

The Commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy Says That Today, the IRGC Navy Is at Its Highest Level of Preparedness and Has Complete Control Over the Persian Gulf

# IRAN NEWS

A French-Irish Citizen Bernard Phelan, Who Was Arrested and Sentenced to 6.5 Years in Prison For Sending Security Information At the Peak of the Unrest in Iran, Has Been Released

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## Iran Finance Minister in Saudi Arabia for Talks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi has arrived in Saudi Arabia, becoming the first Iranian official to visit the Arab kingdom following a China-brokered reconciliation agreement between Tehran and Riyadh.

Khandouzi arrived at the airport of Saudi Arabia's southern city of Jeddah on Thursday and was welcomed by Saudi officials, Islamic Development Bank managers, and members of the Iranian Consulate General in the city.

The Iranian finance minister, who is heading a high-ranking economic delegation, is scheduled to take part in bilateral meetings with Saudi officials and deliver speeches at meetings of the Islamic Development Bank, a Jeddah-based multilateral development finance institution focusing on Islamic finance for infrastructure development.

Khandouzi said last month that Tehran aimed to raise its annual trade with Riyadh to \$1 billion in the first step of resuming economic ties.

He said the target was set by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) based on the two countries' capacities.

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## Iran Ready to Help Syria Develop Defense Infrastructure



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's defense minister says Tehran is ready to assist Syria with its reconstruction process and development of its defense infrastructure in the post-conflict era.

"I assure you that Iran's Defense Ministry stands ready to ... help Syria rebuild and develop the infrastructure of its defense industry in the post-war era, as it stood by the Syrian armed forces during the fight against terrorism," Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said.

Ashtiani made the remarks during a meeting with the chief of the general staff of the Syrian army and armed Forces, General Abdul Karim Mahmoud Ibrahim, in Tehran.

He also underlined the need for holding a joint defense-technical cooperation commission with Syria.

The Iranian defense minister emphasized that the Tehran-Damascus relations are at their best due to a strategic and more importantly fraternal pact between them.

Touching on Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's landmark visit to Syria last week, Ashtiani said the agreements reached and the issues raised during the trip are being followed up.

The Syrian people's support for their political establishment and the non-adherence of many countries to the United States' unilateral policies show the declining power of the global arrogance, he added.

"The regional countries' acknowledgment of the fact that Syria's role in regional developments cannot be dismissed demonstrates the true might of Syria and its victory over the conspiracy of the enemies, especially the US and the Zionist regime," he said.

On Sunday, the Arab League, a 22-member intergovernmental organization of Arab states, agreed to welcome Syria back into the fold after more than a decade of suspension. The move consolidates a regional push to normalize ties with the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Referring to Wednesday's quadrilateral meeting between the top Iranian, Syrian, Turkish and Russian diplomats in Moscow, Ashtiani said the Islamic Republic has in different summits stressed principles such as the withdrawal of all occupation forces from Syria, the fight against terrorists, and respect for the Damascus government's national sovereignty.

Ibrahim, for his part, appreciated the all-out support provided for Syria by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, as well as the Iranian government and nation.

"Syria's current situation is the result of joint sacrifices and steadfastness of the two countries in confronting terrorism and preventing the spread of the ominous scourge to the region and the world. Syria will never forget the assistance and cooperation of its true friends," he said.

The Syrian general also called for enhancing the Iran-Syria ties in all areas, especially in the military and defense sectors.

Iran was the first country to rush to Syria's aid following the 2011 outbreak of foreign-backed violence. In 2017, military advisory assistance provided by the Islamic Republic helped the Arab nation score a monumental victory over the Daesh terrorist group.

## Iran-Pak Gas Pipeline Is Most Important for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's Minister of State for Industry and Production Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi has said that the completion of Pak-Iran gas pipeline is the most important need of the hour. Inshallah, our party will come to power and complete the pipeline. Economic conditions are changing, God willing, Pakistan will never default. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Tasneem Qureshi said that ten different departments are working under of the Ministry of Industry and soon he will issue instructions to the CEOs of these departments to cooperate with ICCI.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there is no scope for setting up new industry in the existing industrial zones of the federal capital and the plots have become very expensive. It is the need of the hour that the government should provide assistance in acquiring land in the vicinity of Islamabad for a new industrial estate. He further said that ICCI should be taken on board by the departments working under the Ministry of Industry and Production so that the business community could provide input to further improve their performance to make them more profitable.

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## Tehran to Soon Appoint Ambassador to Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (pressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says Tehran will soon appoint an ambassador to Riyadh, following a China-brokered agreement in March that ended a seven-year rupture in Saudi-Iranian relations.

The top diplomat made the remarks in an interview with ICANA, a news agency affiliated with the Iranian Parliament.

He noted the details of the reopening of the Saudi embassy in Tehran will soon be announced.

The restoration of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia provides a "great capacity" that could serve the interests of the two countries, the region, and the Muslim world, Amir-Abdollahian added.

The remarks come as the foreign ministers of the two states held their first meeting in seven years in Beijing on April 6, stressing the need to implement the reconciliation agreement signed on March 10.

Speaking on Monday in his weekly press conference, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani said that "good progress" has been made in the reopening of diplomatic missions.

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## Gaza Raid to End in Another Israeli Defeat

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran says Palestine and its resistance movements are determined and well-equipped to deal another blow to Israel amid fresh deadly airstrikes by the occupying regime on the Gaza Strip.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani made the remarks via Twitter on Thursday, as the death toll from the Israeli onslaught on Gaza climbed to over two dozen.

"Over the past two days, the occupiers targeted about 200 points in the Gaza Strip. The regime's main targets were residential areas. [the raids] have so far left more than 25 martyrs and dozens of wounded, especially among children and women," he wrote.

"Despite the Zionists' atrocities, Palestine stands oppressed but with authority, and the martyrdom of some resistance commanders will not prevent it from delivering a response to the regime."

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## UAE's bin Zayed Shocked After U.S. billed Abu Dhabi For Support Against Yemen

ABU DHABI (Dispatches)- An official report has revealed that the United Arab Emirates' then-Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and other Emirati officials were "shocked" last year when the US asked Abu Dhabi, a Washington's close ally, to pay for the military support it had received against Yemen's retaliatory strikes.

US-based news website Axios, citing Emirati and American officials, made the revelation in a report from a book released this week titled Trump's Peace, written by Barak Ravid.

The report said the US request came after the Yemeni army on January 17, 2022 launched an operation deep inside the UAE in retaliation for its role in the Saudi-led war on the impoverished country.

Following the retaliatory drone attack, Mohammed bin Zayed -- who is now the ruler of the UAE -- reportedly held an emergency meeting with his military commanders to figure out what immediate measures to take in order to repel future strikes by the Yemeni army.

According to the report, the Emirati military said the best way was having Emirati Air Force F-16s and Mirage 2000s in the air at all times, which would require refueling capabilities that the US Air Force possessed. As a result, the US agreed to refuel Emirati fighter jets several times with its KC-135 strategic tankers deployed to the Al Dhafra Air Base in Abu Dhabi.

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## Palestinians Vow to Keep Up Retaliation Until Israel Stops Aggression

GAZA (Dispatches) - The Islamic Jihad vows to keep up its retaliatory strikes against the occupied territories until the Israeli regime stops its deadly acts of aggression against the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinian resistance group is headquartered.

The regime has assassinated dozens of Palestinians, including at least five of the movement's commanders since Tuesday, when it began to significantly escalate its airstrikes against Gaza. The al-Quds Brigades, the Islamic Jihad's armed wing, has fired hundreds of rockets towards the occupied territories in response, killing one Israeli and injuring several others.

Speaking on Thursday, Anwar Abu Taha, an Islamic Jihad spokesperson, warned that "our weapons, our resistance, and our missile strikes will not stop until the aggression stops, specifically the policy of assassinations against our leaders and our people."

Taha said the intense reprisal served to send a strong message to the Israeli enemy that the Brigades and the resistance have many surprises in store, which can compel the regime to stop its continuous brutality.

"[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is delusional that the Islamic Jihad will weaken and be broken in light of the assassination of its military leaders, and we tell him that the Islamic Jihad, by assassinating its leaders, is getting stronger and sticking to the option of jihad and resistance," the Palestinian official noted.

