about 800,000 tonnes a year for a decade, beginning from 2025.

Kani did not clearly say whether JERA plans to sign more long-term contracts, however.

Asian spot LNG prices held at 22-month lows in April as demand stayed weak in the key north Asian markets of China, Japan and South Korea.

They had surged to a record in August 2022 after Russia curtailed natural gas supplies to Europe in response to sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine.

"The volatility is very high," Kani said when asked about the outlook for the market.

"If we face a severe winter and China coming back to the market, it is a very bad sign," he added, saying China had large appetite that could lead to a very tight market if it needed to buy spot LNG.

Japan was the world's biggest buyer of the super-chilled fuel in 2022, its imports exceeding those of China, due to slow economic activity amid Beijing's strict COVID-19 curbs.

Apart from its integrated gas-to-power business, which covers fossil fuel procurement through power generation, JERA is expanding use of renewable power to decarbonise.

Western Insurers May Inadvertently Help to Ship Russian Crude

LONDON (OilPrice) - Western tanker insurers are concerned that they may inadvertently help ship Russian crude oil above the \$60 per barrel price cap as purchases and transactions have become opaque since the G7 introduced the price ceiling in early December 2022.

Protection and indemnity (P&I) clubs have attestation that the shipments they are covering have not been bought above the price cap, but they are wary that increasingly evasive practices by Russia and its new crude customers may obscure the actual price at which Russian crude cargoes are being traded.

As international oil prices rose after the surprise OPEC+ cuts announced in early April, the price of Russia's flagship crude grade, Urals, has ticked up to approach \$60 per barrel. The ESPO grade, shipped from the Russian Far East port of Kozmino, has been consistently trading above \$60 per barrel ever since the EU embargo and the EU/G7 price cap came into effect on December 5.

In recent weeks, warnings from the U.S. Treasury Department have advised U.S. and other Western insurers that they may have breached the price cap mechanism in shipments out of Kozmino.

Overall, Western insurers cannot be sure whether they have covered cargoes of crude sold above \$60 per barrel.

"We are definitely not able to assess the oil prices of shipments," Lars Lange, secretary general of the International Union of Marine Insurance, told Reuters this week.

Ship owners and maritime cargo insurers cannot reliably assess the actual price of a Russian cargo, Mike Salthouse, head of external affairs at NorthStandard P&I Club, told Reuters.

"If Russia wants to export its oil and sell it above the price of the price cap, then it's in the interests of both the Russian exporter and the receiver not to release information as to what the true price of the cargo was," Salthouse told Reuters.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Treasury Department published a warning to U.S. companies about possible evasion of the price cap, pointing specifically to ESPO shipments from Kozmino.

"OFAC is aware of reports that ESPO and other crudes exported via Pacific ports in the Russian Federation, such as Kozmino, may be trading above the price cap and may be using covered services provided by U.S. persons," the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said.

"These U.S. service providers may be unaware that they are providing covered services involving Russian oil purchased above the price cap, as the non-U.S. persons involved in the exports may have provided incomplete or false documentation or used other deceptive practices."

Essentially all transactions for Russian crude at the Baltic Sea ports of Primorsk and Ust-Luga as well as the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk were conducted below the price cap in the first quarter of 2023. But more than 95% of crude volumes exported from Kozmino were priced above \$60 per barrel, researchers at KSE Institute, a part of the Kyiv School of Economics, wrote in a report this week. The export price of Russian oil out of Kozmino averaged \$73 per barrel, they noted.

Pakistan Economy Faces Inflation And Slowdown Challenges



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's economy is still facing significant challenges, and the country is struggling with elevated inflation and a slowdown in economic activities.

According to the Ministry of Finance's monthly economic update report, the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation will be hovering around 36-38 percent for April, and that the headline inflation (CPI) is expected to remain at an elevated level in the months to come.

The Ministry of Finance also stated in its monthly economic outlook for April 2023 that its key drivers are food and energy price hikes, and further currency depreciation and rising administered prices have contributed to the overall price level hike. Although global commodity prices are showing a downward trend, they are still higher compared to the pre-pandemic level.