"The enemy should not test our patience and strength, because we have a lot in store, and in this round, all the suburbs of Tel Aviv are under the range of missiles."

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## Iran Envoy to Chair 2023 Social Forum in Geneva

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Ali Bahreini, has been appointed as the rotating president for the 2023 Social Forum of the Human Rights Council slated for November.

This appointment of an Islamic Republic official has been made for the first time.

The Social Forum of the Human Rights Council is to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 2 to 3 to prepare the ground for the member states and the participating representatives to exchange views about the role of science, innovation, and technology in promoting the human rights, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

## President Calls for Compliance of Banking System With Sharia Standards

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN - In the meeting of the Jurisprudential Council of the Central Bank, President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi appreciated the role-playing and efforts of the members of this council and emphasized the importance of the active role-playing of the Jurisprudence Council of the Central Bank in reforming banking processes.**

In the meeting of the Jurisprudence Council of the Central Bank with Raisi, first Hojatoleslam val-Moslemin Dr Mesbahi Moghadam, Chairman of the Council, presented a report on the performance of the Jurisprudence Council in the 5-year period of its activity.

Compilation of guidelines for the compliance of banking contracts with Sharia standards, establishment of Sharia monitoring and implementation officials in the banking network, reforming the mechanism and work of bank claims in order to comply with Islamic standards, designing a wage-worker model instead of a fee in Qarz Al-Hasana contracts and pursuing the elimination of compound interest from bank loans were the most important points of the report of the head of the legal council of the Central Bank.

After the presentation of the necessary explanations by the Governor of the Central Bank and some other members of the legal council, the President



thanked for the measures taken, especially the pursuit of the elimination of compound interest in banking loans and the establishment of supervisory officials in the banking network, saying, "The Jurisprudence Council, in fulfilling its very important and sensitive mission, should be a dynamic institution with active role-playing in the banking field".

Raisi emphasized, "In addition to formal supervision, this council's supervision of banking activities and contracts should also consider substantive supervision in order to witness the conformity of the nature of banking activities with Sharia standards".

The President stated, "The Central Bank and the Jurisprudence Council should interact with each other to strengthen the authority of the Central Bank in supervising and managing the country's banks, predicting the necessary mechanisms to resolve the imbalances of the banks and complying all banking activities and contracts with Sharia standards".

## IRGC Opens New Airbase For Drone, Helicopter Fleet

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has opened a new airbase to house and support the force's drone and helicopter fleet in southeastern Iran.

Named after Martyr Ali Arabi, the airbase in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, was inaugurated on Wednesday in the presence of IRGC Chief Commander Major General Hossein Salami.

Built by the aviation division of the IRGC Ground Force, the base is fit to accommodate various types of combat, assault, support, and rescue helicopters, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour, commander of the IRGC Ground Force, said the airbase will reinforce the force's helicopter fleet for various defense, rescue, logistics, and relief missions in southeastern Iran.

The airbase has also been outfitted with all the necessary facilities and hangers to meet the helicopter fleet's fueling, and repair and maintenance requirements.

## Moscow Meeting Positive Step For Syria, Turkey Rapprochement

TEHRAN (MNA) - The quadrilateral meeting of Iran, Russia, Syria, and Turkey in Moscow was a positive step in the line of bringing the views of Turkey and Syria closer to each other, the Iranian Foreign Minister said.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made the remarks while in Moscow for the Syria meeting before his departure to Tehran.

He also said that he discussed the bilateral relations, especially the follow-up of economic and commercial issues, including the Tehran-Moscow agreements as well as the meeting of the Iranian and Turkish presidents with his Russian and Turkish counterparts.

Very good progress has been made in Iran's relations with Turkey and Russia, he further said.

The quadrilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Iran, Russia, Syria, and Turkey was held in Moscow on Wednesday.

At the end of the meeting, the foreign ministers issued a joint statement, stressing their commitment to the territorial integrity of Syria and preparing a roadmap for developing relations between Damascus and Ankara.

They also said that they had a focused and frank discussion of issues related to resuming the interstate relations between Syria and Turkey in various aspects.

## Iran, Italy Hold Joint Commission

TEHRAN (IP) - The fifth meeting of Iran-Italy joint consular commission was held in Rome with the consular directors general of the two countries' foreign ministries chairing the meeting.

The fifth consular meeting was held in Rome on Wednesday after a six-month pause while an air of cooperation and mutual understanding ruled the capital city.

Issues related to the opening of students' banking accounts, their visas, transit driver's visas, signing of judicial assistance agreements, transfer of convicts, and extradition of criminals and police cooperation as well as academic and student cooperation were among the topics discussed in the meeting.

## Shamkhani Stresses Practical Approach to New World Order



TEHRAN (IP) - The Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) says the passive approach to the new world order prevents the country from comprehensive improvement, especially in economic and security areas.

Delivering a speech at the closing ceremony of the New World Order Geometry international conference on Thursday, Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani said the statutes quo has made the constant resistance of independent countries against the domination system inevitable to play an active role in the future international system.

The two-day conference 'New World Order Geometry' kicked off on Wednesday in Tehran with the presence of participants from dozens of countries.

Shamkhani referred to the "historical turn" notion by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution for the very new world order and said that the turn has provided Iran with a historic opportunity to abandon the status quo and envision a historic direction for the faster realization of its causes.

"We should get prepared comprehensively and vigilantly to face the conditions and increase our smart resilience and exploitation," he added.

The secretary of Iran's SNSC reminded the audience of the fact that the change of the old system and order does not mean the formation of a new one, but it means that due to the decline of the current order, there would be a stage of anarchism after which the grounds are prepared for a new order in a long process.

The International Conference on New World Order Geometry in Tehran, wrapped up on Thursday.

## Tehran Slams Sweden's IRGC Blacklisting

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has strongly condemned Sweden's blacklisting of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), saying the designation violates international law and amounts to an aggression against the Islamic Republic's sovereignty and national security.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani made the remarks on Thursday, one day after the Swedish parliament voted in favor of designating the IRGC as a "terrorist" organization.

"The Swedish parliament's illegal act is influenced by terrorist and banished elements working against the Iranian nation," he said.

"The anti-Iranian move is contrary to accepted rules and principles of international law, including the equality of [national] sovereignties and non-interference in the internal affairs of governments, and tantamount to an aggression against Iran's sovereignty and national security," the official added.



Kanaani also advised the Swedish government to exercise "foresight and tact" in the face of plots hatched to damage Tehran-Stockholm relations.

The Swedish government, he added, should "think about the consequences of its unmeasured act and not sacrifice its national interests and long-standing ties with Iran for the interests of terrorists, the Zionist apartheid regime and the enemies of the Iranian nation."

Kanaani also said that the IRGC is a state institution that has emerged from the Iranian nation with an official and legal identity enshrined in the Constitution, noting that the elite military force, along with other units of the Armed Forces, has been protecting Iran's national security and borders.

For more than a decade now, the IRGC has played a decisive role in the fight against international Takfiri and Daesh terrorism as well as a historic role in protecting regional and international peace and security, he asserted.

## Iran, Iraq Not to Let Gen. Soleimani's Case Go Unpunished

TEHRAN (IRNA) - A senior judicial official has announced that the case of the January 2020 assassination of General Qassem Soleimani will not remain unanswered as Iran and Iraq are determined to not let it go unpunished.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Iranian Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs, made the remarks on a TV program on Wednesday.

"That a criminal is in the United States and it would not be on trial is unacceptable, said the official stressing that "justice" must be carried out.

He went on to say that Iran's and Iraq's determination will prevent the criminals from committing the same crimes.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Qods Force commander Lt General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, the acting commander of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) - known as the Hashd al-Shaabi - were assassinated in Baghdad by the US attack on January 3, 2020.

Reportedly, such a terrorist attack did occur with a direct order of the then US president.

## IRGC Plays Biggest Role in Fight Against Terrorism

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The IRGC is a sovereign body that is responsible for guarding national and border security and plays the biggest role in the fight against terrorism in the region, the Iranian Foreign Minister told his Irish counterpart.

Hossein Amirabdollahian held a telephone conversation with his Irish counterpart Micheál Martin on Thursday to discuss the various fields of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Ireland. The two top diplomats also

emphasized the need to take advantage of the available opportunities and potentials in line with the interests of the two countries.

Amirabdollahian's pointing to the blacklisting of the IRGC by the Swedish parliament yesterday saying that the action was instigated by the terrorist anti-Iran elements.

Irish foreign minister, for his part, said that Ireland has been never interested in judging wrongly about the IRGC which is a state body. "We are aware of Iran's role in the fight against terrorism," Martin added. He expressed satisfaction with Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and efforts to get the sanctions lifted, saying that Dublin welcomes that process.

Appreciating the humanitarian decision of the Islamic Republic of Iran to release an Irish national, he emphasized his country's willingness to cooperate with Tehran. He also invited the Iranian foreign minister to visit Ireland and also expressed hope to visit Tehran in the near future.

## Iran, Oman Officials Mull Over ICT Cooperation

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Information and Communications consult over shoring up cooperations in the post, transit, and relevant start-up areas.

Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Issa Zarepour met with Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali Oman's Transport, Communications, and Information Technology Minister on May 11, 2023, in Tehran.

During the meeting, the parties emphasized on development of Postal cooperation and payment services through the signing of MoUs, within the framework of the Universal Postal Union's rules and regulations.

Also, each party was supposed to appoint and introduce a senior representative to coordinate the ICT working group.

During the meeting, Iran's ICT Minister said: Both sides decided to have interactions regarding the cooperation of post offices.

Zarepour stated that Iran announced readiness for transit between the

two countries through the territory of the Islamic Republic, and the establishment of joint data centers in places close to Oman, such as

Chabahar port city, for electronic cooperation Oman's Transport, Communications, and Information Technology Minister, for his part, said that the most important mutual issue discussed was startups that can be implemented very quickly.

Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali noted: Iran has many experts who are active in the fields of engineering and medicine in the Sultanate of Oman, so I hope we can expand our cooperation with Iran in information and communication technology to operationalize the startups.

## Iran, Pakistan Call for Strengthening Mutual Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian and Pakistani parliamentary officials have urged the solidarity and unity of the two countries' officials to strengthen bilateral relations.

Members of the Iranian parliamentary delegation headed by Vahid Jalalzadeh, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, in a meeting on Wednesday with Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood, Minister for Religious Affairs, in Pakistan emphasized the strengthening of relations between the two countries. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the common ground between the two states, highlighting that their enemies are trying to undermine mutual ties between Iran and Pakistan.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:00
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:20
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:22
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:00

24. Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess: Thus hath Allah ordained (Prohibitions) against you: Except for these, all others are lawful, provided ye seek (them in marriage) with gifts from your property; - desiring chastity, not lust, seeing that ye derive benefit from them, give them their dowers (at least) as prescribed; but if, after a dower is prescribed, agree Mutually (to vary it), there is no blame on you, and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.

Surah 4. Women (24)

## Tehran, Havana Require Identifying Opportunities For Broadening Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – President of Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Cuba (CC) met with Vice-Chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and during the meeting both sides explored ways for broadening trade ties and both sides emphasized identifying capacities and opportunities for trade.**

President of CC Mr. Antonio Luis Carricarte Corona while being accompanied by Ambassador of Cuba to Tehran Mr. Alberto Gonzalez Casals met with Vice-Chairman of ICCIMA Mr. Hossein Salahvarzi and in the meeting both sides exchanged views for increasing the current level of bilateral trade.

In the meeting Mr. Corona said that Iran and Cuba should provide grounds for joint commercial activities of their private sectors and chambers of commerce, adding that they can create a link between the private sectors and for boosting cooperation can define some projects in order that Iranian companies can have continuous contact.

He then pointed to the fields of cooperation between Iran and Cuba and said that first priorities and needs in the field of economic cooperation of both countries should be determined, for example, Iran in the field of agriculture and agro products is good or Cuba has high capacities in the field of tourism that these capacities should be noticed.

Corona further said that they can provide the grounds for the launch of a trade center in Cuba for increasing economic and trade connections, adding that they should work on those products that countries have potentials in them for deepening and broadening bilateral cooperation.

He also called for focusing on trilateral relation between Iran, Cuba and countries in the region of Iran and Cuba. He added that they can invest on those products that they are able to return the capital very fast.

Corona further said that Cuba's tourism industry is growing very fast as so far this year over 3m tourists have entered Cuba and this market is on the growth. He said that this year companies have imported \$300m of goods and services to meet the demands of tourists and Cuba can import some part of its needs in this field from Iran



and they have started talks with an Iranian company.

He added that they are interested to open a trade department on Iran in the CC for bringing closer the traders of the two countries, noting that the chambers of commerce can rush to help at the time of dispute and problem.

He then said that Iran and Cuba can start projects which are able to grow more like chicken or dairy products plant that Cuba is good at them, reiterating that Cuba wants to become a hub in the region and there is good opportunity for cooperation in this field.

He expressed hope that ICCIMA and Iranian traders would partake in an exhibition in Cuba which will be held on November 9.

Then Salahvarzi, for his part, pointed to the good and strong political relation of Iran and Cuba, adding that despite this good relation, their economic relation is not satisfactory. He then pointed to great capacities and capabilities for economic cooperation between the two states, admitting the long distance between the two countries has created a serious problem for bilateral trade.

He then pointed to the capacities for broadening bilateral trade and called for more cooperation in the fields of foodstuff, medicines, mines, Nano technology and tourism.

Salahvarzi then pointed to the capacities of Iranian technical and engineering services companies and said that these companies have good experiences in the field of infrastructure and house construction in Latin America and Venezuela.

He then pointed to the sanctions that Cuba has been struggling with them and said that Iran and Cuba can find innovative way for trade and barter can be one of them.

Then Ambassador of Cuba to Tehran Mr. Casals said that the first challenge for Iran-Cuba economic relation is lack of cognizance of businessmen of the two countries and chambers of commerce of both countries can play a good role in helping businessmen to know both countries and Iran's private sector can partake in an exhibition in Havana this year.

He said that Iran's private sector has good experiences and Cuba needs cooperation in joint projects.

## Iran, Saudi Arabia Discuss Boosting Maritime Trade

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The deputy CEO of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said talks have been held with Saudi Arabia for the development of maritime trade.

Majid Ali-Nazi made the remark and added that the development of maritime trade constitutes a major part of the enhancement of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"We are planning to launch various expert-level meetings with Saudi officials so that a strategic program will be compiled between the two sides in the coming months in line with developing ports and shipping lines," Ali-Nazi continued.

He pointed to the development of investment within the framework of joint ventures and stated that this issue will probably be considered as one of the major programs to be implemented between the two countries.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said talks are underway with Oman and Qatar for investing in Iran and various expert-level negotiations have been conducted with the Caspian Sea littoral states in this regard as well.

## Persian Gulf Star Refinery Holds Anti-Cyber Attack Maneuver

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The joint

maneuver of anti-cyber-attack on industrial controlling system with chemical subsequence against industries of the West of Bandar Abbas was held and Persian Gulf Star Refinery was the host of this maneuver.

According to reports, Persian Gulf Star Refinery hosted the anti-cyber-attack maneuver which was aimed at detecting and thwarting probable cyber-attacks on the industrial control systems in the West Bandar Abbas industries.

The organizers of the maneuver aimed at creating coordination among the present teams in the maneuver, evaluating equipment and human forces for confronting with probable threats and risks against the controlling systems of the industries.

Teams from Persian Gulf Star Company, Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, Hormozgan Ports and Maritime Organization, National Iranian Oil Pipelines and Telecommunication Company, National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company, Hormozgan Steel Company, Special Economic Zone of Mining Industries of Persian Gulf, Al-Mahdi Aluminum Company, District 6 Gas Transmission Operation, Sarkhoon and Qeshm Gas Refinery, and Hormozgan Province Gas Company conducted this maneuver and all stages of the maneuver were carried out successfully.