The supply of essential crops remains short of domestic requirements due to a slow recovery from flood-led damages, which is causing a demand-supply gap and intensifying inflation. Additionally, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is enacting contractionary monetary policy, but inflationary expectations are not settling down.

The federal government, in liaison with provincial governments, is closely monitoring the demand-supply gap of essential items and taking necessary measures to ease out inflationary pressures. However, Pakistan's economy is still facing significant challenges characterized by high inflation and a slowdown in economic activity.

Export From Maku Free Zone Hits \$234m

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - As announced by the commercial director of Maku Free Trade Zone Organization, services and commodities valued at \$234 million were exported from the Maku FTZ, in Iran's northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Ali Qanbari said that services worth over \$223 million, and commodities

valued at \$10.68 million were exported from the zone during the previous year. Maku is one of the seven major free zones of Iran.

It has 140 kilometers of border with Azerbaijan Republic and 130 kilometers of border with Turkey.

As Maku is among the most newly-established and also the largest free zones of the country, there is a high need for the creation of infrastructures in this zone.



Turkey Set to Join Nuclear Club

ANKARA 9Dispatches) - Turkey is well on its way to becoming part of the club of nations using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes amid its efforts to diversify energy resources, according to an expert.

Adnan Shihab-Eldin, former acting secretary-general of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), spoke to Daily Sabah in Istanbul Friday as part of the Future Leaders Executive Program (FLEP). The event was organized by the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), the umbrella youth group of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Member states organize events to promote international cooperation between the youth and with the participation of governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide with a vision of economic and cultural development.

Turkey is making significant strides toward achieving a diverse energy mix, Shihab-Eldin said and pointed out that this is the most efficient and logical way to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Shihab-Eldin emphasized the importance of exploring and deploying all possible decarbonization technologies to achieve low carbon or net zero emission targets by 2050.

He commended Turkey's efforts to pursue a diverse energy mix that includes nuclear power, renewables and natural gas with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). He highlighted the recent milestone of Turkey receiving the first nuclear fuel shipment for its first nuclear reactor, marking the country's progress in becoming part of the nuclear club of nations for peaceful purposes.

"Turkey has thought about nuclear for a long time but the fact that it continued to explore it, and when the opportunity came, they went ahead decisively with the plans, cooperating with Russia and benefiting from what Russia is offering," he said.

"We saw the celebration on the occasion of the arrival of the first nuclear fuel shipment for the first reactor when it arrived. That means Turkey is well underway to become part of the nuclear club of nations for peaceful purposes. And in that, Turkey is helping itself not rely on only one source or one resource."

With a ceremony last week attended by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin online, Turkey's first nuclear plant and a joint Russia-Turkey project, Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), received the initial batch of nuclear fuel.

"Turkey has risen to the league of countries with nuclear power in the world, albeit after a 60-year delay," the president said at the ceremony.

Erdoğan said the EU eliminates roadblocks by accepting nuclear energy as green energy, adding: "We made our country part of this development with Akkuyu."

Akkuyu NPP is Turkey's "biggest joint investment" with Russia, Erdoğan said.

The plant will be fully operational by 2028 and supply 10% of Turkey's electricity consumption. Shihab-Eldin, meanwhile, also noted Turkey's vast potential for renewables, such as wind and solar, and urged the country to deploy these resources fully as part of a portfolio of all available competitive resources. However, he cautioned against relying solely on renewables, citing the example of Germany, which ended up with the most expensive average cost of electricity per kilowatt-hour (KWh) by relying only on renewable sources.

The former OPEC official also suggested that Turkey should explore and deploy its available gas resources, whether it is in the Black Sea or the Mediterranean. He emphasized the need to think ahead about combining gas deployment with decarbonization, as there is no escape from the fact that if we want to continue to use fossil fuels and meet the Paris Agreement goal at the same time, we have to decarbonize whatever fossil fuels we use, whether oil or gas.

Turkey on April 20 started natural gas production from a vast reserve – around 710 billion cubic meters (bcm) - discovered in the Black Sea.

According to experts, 10 million cubic meters of gas per day in the first phase would meet around 6% of Turkey's annual consumption, which stands at 60 bcm.