## Iran, Iraq Oil Ministers Sign MoU



SHANA (Baghdad) – Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji and his Iraqi counterpart Hayan Abdel-Ghani here on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Based on the MoU inked in the presence of Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, the two sides agreed to cooperate in oil, gas, and petrochemical projects.

Owji and Sudani put emphasis on the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, urging Iran-Iraq Joint Working Group to follow up the implementation of the recent memorandum through holding regular sessions.

The Iraqi prime minister brought forward proposals to develop joint fields, train human resources, and implement petrochemical projects, which were welcomed by the visiting Iranian oil minister.

Iran's oil minister also held talks with Iraqi Minister of Electricity Ziad Ali Fadel.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Owji was officially welcomed by Iraqi Deputy Oil Minister Bassim Mohammed Khudair and Iran's Ambassador to Baghdad Mohammad-Kazem Al-e Sadeq on Wednesday.

On April 29, Iran's President Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi, who met his Iraqi counterpart Abdul Latif Rashid in Tehran, underlined the development of Tehran-Baghdad relations and promotion of their cooperation in infrastructure fields, including water, electricity, gas, and energy sectors.

## Expansion of Iran-Pakistan Ties Require New Mechanisms

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Caretaker of international affairs of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) says that Iran and Pakistan have to devise new mechanisms to give a boost to their bilateral relations.

Nilofar Assadi, the caretaker of international affairs of ICCIMA in the Iran-Pakistan Business Forum said that Iran and Pakistan have to devise new mechanisms to give a boost to their bilateral relations.

The forum was participated by more than 100 Pakistani businesspeople from Karachi, Lahore and Quetta.

Assadi said that the economic ties between the two countries is not satisfactory, urging the need for both nations to devise new mechanisms to enhance relations.

Referring to major strong links between the private sectors of the two neighboring countries, she stressed the necessity of planning for making joint investment and production and more increased relations in the area of tourism, health tourism in particular.



Assadi also called for reviving a preferential trade agreement with Pakistan, more cooperation on textile and overseas farming, and focusing on facilitating barter trade between the two nations.

Speaking in the meantime, Abdolkhaleq Rigi, the head of Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said that volume of trade between the two nations has grown to \$2.5 billion.

He said that bilateral trade between Tehran and Islamabad can double to \$5 billion which would require both countries to prepare the necessary grounds, including implementation of preferential trade, lifting the customs bans and making a better use of border markets.

He called the complication of the barter trade a serious obstacle to trade between Iran and Pakistan, adding that the barter trade mechanism proposed by Zahedan Chamber of Commerce is so simple while the interference of the central banks of the two countries has complicated the issue.

## Tehran, Muscat Seeking Shore-Up of Maritime Transport

TEHRAN (IP) - Roads and Urban Development Minister met with Oman's Transport, Communications, and Information Technology Minister.

During the meeting, Mehrdad Bazrpush and Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali discussed mutual interests and aims, including establishing regular shipping lines between the two countries, increasing cargo flights (exports from Iran), and increasing passenger flights.

Also, a binding roadmap for cooperation in maritime transportation was discussed along with a follow-up on the Ashgabat Corridor (from Central Asia to Oman).

Iran proposed reaching a comprehensive transport agreement; in this regard, the Omani Minister talked about approving the 'comprehensive maritime transport agreement' on the part of Oman which now needs to be approved by Iran's Parliament.

In maritime transport, launching direct shipping lines between the ports of Iran and Oman, particularly between Bandar Abbas and Shinas Ports for boosting commercial activities was emphasized.

Moreover, investments in ports particularly in Chabahar and Shinas Ports were welcomed by the two parties.

Upon the formal invitation of Bazrpush, Saeed bin Hamoud Maawali heading a high-ranked delegation, visited Bandar Abbas (southern Iran) to see Iran's capabilities in the field of maritime transport on Tuesday.

The facilitation of export/import through multimodal transit from Central Asia to Oman through Iran was also discussed by the implementation of the Ashgabat Agreement. In this sense, Iran and Oman trucks will enter their territories and then the freight would be shipped through landing crafts and ships to the destinations.

Iran and Oman Ministers of transport had met last year in May when the two sides negotiated on transport ties including Oman's joining to the trilateral Chabahar Agreement previously inked between Iran, India, and Afghanistan. In this meeting, the two sides followed up on previous agreements.

Earlier in January, the passenger shipping line between Chabahar and Oman resumed its operation after its first launch in 2016. The Omani Minister of Transport says that his country is eager to increase the volume of trade with Iran through inter-port maritime transit.

Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali who is in Iran to negotiate over maritime cooperation between the countries told Iran Press in an interview on Wednesday that Oman seeks more movement of ships, especially via Iranian south ports including Shenas port, and Omani north ports including Sohar and Suwaiq ports.



## Iranian Technicians Bring Bushehr Nuclear Plant Back on Grid

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's only nuclear power plant has been reconnected to the country's electricity grid after a home-grown program of overhaul and refueling.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said on Wednesday that the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, located over 1,200 kilometers south of the capital Tehran on the Persian Gulf coast, had resumed supplying electricity to the national power grid two days earlier.

It said local experts, technicians, companies and contractors played a major role in the plant's overhaul and refueling program that had started in mid-February. The overhaul program included annual replacing of fuel rods and periodic inspections, said the AEOI.

## Mashhad, Karbala Become Sister Cities

MASHHAD (IRNA) - Director-General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization in Iran's eastern province of Khorasan Razavi has said that Mashhad, the second largest city in the country and Iraq's holy city of Karbala have become sister cities through agreement signed in Iraq.

Javad Mousavi said that Yaghoob Ali Nazari, the governor-general of Khorasan Razavi province, in a meeting with Nassif Jassim Al-Khattabi, governor of Karbala, had signed an agreement to cooperate in the fields of culture and social issues that became effective as of Wednesday May 10, 2023.

Mousavi added that the two side's private sectors will cooperate in the fields of tourism to facilitate the movement of pilgrims between Mashhad and Karbala, two cities that host major holy shia shrines.

He said the agreements will also cover health tourism issues with a focus on Iraqis who travel to Mashhad to receive medical services.

## Turkish Candidate Muharrem Ince Drops out of Presidential Race

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Third-party candidate Muharrem Ince on Thursday withdrew from Turkey's tight presidential election in a shock move that increased the chances of an opposition first-round victory.

The 59-year-old announced his decision after being targeted by an online smear campaign that included doctored images of him meeting women and riding around in fancy cars. The secular nationalist picked up 30.6 percent of the vote when he challenged President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2018 presidential polls.

He then quit the main opposition party and launched his own movement that began to pull votes away from secular leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu -- the joint candidate of the anti-Erdogan bloc.



## Finnish Footbridge Collapse Injures 27, Mostly Children

ESPOO (Dispatches) - Some 27 young people, mostly children, were injured in Finland on Thursday when a temporary footbridge near a construction site collapsed and they fell several metres onto a road, officials said.

The accident occurred at around 9:20 am (0620 GMT) in Espoo, near the capital, Helsinki, when wooden planks are believed to have given way and the group fell five to six metres (feet) onto the carriageway of the small side road.

Most of the injured were eighth-year pupils aged around 14 or 15, who were on a school field trip, city officials said. Their teacher was among the injured.

Twenty-four people were taken to various hospitals in the Helsinki region.



## Armenia-Azerbaijan Clashes Threaten to Derail Peace Talks



YEREVAN (Dispatches) - Armenia and Azerbaijan blamed each other for an exchange of fire along their restive border, which killed one person and wounded four days ahead of EU-hosted peace talks.

The Caucasus neighbours have been locked in a decades-long territorial dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, which has reignited in recent months.

Russia urged the sides to de-escalate tensions after the fatal exchange of fire, but its influence as a power broker in the region has waned since it launched its invasion of Ukraine last year.

Armenia initially said four of its soldiers had been wounded by incoming fire in an eastern region of the ex-Soviet country. "Azerbaijani forces are shooting artillery and mortars at Armenian positions in the Sotk region" the Armenia's defence ministry said.

Baku meanwhile accused Armenia of a "provocation" that had left one of its soldiers dead.

It said Armenian soldiers had "once again violated the ceasefire agreement" with "large-calibre weapons," referring to an accord from November 2020 that ended six weeks of hostilities.

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Thursday: "We expect a restrained approach from the parties and urge them not to take any actions that could lead to an increase in tensions."

Thursday's flare up in fighting comes just days before European Council President Charles Michel is to host Armenia's Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev for talks in Brussels.

The two leaders had also agreed to jointly meet the leaders of France and Germany on the sidelines of a European summit in Moldova on June 1, according to the EU.

Pashinyan on Thursday accused Azerbaijan of looking to "undermine the talks" in Brussels.

"I have not changed my mind about going to Brussels," he said in his statement -- but there was "very little" chance of signing a peace deal with Azerbaijan at the meeting.

A draft agreement "is still at a very preliminary stage and it is too early to speak of an eventual signature", said Pashinyan.

The European Union-hosted meeting comes after talks in the United States at the beginning of May. After that meeting, US top diplomat Antony Blinken spoke of "tangible progress on a durable peace agreement" between the two sides.

Baku and Yerevan however put out quasi-similar statements following the talks, noting progress but acknowledging that they differed on key issues.

The Western mediation efforts come as major regional power Russia has struggled to maintain its influence, part of the fallout from its war in Ukraine.

Armenia has traditionally relied on Russia as its security guarantor but Yerevan has grown increasingly frustrated with Moscow.

It has accused Russia of failing to fulfill its peacekeeping role when Azerbaijani activists blocked the Lachin corridor, the only land link to Armenia.

The two countries have gone to war twice over disputed territories, mainly Nagorno-Karabakh, a majority-Armenian region inside Azerbaijan.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed in the two wars over the region.

The first war lasted six years, until 1994. The second, fought in 2020, ended in a Russia-negotiated ceasefire.

Under the Russia-brokered 2020 ceasefire, Azerbaijan is required to guarantee safe passage on the Lachin corridor, which is patrolled by Russian peacekeepers. In a new escalation at the end of April, Azerbaijan said it had built a checkpoint on the corridor following "threats and provocations" from Armenia.

## Zelenskiy Says Counteroffensive Yet to Begin

KYIV (Dispatches) - President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Ukraine's long-awaited counteroffensive against Russia's invasion force had yet to start, even as his generals claimed some of their biggest battlefield successes in months.

Kyiv says it has pushed Russian forces back over the past several days near the eastern city of Bakhmut in local assaults, while a full-blown counteroffensive involving tens of thousands of troops and hundreds of Western tanks is still being prepared.

"We still need a bit more time," Zelenskiy said in an interview with European broadcasters.

Ukrainian forces had already received enough equipment from Western allies for their campaign but were waiting for the full complement of armored vehicles to arrive to reduce their casualties, Zelenskiy said.

In a major step up in Western military support for Ukraine, Britain announced it was sending Storm Shadow cruise missiles that would give Kyiv the ability to strike targets deep behind Russian lines.

"The key here is to give Ukraine that capability. To defend itself," Defense Secretary Ben Wallace told parliament in London.

Western countries including the United States had previously held back from providing long range weapons for fear of provoking Russian retaliation. Wallace said Britain had weighed the risk.

The war in Ukraine is at a turning point, with Kyiv poised to unleash its new counterstrike after six months of keeping its forces on the defensive, while Russia mounted a huge winter offensive that failed to capture significant territory.

Moscow's main target for months has been Bakhmut, which it has yet to fully capture despite the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since World War Two.

The head of Russia's Wagner private army, which has led the fight in Bakhmut, has acknowledged Ukrainian gains against regular Russian forces on the city's flanks for several days, while complaining of a lack of support for his men.



## Top Pakistan Court Says Imran Khan's Arrest Was Illegal

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's top court ruled that the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan was illegal, his lawyer said, two days after his detention on graft allegations ignited deadly protests and a tussle with the powerful military.

"The Supreme Court reversed all legal proceedings against Imran Khan ... he has been asked to present himself in the Islamabad High Court on Friday morning," lawyer Babar Awan told reporters.

Awan added that the Supreme Court had ruled that Khan was now under its custody and not the anti-graft agency. Khan would spend the night in the same police guest house as before but allowed to meet a limited number of friends and family.

It was not immediately clear when he would be allowed to go home.

Khan, 70, a cricket hero-turned-politician, has denied any wrongdoing.

Violence triggered by his arrest has aggravated instability in the country of 220 million people that is grappling with a severe economic crisis, eroding hopes of a quick resumption of an IMF bailout.

Former Pakistani PM Imran Khan speaks with Reuters during an interview, in Lahore

Nearly 2,000 people have been arrested and at least five killed after Khan's supporters clashed with police, attacked military establishments and set other state buildings and assets ablaze, prompting the government to call out the army to help restore order.

Footage on Thursday showed Khan walking towards the Supreme Court dressed in a blue traditional shalwar kameez and wearing dark glasses. On Tuesday, he was picked up by heavily armed paramilitary police from Islamabad High Court premises, shoved into an armoured car and whisked away.

Broadcaster Geo TV reported that Khan was brought to the Supreme Court under heavy security in a motorcade of nearly a dozen vehicles led by a top police official.

## U.N. Urges Halt to Sudan Conflict as Fighting Rumbles on

KHARTOUM (Dispatches) - The U.N. urged countries with influence in Africa to help end the conflict in Sudan after reported progress in truce talks between the army and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Clashes rocked Halfaya, an entry point to the capital, early on Thursday as residents heard warplanes circling Khartoum and its adjoining sister cities of Bahri and Omdurman, but the fighting appeared calmer than on Wednesday.

In public neither side has shown it is ready to offer concessions to end the conflict that erupted suddenly last month, threatening to pitch Sudan into a civil war, killing hundreds of people and triggering a humanitarian crisis.

U.N. Sudan envoy Volker Turk said in Geneva that both sides had trampled international humanitarian law and he urged "all states with influence in the region to encourage, by all possible means, the resolution of this crisis".

Army general Yassir al-Atta was quoted on Thursday saying the talks should aim at removing the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) from Khartoum, merging its fighters into the regular military and putting its leaders on trial.

"Any dialogue outside those points is simply delaying the war to another time," he told Asharq

al-Awsat newspaper, adding the army had beaten back RSF forces at one key location in Khartoum.

The RSF on Wednesday said it held nearly all of Khartoum and accused the army of "unrelenting violations". Reuters could not independently verify their accounts.

Egyptian doctor Abdelaty Elmannaee, who stayed in central Khartoum despite the fighting to provide health services to residents, said patients are seeking help for everything from wounds and burns to diabetes care.

"I'm in a neighbourhood in the centre of the conflict so I know very well that there are people in need of medical consultations," said Elmannaee, who had been in the process of setting up a clinic when the fighting broke out.

The fighting has hit the banking system, slowing imports and exports and leading to shortages of fuel and key commodities in Khartoum, though Finance Minister Jibril Ibrahim said on Thursday he was trying to solve the issue.

The talks in the Saudi port of Jeddah represent the most serious effort yet to stop the fighting and U.S. mediators said on Wednesday they were "cautiously optimistic".

Previous ceasefire agreements have been repeatedly violated, leaving civilians to navigate a terrifying landscape of chaos and bombardment with failing power and water, little food and a collapsing health system.



## French Mayor's Resignation Amid Far-Right Death Threats Sparks Political Outcry

PARIS (Dispatches) - The resignation of a French mayor targeted by the far right over plans to move an asylum-seekers' centre prompted a political outcry Thursday after he faced death threats and an arson attack on his home.

The resignation of Yannick Morez, mayor of Saint-Brevin-les-Pins in western France, comes as support for the far right swells and mainstream parties seek to channel anti-immigration sentiment in an increasingly tense political environment.

Morez said late Wednesday he was stepping down "for personal reasons" -- while complaining of "a lack of support from the state".

President Emmanuel Macron on Twitter described the attacks against him as "outrageous" and expressed his "solidarity" with Morez and his family.

"What has happened is very shocking, and I want to assure the mayor of my full support," Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said Thursday during a visit to French Indian Ocean territory La Reunion.

She added that she wanted to "protect mayors better... intervene sooner to support them, to identify their difficulties and back them up better".