It will deliver a boost to the economy and cover a significant part of Turkey's energy needs, reducing its dependence on foreign sources while strengthening its hand in contracts with major gas-supplying countries.

Turkey's strategic position at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, Africa and



Central Asia means that the country could become a key player in the global energy market, according to Shihab-Eldin.

He went on to explain how Turkey could benefit from its position by building the necessary infrastructure for energy imports, exports, pipelines and tankers. "Hydrogen is coming on the scene also because it is going to be an important clean fuel substituting for fossil fuel," he said. "So Turkey could position itself also as a hub for blue and green hydrogen."

Shihab-Eldin added that many countries are trying to position themselves as a hub for hydrogen, including the Netherlands, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. However, Turkey's central location could give it an advantage over its competitors.

Patrick Graichen, the undersecretary of the German Ministry of Economy and Climate Protection, most recently said that his country is working on pipelines to transport green hydrogen to be produced in Turkey to his country.

"By using Turkey's enormous solar and wind energy potential in green hydrogen production, the green hydrogen produced will be transported from Turkey to Germany. We are working on transporting it through pipelines to be built," Graichen told Anadolu Agency (AA) earlier.

While Turkey currently relies heavily on energy imports, Shihab-Eldin believes that the country has the potential to become a significant energy producer in the future.

Global oil prices are expected to continue to fluctuate, but experts in the industry are not too worried about the potential spikes in prices. Shihab-Eldin explained that even if prices rise to unreasonable levels, they tend to come down very quickly.

"The fair average, for consumers and producers, has been somewhere around \$70 to \$90," Shihab-Eldin said. "That is what everybody is comfortable with right now. If you are a consumer, you want the price to be \$70 or below, if you are a producer, you want the price to be \$90 and above. But that's the range of the comfort zone for everybody."

He added that when he was with the OPEC, they used to talk about a price band that was comfortable for everyone, which was between \$22 to \$28. Adjusting for inflation, that range now translates to \$70 to \$90.

Shihab-Eldin emphasized the importance of having spare capacity to cope with any unexpected surge in demand in the future. "You should have some spare capacity of a few million barrels per day. And the responsibility to provide sufficient spare capacity is taken on by OPEC and the Gulf countries specifically under the leadership of Saudi Arabia – which is where most of the spare capacity exists."

He noted that the OPEC and OPEC+ are playing an effective role in ensuring that there is always enough supply and that there is spare capacity to respond to shortages due to war, weather, industrial accidents or other factors.

Raisi's Strategic Visit...

FROM PAGE 1

"Economic ties in also high on the agenda. The two countries have had successful cooperation in various fields such as security and the fight against terrorism. Just like the effective and decisive cooperation in the season of fighting terrorism, the two countries can now stand together in the construction season taking into account Iran's engineering capabilities and capabilities," Jahromi noted.

Iran maintains an advisory mission in Syria at the request of Damascus with the aim of helping the war-torn Arab country get rid of the foreign-backed militants, who have been fighting against the democratically-elected Syrian government since 2011.

Also on Tuesday, Iran's Ambassador to Damascus Hossein Akbari expressed Tehran's readiness to help the Syrian nation and government pass through the post-war era.

Akbari said that Tehran and Damascus have stood by each other in difficult times and maintained cordial relations over the past 44 years.

"Iran has proper capabilities in economic, production, technical-engineering, industrial and high tech fields as well as new technologies, and it has made good achievements in scientific and technological sectors," he added.

"Like the war period, we are ready to help the Syrian people and government so that the country can overcome the current situation."

The envoy further noted that the Iranian and Syrian expenditure has been appropriate as they today enjoy a victorious and superior position in the region while many countries are resuming their relations with the pair.

The Spokesman stated that reducing and neutralizing the effects of sanctions forms the pivot of the government's comprehensive bill to counter the sanctions.

Bahadori-Jahromi said: "Reducing and neutralizing the effects of sanctions, and especially the effective support of foreign nationals affected by sanctions, is one of the main axes of the bill."

He further noted that various Iranian executive bodies are obliged to foresee the necessary mechanisms to deal with sanctions in the framework of their relations and contracts with foreign countries.

The official concluded: "Also, the executive bodies are required to identify, regulate, evaluate, and document the violated rights of the Iranians and send them to international authorities for follow-up."