Saint-Brevin, a seaside town at the mouth of the Loire river near the western city of Nantes, has been racked for months by protests against plans to move existing asylum accommodation to a site close to a primary school.

The town has hosted migrants since the so-called Jungle camp near Calais on France's north coast was dismantled in 2016.

Morez said in March that there had "never been the slightest problem" with asylum seekers in the years they had been hosted in his town.

But beyond repeated demonstrations organised by far-right party Reconquete (Reconquest) led by former presidential candidate Eric Zemmour against the move, Morez's home was targeted in an arson attack on March 22 that is the subject of a criminal investigation.

Socialist Party chief Olivier Faure posted on Twitter that "it's shameful that the state did not grasp the scale of what was happening to him and did not back him up. It's shameful to continue normalising the far right."

MPs from the far-right National Rally (RN) of Marine Le Pen did not join other lawmakers in standing to pay their respects to Morez following his resignation on Wednesday.



## Climate Maths Doesn't Add Up Without Carbon Capture

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - The Emirati oil chief leading this year's UN climate talks said Wednesday the world must get "serious" about new emission-capturing technology, rather than focussing only on replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.

Sultan Al Jaber said renewables such as solar and wind "cannot be the only answer", especially in the steel, cement and aluminum industries, where emissions are particularly hard to reduce.

While major oil producers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are touting carbon capture and storage as a remedy for global warming, some experts caution that the nascent technology is unproven and expensive, and should not replace efforts to phase out hydrocarbons.

"Renewable energies are not and cannot be the only answer," argued Al Jaber, who is simultaneously the head of state oil giant ADNOC and the country's climate envoy.

"If we are serious about curbing industrial emissions, we need to get serious about carbon capture technologies," he told the United Arab Emirates' Climate Tech event in Abu Dhabi.

"We need to phase out emissions," added Al Jaber, reiterating his position that crude remains indispensable to the global economy and crucial to financing the energy transition.

The debate between carbon capture and reduced fossil fuel use is shaping as a key battleground at COP28, beginning in November in Dubai, the UAE's commercial hub.

A photo taken in Finland on May 3, 2023, shows ice chunks drifting in the Bothnia Gulf near the shore at the beginning of the spring

Earlier this year, the UN's climate expert panel (IPCC) said the world risks crossing the key 1.5-degree Celsius global warming threshold in about a decade, urging a drastic reduction in planet-heating emissions.

One of the fastest transformations will need to be in energy, the report said, with solar and wind power already expanding dramatically.

Major economies are taking key steps, with the European Union banning sales of new fossil fuel cars from 2035 and planning to nearly double renewable energy production by 2030.

But greenhouse gas emissions from existing fossil fuel infrastructure will still push the world beyond 1.5C unless the costly and emerging carbon capture and storage technologies are utilised, the IPCC said.

"Cost remains a barrier," said Al Jaber, president-designate of COP28.

He said policymakers must provide incentives to companies to commercialize technological solutions, including carbon capture and storage (CCS) and direct air capture (DAC).

"Renewable energies are not and cannot be the only answer," argued Al Jaber, who is simultaneously the head of state oil giant ADNOC and the country's climate envoy

CCS syphons off CO2 pollution from energy production and heavy industry and stores it underground, thus preventing it from entering the atmosphere.

By contrast, direct air capture — still in its infancy -- removes CO2 directly from ambient air, which makes it a "negative emissions" technology.

Some environmentalists are sceptical about the focus on carbon capture, with Rex Weyler from Greenpeace last year labelling it a "scam".

"Carbon offset technologies are a distraction that we cannot afford," Julien Jreissati, programme director at Greenpeace MENA, told AFP on Wednesday.

"They have yet to be commercially viable and are not proven at scale despite years of development and billions of dollars of investment."



## Young Adults With Mental Health Conditions Have an Increased Risk of Heart Attack

PARIS (Dispatches) - Considered one of the major public health issues of our times, mental health disorders can have a significant impact on physical health.

This is supported by the findings of a new study conducted by international researchers. They suggest that adults between the ages of 20 and 39 with mental health problems are more likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke.

Physical health and mental health are intertwined, forming a whole that shapes an individual's overall state of health.

This is important to consider at a time when the mental health of global populations has deteriorated considerably, with one in eight people worldwide living with a mental disorder in 2019, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), and with the consequences that this can have on physical health.

Eating disorders, insomnia, exhaustion or weakening of the immune system are among the potential repercussions of mental health disorders, but they are not the only ones.

A team of international researchers, mainly from South Korea and the United Kingdom, studied the impact of these disorders on the cardiovascular health of some 6.5 million adults aged 20 to 39 years.

Published in the journal, European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, the study used data from the Korean National Health Insurance Service and focused on more than 6.5 million people between the ages of 20 and 39 who underwent health examinations between 2009 and 2012 and had no history of heart attack or stroke.

The researchers note that the average age of the participants was 31 years, more than half were 30 years or older, and 1 in 8 study participants had a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or insomnia.

The scientists first determined the mental health disorders suffered by some of the participants, and then looked at a potential association between the mental disorders observed in adults aged 20 to 39 years and the risk of developing a myocardial infarction and/or an ischemic stroke after adjusting for certain factors such as age, smoking, alcohol consumption, diabetes, high blood pressure or physical activity.

To do this, they followed the participants until December 2018, counting at the end of their research 16,133 myocardial infarctions and 10,509 strokes.

Their findings show that people with any kind of mental disorder were 58 per cent and 42 per cent more likely to suffer a heart attack or a stroke, respectively, than other participants.

In detail, the risk of heart attack was 1.97 times higher for those with eating disorders, 1.73 times higher for those with insomnia, 1.72 times higher for those with depression, and 1.53 times higher for anxiety.

The same was found for strokes, with a risk 1.60 times higher for depression, 1.45 times higher for insomnia, and 1.38 times higher for anxiety.

In a statement, study author Dr Chan Soon Park of Seoul National University Hospital, Republic of Korea, said: "Patients with mental health problems are known to have a shorter life expectancy than the general population, with the majority of deaths due to physical illnesses.

"Our study shows that substantial numbers of young adults have at least one mental health problem, which may predispose them to heart attack and stroke. Future research should examine the cardiovascular benefits of managing psychological problems and monitoring heart health in this vulnerable group."

Previous studies have shown that physical activity — whether it's yoga, brisk walking, fitness, or other activities — can be beneficial in improving symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.



## How Can the Sun Damage Your Scalp?



LONDON (Dispatches) - Exposure to intense sunlight for longer durations can result in damage and burning of the skin, which is commonly called sunburn. Sunlight consists of harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that are responsible for causing sunburns. Sunburns can affect any part of the skin, including the scalp.

Sunburn is the burning of the skin due to excessive exposure to the sun's UV rays.

Sunburn can damage the scalp leading to redness, itching, and blisters.

The signs of sunburn do not appear immediately — they take a few hours to develop.

Several approaches are available to soothe the scalp and treat the damage.

Exposure of the scalp to sunlight-containing UV rays can result in damage to the scalp, which is commonly known as sunburn. The amount of time the scalp is exposed and the intensity of the sunlight are two of the most important risk factors for sunburn. An increase in the number of sunburns can increase the risk of getting skin cancer.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, people that experience 5 or more sunburns between 15 to 20 years of age have an 80% higher risk of developing melanoma skin cancer and a 68% higher risk of developing nonmelanoma skin cancer.

Several factors can increase the risk for people to get sunburn on their scalp. These include:

- \*Exposure to sunlight for increased amounts of time.
- \*Exposure to the sun's rays between 10 am and 4 pm when they are at their strongest.
- \*Living at higher altitudes where there is less atmospheric protection.

## Pets May Bring in Parasites

LONDON (Dispatches) - Thrive Pet Healthcare, a well-known veterinarian service network with nearly 400 locations across the United States, highlighted the hazards to household health when pets are not protected year-round from external parasites like fleas and ticks.

Pets are a part of our families, and aside from the smiles and joy they bring, they can also introduce parasites to the house if not given preventative medication prior.

According to a study published in the Zoonoses Public Health, families with pets are likelier than non-pet-owning families to find ticks on or attached to household members. Many illnesses that may infect dogs and cats and are spread by fleas and ticks can also infect humans.

Tick bites can transmit diseases like Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, which can seriously affect people and animals.

Lyme disease, a bacterial illness, can be transmitted to people by infected ticks, and a timely diagnosis frequently makes treatment more straightforward. Lyme disease is usually followed by a circular rash and flu-like symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and headache.

The bacterial illness known as RMSF is contracted by being bitten by an infected tick. Most RMSF patients will experience a fever, headache, and rash. It might be fatal if the proper antibiotic is not used in time to treat RMSF.

Over half of the 2,727 families included in the study said they had a dog, a cat, or both, that were let inside the house and outdoors in the yard.

Out of the houses with pets, 1,193 of the 1,546 houses reported using tick control on their dogs, whereas 338 of the households with cats reported using tick control on their cats. Of the 1,546 homes with pets, 1,362 reported using some tick control on their animals.

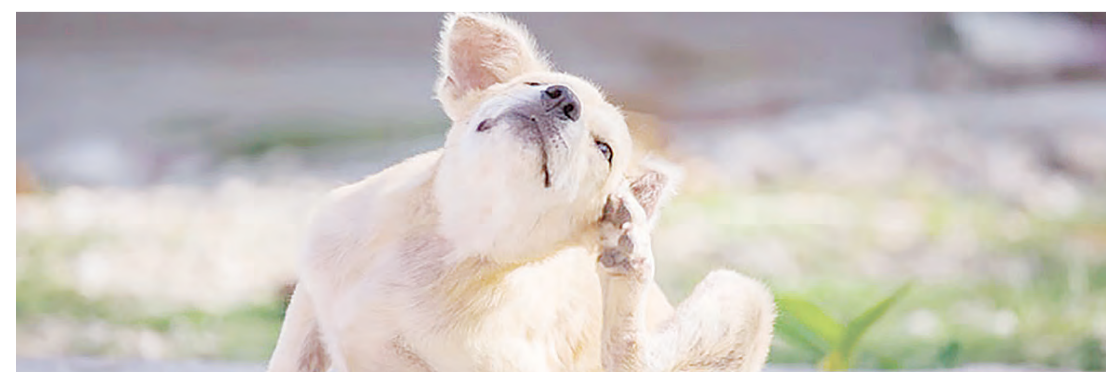
When compared to pet-owning households that did not find ticks on their pets, identifying ticks on pets significantly increased the likelihood of finding ticks crawling on and attached to household members.

Finding ticks on pets wasn't substantially linked to disease in household members who had it confirmed. The reported use of tick control on cats, dogs, or any pet was ineffective at preventing the discovery of ticks on pets or the crawling or attached to individuals.

"Parasites are not picky. Fleas and ticks will bite humans just as easily as they will bite our pets, potentially putting everyone in the household at risk for illness or disease when dogs and cats are not on a year-round preventative regimen."

The expert continues that the best approach to shield your pet against dangerous and even fatal parasite-related disorders is with medication recommended by a veterinarian.

Cairns concludes: "Once your dog or cat is infected with heartworm disease, treatment can be very costly, have possible side effects, and is not always successful. Ultimately, the risks of infection and high cost of treatment outweigh the cost of prevention."



## Study Shows Little Evidence Antidepressants Help Chronic Pain



PARIS (Dispatches) - There is little evidence that most antidepressants are effective against chronic pain, the largest study conducted on the subject said.

However, the British researchers who carried out the review emphasized that patients should not stop taking their current medication, advising them to talk to their doctors instead.

Chronic pain, or any kind of pain that lasts more than three months, is estimated to be experienced by one-third of people.

Opioids, long prescribed for such cases, are no longer recommended for most patients because they can be addictive and dangerous, particularly over the long term.

So antidepressants are often prescribed for chronic pain patients in the hope that the chemicals in the brain that affect mood could also impact pain.

But a new Cochrane review, which evaluated all the research related to the topic for the first time, said there was a "low certainty" of the effectiveness and safety of almost all antidepressants against chronic pain.

Scientists from several UK universities looked at 176 trials that included nearly 30,000 patients who took 25 different antidepressants for their chronic pain.

They were only confident in the efficacy of one antidepressant, duloxetine, for short-term pain relief.

While it was equally effective for fibromyalgia as well as musculoskeletal and nerve pain, the researchers said there was a lack of data on long-term side effects.

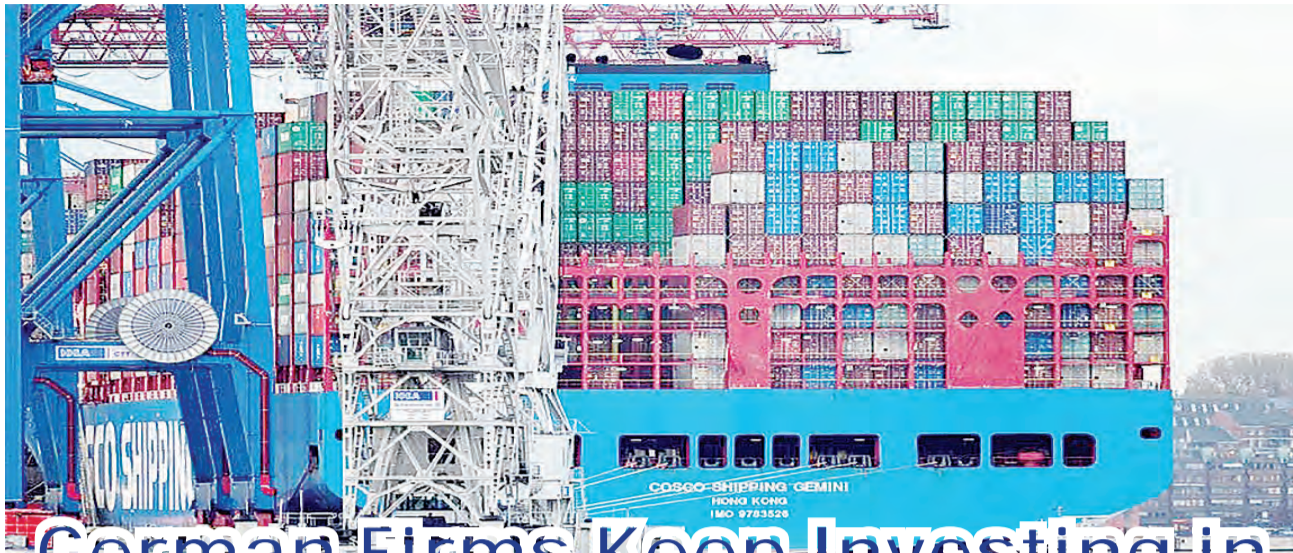
Another antidepressant, milnacipran, could also reduce pain but researchers were less confident because there were fewer available studies.

## OPEC+ Voluntary Cuts Aimed to Balance Oil Market

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates' energy minister Suhail al-Mazrouei said that additional voluntary output cuts by the OPEC+ producer group were implemented to balance the oil market.

Mazrouei, who briefed reporters on the sidelines of the World Utilities Congress, said he was concerned about future supply shortages due to low investment.

"I'm not that worried about the very short term, I think we can manage balancing the supply with demand. I'm more worried about the level of investment required for years to come," he said. In a surprise move in early April, Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ members announced further oil output cuts of around 1.2 million barrels per day.



## German Firms Keep Investing in China Despite Moves to "De-Risk"

BERLIN (Dispatches) - German companies are increasing investment in China, even as the German government, the European Union and the G7 want to "de-risk" their relationships with Beijing.

Preliminary data provided to Reuters by the German Economic Institute IW show German direct investment in China is still rising. "Direct investment flows to China are estimated to have increased by 11% in 2022, similar to the increase in 2021, but much stronger than in previous years between 2016 and 2020," Juergen Matthes of the IW told Reuters.

He declined to give absolute figures for total investment as the 2022 estimate was still preliminary.

According to Matthes, German companies in China are increasingly relying on local suppliers and local research. This is partly due to subsidies offered by the Chinese government, but also to protect themselves from the impact of a potential trade war or a conflict in Taiwan, he said.

In a significant speech in March, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen said it was not viable to decouple from China entirely, but Europe should focus on reducing the risks such economic ties posed.