Speaking about the volume of foreign investment in the 13th administration under President, Raisi the Spokesman for Iran's government Bahadori Jahromi said: "From the inauguration of the 13th administration till the end of April 2023, foreign investment projects were approved and the foreign investment value of these approvals was ten billion and 765 million dollars."

Of course, the Foreign Investment Organization approved the investments, and according to that organization, at least 6 billion dollars out of the ten billion dollars announced for their investment have been confirmed, which it has mentioned as valid approved projects.

The 13th administration has decided to invest 6 billion dollars in the Islamic Iran with the diplomacy of the neighborhood.

No Need for Extra-Regional...

FROM PAGE 1

In similar remarks on Saturday, Commander of the IRGC Navy Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said his forces will resolutely "protect and safeguard" the Persian Gulf and its resources, urging the United States and the Israeli regime to immediately leave the strategic waterway.

Tangsiri added that "the illegitimate presence of the aggressive United States and the child-killing Israeli regime in this region has endangered the stability and security of the Persian Gulf," calling on Washington and Tel Aviv to leave the area as soon as possible "so that this sensitive region becomes safer."

The Persian Gulf — spanning some 251,000 square kilometers — is bounded by the Arvand River in the north, which forms the frontier between Iran and Iraq, and the Strait of Hormuz in the south, linking the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

The strategic inland sea is an international trade route connecting the Middle East to Africa, India, and China.

ECB, IMF Welcome EU Proposals to Revamp Spending Rules



STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - The European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund welcomed the EU's proposals to overhaul its fiscal rules to boost growth, but the IMF called for more action.

The EU's executive arm unveiled the plans on Wednesday but they have sparked a rift between member states over how to encourage investment in key areas, such as defence, while keeping a strong watch over government spending. The "frugal" northern countries including Germany want the rules to remain strict, while southern states like Italy say they constrain their ability to invest.

ECB president Christine Lagarde said the bank appreciated the "commission's effort to reach a compromise with member states because that is already unsure given the balancing act that you see in the documents".

Lagarde also pointed to the "differences and disagreements between countries because they face different challenges".

"(It) is a good proposal," IMF's European department director Alfred Kammer told reporters in Stockholm, but he said there was a need for "further action".

He called for an independent European fiscal council "that could look at methodology and can intervene on methodology, for instance, outside of the commission".

New Research Shows Efficacy of Cranberries in Preventing UTIs

LONDON (Dispatches) - More than just a myth or hearsay, a recent Australian study shows these small red berries could indeed be helpful in staving off the urinary infection.

These small red berries native to North America have long been said to help with UTIs, and now new research backs it up. More than just a myth or hearsay, it turns out that cranberries could indeed be beneficial in preventing urinary tract infections (UTIs), as revealed by new research conducted by scientists in Australia.

This is the first time science has been able to attribute such properties to these small red berries native to North America, providing evidence to confirm a decades-old myth. Despite numerous studies on the subject, science had not previously been able to substantiate claims that cranberries could prevent UTIs, with the last recent review conducted in 2012 and based on 24 trials.

Iran Takes Delivery of...

FROM PAGE 1

"Sixteen planes have been grounded for more than 10 years, 68 planes for less than 10 years and 39 planes for 2 to 5 years," he noted.

He said Iran currently has 180 active planes, including a number of grounded aircraft that have been repaired and returned to the aviation fleet. In the meantime, the CAO is working to purchase medium-range planes to keep smaller airlines afloat, Mohammadi Bakhsh added. Following the nuclear deal of 2015, Iran had placed orders for purchases of 200 brand new passenger planes from Western suppliers, including from Airbus and Boeing. The contracts, however, were suspended in 2018 after

the United States withdrew from the accord and restored sanctions on Iran. Meanwhile the CEO of Iran Air said that Iran Air has no share in recent purchase of planes and Iran Air seeks buying a certain type of plane to diversify its air fleet.

He reiterated that the priority of Iran Air is to repair and bring back the grounded planes to its fleet and this year 50% of the grounded ATR planes will be repaired and join the fleet.

He also said that Iranian airlines have not any problem for refueling of their planes in Saudi Arabia despite sanctions because Saudis have not sanctioned Iran and by the way Iranian planes mostly need no refueling in Riyadh.

Iran-Brazil...

FROM PAGE 1

"Petrochemical products in Iran are usually offered to buyers through tenders and at the best price, while Brazilian buyers are used to buying their products at ports, so it is a big challenge for us to have traders who can buy the product from the Iranian manufacturer and deliver it to the Brazilian consumer."

"Our businessmen should have enough capital to be able to deposit their money in an account for at least two months and not have to worry about the two-month distance of transporting products from Iran to Brazil," he added.

Gharibi said the extreme fluctuation of prices has caused the business of urea products to Brazil to be associated with a high risk for traders.

"Hence, it is necessary to think of a solution inside the country to solve this problem, such as calculating the price at the time of delivery or finding mechanisms through which the possible loss of the trader can be avoided to a large extent."

Last month, reports said the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL) is planning to launch a direct container route to Brazil.

Hamed Ghaderi, a member of Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce, said the launch of a direct shipping route between Iran and Brazil will be a major positive development in trade ties between the two countries.

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Yates Wins Tour of Romandie

GENEVA (Dispatches) - British rider Adam Yates won the Tour of Romandie cycling race after a 170km run around the magnificent Lake Lemman as the Team UAE man finished in the main bunch in the fifth and final stage. The run from Vuflens-la-Ville to Geneva ended in a mass sprint which Colombian Fernando Gaviria of Movistar won ahead of German Nikias Arndt of Bahrain Victorious and Briton Ethan Hayter of Ineos, who clinched the jersey for best sprinter.

Green Grabs Emotional Playoff Win in LPGA

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Hannah Green ended her LPGA title drought, winning the LA Championship with a par at the second playoff hole to capture the victory ahead of Lin Xiyu and Aditi Ashok. Green claimed her third LPGA title, she won the Portland Classic and a major crown at the Women's PGA Championship in 2019. When her short par putt dropped for the win at the par-three 18th at Wilshire Country Club, Green couldn't hold back her emotions.

Curry Hits 50 as Warriors Advance

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry scored 50 points in a record-shattering performance to send the defending champion Golden State Warriors into the second round of the NBA playoffs while a Jimmy Butler ankle injury raised tensions for the triumphant Miami Heat. Curry, a four-time NBA champion and two-time NBA Most Valuable Player, was nearly unstoppable as the Warriors won 120-100 at Sacramento to capture their best-of-seven Western Conference series 4-3.

"I just wanted to come out and look for shots early, get my teammates going throughout the game," Curry said. "But when I'm looking for shots, it usually works in our favor." The 35-year-old guard delivered an incredible performance, hitting 20 of a career-high 38 shot attempts and going 7-of-18 from 3-point range and 3-of-5 from the free throw line. "It was about being aggressive," Curry said. "I got 38 shots for a reason. We started to see where the holes were and I could be ultra aggressive and it worked."

Curry also added eight rebounds and six assists. "Steph was elite. He put these guys on his back and said, 'We're not losing,'" Kings coach Mike Brown said. "Give Steph a ton of credit for doing exactly what he's supposed to do. Heck of a performance."

Curry's 50 points were a career playoff high and the most points in any NBA game seven -- breaking the old mark of 48 set by Kevin Durant for Brooklyn in a 2021 loss to Milwaukee. "What an incredible all-time performance," Curry's backcourt teammate Klay Thompson said. "This is a game seven I'll forever remember as the Steph Curry game." The Warriors next face LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers in a Western Conference semi-final matchup starting on Tuesday. Golden State faced a James-led Cleveland in four straight NBA Finals, winning three of them. "It's special from the first series we played him in Cleveland," Curry said. "We're blessed to be playing at this level still and excited about a new chapter."

In the other playoff contest, Butler scored 25 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Miami over the host New York Knicks 108-101 in their Eastern Conference second-round opener but suffered a right ankle injury.



The series continues Tuesday at New York but Butler's status will steal the spotlight until then. "No idea," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "You just don't know with ankle sprains. I don't even know if we will know more by tomorrow. We'll just have to wait and see. It will be a waiting game."

Asked how the ankle felt, Butler said, "Like a rolled ankle." At Sacramento, the Kings had no answer for Curry in the winner-take-all battle. After 20 first-half points, he pressed the attack in the third quarter as the Warriors pulled away along with Kevon Looney, who grabbed 21 rebounds.

Thompson completed a four-point play with 1.4 seconds remaining in the third quarter to give Golden State a 91-81 edge entering the fourth. The Warriors stretched the lead to 104-83 with 6:30 remaining and cruised from there.

Domantas Sabonis led the Kings with 22 points but had only six in the second half. There was an intense atmosphere at Madison Square Garden, which had not seen a second-round playoff contest since 2013. The game and Butler's ankle turned when Butler fell to the court with the Heat up 95-92 and 5:05 to play. As Butler planted his right foot to drive to the basket, falling Knicks defender Josh Hart's foot struck Butler's foot. Butler limped to the bench but returned to make two free throws and remained in the game.

Often standing in a corner far from the run of play, Butler was largely stationary. Butler's teammates stepped up. Gabe Vincent made a 3-pointer and Bam Adebayo and reserve Kyle Lowry, who scored 12 of his 18 in the second half, added hoops in a pivotal 7-0 run for a 104-94 Miami edge.



Alcaraz Relishing Zverev Rematch In Madrid

MADRID (Dispatches) - World number two Carlos Alcaraz said he is looking forward to facing Alexander Zverev at the Madrid Open again, nearly a year after defeating the German in the final of last year's edition.

Alcaraz eased past Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 6-2 7-5 on Sunday to set up a last-16 showdown with Zverev, who demolished Frenchman Hugo Grenier 6-1 6-0.

The pair met twice during last year's clay swing, with Alcaraz beating Zverev in Madrid to win his second ATP Masters 1000 title before Zverev got his revenge in the French Open quarter-finals a few weeks later.

"I really want to play that match. We played a few times, head-to-head he is up," Alcaraz said.

"I really want to show my great level here in front of my home crowd. I have great memories from last year in the final but obviously I have to be really focused in that match.

"I know that Zverev is a really good player, a really aggressive one with good serves. I have to show all my skills."

Swiatek Into Madrid Last 16

MADRID (Dispatches) - World number one Iga Swiatek claimed she had endured a "tricky" afternoon despite easing to a straight-sets win over American left-hander Bernarda Pera to reach the Madrid Open last 16.

Swiatek, warming up for the defence of her French Open title, claimed a 6-3, 6-2 win over 29th seed Pera for a sixth consecutive victory on clay this season.

"I wouldn't say it was easy. Every match is tricky here," Swiatek said after her 75-minute outing.

"I'm happy that I'm getting my rhythm. Playing against a lefty is never easy ... but I'm pretty happy that I was disciplined and focused."

Swiatek next faces either Chinese 22nd seed Zheng Qinwen, who was the only player to take a set off her at Roland Garros last year, or 16th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Also progressing to the fourth round on Sunday was world number three Jessica Pegula who clinched a gruelling 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) victory over Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic.

Pegula, 29, made the final in Madrid in 2022 where she lost to Ons Jabeur. She will now tackle Italy's Martina Trevisan on Monday for a quarter-final spot.

NBA Fines Grizzlies Forward Brooks

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Memphis Grizzlies forward Dillon Brooks, whose taunting of LeBron James backfired badly in the NBA playoffs, will pay \$25,000 for ducking out on reporters after being eliminated from the post-season.

The NBA announced Sunday that Brooks has been fined \$25,000 for violating league rules requiring players to be available for media interviews.

Brooks had called out Los Angeles Lakers superstar James, a four-time NBA Most Valuable Player and four-time champion, after a Memphis victory in game two of their best-of-seven first round series.

Alonso Upbeat Despite Podium Run Ending



BAKU (Dispatches) - Fernando Alonso was far from downhearted after missing out on his fourth consecutive podium of the season at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in Baku. The Spanish veteran's decision to quit Alpine and join Aston Martin has proved an inspired choice.

Alonso made the podiums for his rejuvenated new team in the season-opener in Bahrain, followed by Saudi Arabia and Melbourne - the first time he had strung together three top three finishes since the 2013 season.

Finishing fourth on Sunday -- behind Sergio Perez, Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc -- ended the sequence, but he was packing a lot of positives into his luggage as he headed off to Florida for next weekend's Miami Grand Prix.

"I'm quite happy. We had pace in (Saturday's) sprint, and showed we were even stronger today. It was a tricky weekend for Aston," said Alonso, alluding to his team's issues with its DRS (drag reduction system) and set up.

"We were not that fast, and still only one second away from the podium.

"Ferrari had a perfect weekend: two pole positions, super fast car. They were just one second from the Astons. We have to be happy overall."

Alonso's teammate, Lance Stroll, son of team owner Lawrence Stroll, came in seventh. Alonso sits third in the drivers championship with 60 points, 33 behind leader and world champion Verstappen, with Stroll in eighth place on 27 points.

Looking ahead to Miami next Sunday Alonso anticipated a tight tussle between Aston Martin and their two main rivals for any crumbs falling off Red Bull's overlaiden plate. "Miami is a more standard format (to Baku). It's a different thing again. Ferrari, Mercedes and Aston are so close together so every weekend will be a little bit different, with always one of us a little bit ahead."

Referee Files Criminal Complaint After Penalty Threats

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The referee who admitted to making a mistake in Borussia Dortmund's 1-1 draw at Bochum has filed a criminal complaint due to threats against himself and his family.

German media reported Sascha Stegemann, who refereed the draw which saw Dortmund fall behind Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga title race, was even under police protection.

Speaking on German TV on Sunday, Stegemann, who on Saturday admitted his mistake after reviewing the footage of the incident, said he felt lodging the complaint was necessary.

"I have a great understanding for the emotions on Friday night" Stegemann told TV show Doppelpass.

"But my family and I were threatened very specifically. I have seen (these threats) myself and have filed a criminal complaint accordingly."

Stegemann said he was considering "whether it makes sense to take a break".

"A lot of negative things have come my way and I still have to process them."

In Friday's key moment, Dortmund forward Karim Adeyemi was brought down in the box by Bochum defender Danilo Soares midway through the second half with the scores locked.

However, Stegemann waived play on and declined to use VAR to review the contact.

On Saturday, the German FA issued a statement saying "the TV pictures prove" the incident was "a foul and a penalty".

Stegemann then did an interview with German tabloid Bild saying he was "really annoyed" and "feels crappy", admitting he realised he made a mistake on watching the footage.

Bild reported that Stegemann was accompanied to the TV studios on Sunday by several police officers, some of whom can be seen in the background.



Klopp Risks Sanction for Referee "Against Us" Rant

LIVERPOOL (Dispatches) - Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp could face disciplinary action after accusing the referee in the dramatic 4-3 win over Tottenham of bearing a grudge against his team.

Diogo Jota's stoppage-time strike sealed victory at Anfield, just 99 seconds after Spurs thought Richarlison's first Premier League goal for the club had rescued a point after the visitors had been 3-0 behind.

Klopp, however, was so incensed by the officiating throughout the match that he charged down the touchline to celebrate wildly in front of fourth official John Brooks — and injured himself in the process.

Klopp then lambasted referee Paul Tierney.

"We have our history with Tierney, I really don't know what he has against us, he has said there is no problem but that cannot be true," Klopp told Sky Sports.

"How he looks at me, I don't understand it. My celebration was unnecessary, but what he said to me when he gave me the yellow card is not OK."

The German boss, asked what Tierney had said, replied: "I will not say anything about it. The refs don't say what is said so I don't say what is said."

That did not stop Klopp from going on to reference Tierney's performance during Liverpool's 2-2 draw away to Spurs last season.

"Paul Tierney didn't give Harry Kane a red card but Robbo (Liverpool's Andy Robertson) got a red card. It was not the first time, there are so many things."

The Professional Game Match Officials Limited said in a statement that, having checked audio of the game, Tierney "acted in a professional manner".

"We strongly refute any suggestion that Tierney's actions were improper," the statement added.

Earlier, Klopp explained his touchline antics following Jota's winning goal by saying: "Of course, we are emotional in these moments. It's difficult. It is not OK, we shouldn't do that."