China, she said, was becoming more repressive at home and more assertive abroad. In response, the EU needed to "rebalance" the economic relationship and reduce its reliance on China for key inputs, such as lithium and other critical minerals.

It also, she said, should look at the technology it shared with China.

However, the investment figures show that there is no significant diversification away from China, Matthes said, with Germany continuing to invest heavily in the Asian giant.

Industry leaders, such as the chief executive of luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz Ola Kaellenius, also argue that cutting economic ties with China would have massive repercussions over the next decade.

China will be the elephant in the room at this week's G7 finance ministers' meeting starting on Thursday. Host Japan wants the gathering to produce an ambitious statement on diversifying G7 supply chains "away from countries like China."

"De-risking is the new favourite word in politics," said Genia Kostka, professor at Freie Universitaet Berlin. "But then you should de-risk not only against China, but against all states on which you are too dependent in case of crisis."

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang warned German counterpart Annalena Baerbock against de-risking during a visit to Berlin. "If one gets rid of China in the name of de-risking, it will become de-opportunity, de-cooperation, destabilising and de-development."

Germany's BDI industry body sees the increased investment in China as a transitional phase. Many companies are currently strengthening their value chains in certain regions, not only in China, but also in the U.S. and South America. This initially leads to higher investments, according to Wolfgang Niedermark, a member of the BDI's Executive Board.

Trade between the two countries is also going strong. China remained Germany's most important trading partner in 2022 for the seventh year in a row, despite coronavirus lockdowns.

## Pakistan Wants to Pay In Chinese Yuan for Russia's Crude Oil

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan hopes it can pay for future Russian crude oil deliveries in Chinese yuan, Pakistani Minister of Power, Khurram Dastgir Khan, told Bloomberg in an interview published on Wednesday.

Pakistan has so far ordered just one crude oil cargo from Russia, expected to arrive this month.

Pakistan expects to receive in May its first cargo loaded with discounted Russian crude after placing its first order for oil from Moscow under a new bilateral deal, Pakistan's Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik told Reuters at the end of April.

The payment for the first cargo of Russian oil was made in U.S. dollars. Pakistan is desperate to import energy at low costs after it was outspent on the market last year when oil and gas prices surged while its foreign exchange reserves dwindled. The country has a currency swap with China, which would make it easier to pay for crude than using the little U.S. dollar reserves it has.

## U.S. Annual Inflation Increase Slows To Below 5%

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The annual increase in U.S. consumer prices slowed to below 5% in April for the first time in two years, while a key inflation measure monitored by the Federal Reserve subsided, potentially providing cover for the central bank to pause further interest rates hike next month.

Nevertheless, inflation remains too strong, with the report from the Labor Department on Wednesday showing monthly consumer prices rising solidly because of sticky rents as well as rebounds in the costs of gasoline and used motor vehicles. The mixed report dashed financial market hopes that the Fed would start cutting rates this year to shore up the economy.

"Today's consumer inflation report supports the case for the Fed to seriously contemplate a pause in rate hikes in June, but does not support any near-term rate cuts," said Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West in San Francisco.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 0.4% last month after gaining 0.1% in March. The increase was in line with economists' expectations. Stubbornly high rents accounted for much of the increase in inflation. There were, however, pockets of relief for consumers.

Food prices were unchanged for a second straight month. Grocery store prices fell 0.2% after decreasing 0.3% in March, posting back-to-back declines for the first time since July 2019. Fruits and vegetables, meat, fish and eggs were cheaper compared to March.

Milk prices dropped 2.0%, the most since February 2015.

Natural gas prices tumbled 4.9% and the cost of electricity dropped for the second straight month, blunting some of the 3.0% jump in gasoline prices, which followed a 4.6% plunge in March.

The rebound came after Saudi Arabia and other OPEC+ oil producers announced further oil output cuts. But oil prices have since been largely trending lower, pushing gasoline costs down as risks of a

recession have increased, because of the Fed's punitive rate hikes, tightening credit conditions and an impasse over raising the federal government's borrowing cap.

In the 12 months through April, the CPI increased 4.9%. That was the smallest year-on-year rise since April 2021 and followed a 5.0% advance in March.

Consumer prices decelerated to 4.9% year-on-year, the 10th straight month of slowdown as prices react to the Fed's rate-tightening cycle.

The annual CPI peaked at 9.1% last June, posting its biggest increase since November 1981, and is subsiding as last year's initial surge in energy prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine drops out of the calculation.

"On balance, inflation is still too high and it is not going to fall back to 2% if it increases 0.4% a month," said Chris Low, chief economist at FHN Financial in New York. "We need to see steady increases around 0.15% to get there."

## China's Economy Under Pressure Due to Shrinking Imports, Slower Exports

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's imports contracted sharply in April, while exports grew at a slower pace, reinforcing signs of feeble domestic demand despite the lifting of Covid curbs and heaping pressure on an economy already struggling in the face of cooling global growth.

Inbound shipments to the world's second largest economy fell by 7.9 per cent year on year, while exports grew by 8.5 per cent in the same period after an unexpected surge of 14.8 per cent in March, customs data showed today.

Economists in a Reuters poll had predicted no growth in imports and an 8.0 per cent increase in exports. "The growth rate of imports continued to decline year on year, indicating that it is being dragged down simultaneously by seasonality and the continued weak recovery of the domestic economy," said Bruce Pang, chief economist at Jones Lang Lasalle.

Government officials have repeatedly warned of a "severe" and "complicated" external environment in the wake of mounting recession risks for many of China's key trading partners. Analysts say cooling global growth pointed to a longer road to recovery for the Asian giant after Beijing abruptly ended tough Covid curbs in December.

The drop in imports is worrying as it suggests domestic demand remains tepid and may not be able to take up the slack of an underpowered export engine.

China's coal imports fell in April from a 15-month high in the prior month, snapping back as demand weakens in the world's second-largest economy. Imports of copper and natural gas were also down in the same period.

## Turkey Defers \$600m Russian Energy Payment Under Deal

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey has deferred payment to Russia of a \$600 million natural gas bill to 2024, two sources said, the first such postponement under a deal announced last week that underlines deepening ties between Ankara and Moscow.

Under the terms of the agreement, up to \$4 billion in Turkish energy payments to Russia may be postponed until next year, both sources told Reuters under condition of anonymity. Details of the deal have not previously been disclosed.

Turkey, which is preparing for elections on Sunday, depends heavily on energy imports and Russia is its largest supplier.

The gas payments deal relieves some pressure on Turkey's foreign reserves, which have been depleted by unorthodox economic policies meant to support the lira, as well as rising energy prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year.

"Officially a payment worth \$600 million has been postponed to next year. The increase in energy prices had a huge impact on this," one of the sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The source said Turkey could push back further such payments in the coming months depending on the course of energy prices.

The Russian and Turkish energy ministries, and their respective energy companies Gazprom and Botas, have not responded to requests for comment on the issue.

Turkish Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said last week that Turkey and Moscow agreed a deal allowing Ankara to defer energy payments up to a certain amount, but did not give details.

Turkey's energy import bill hit a record near \$100 billion in 2022 and in the year to February it imported 39% of its total 53.5 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas from Russia.

The deal underlines ties between Russia and Turkey, with the closeness between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Tayyip Erdogan allowing them to hold frequent talks on issues ranging from energy to the wars in Ukraine and Syria.

Turkey has sought to strike a balance in the war between Russia and Ukraine, opposing the Western sanctions on Moscow, while providing arms to Kyiv. Ankara also helped broker a deal that allowed the resumption of Ukrainian grains.

Ankara and Moscow have also cooperated over other regional conflicts, mainly thanks to the rapport between their leaders, helping them reach solutions in Libya, Syria and between Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite mostly backing opposing sides.

## Russia's Jan-April Budget Deficit Hits \$44b



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's federal budget recorded a 3.4 trillion rouble (\$43.8 billion) deficit in the first four months of the year, the finance ministry said, as Moscow continued to spend heavily and energy revenue fell sharply.

In the same period of 2022 Russia posted a surplus of 1.2 trillion roubles, but since then significant outlays to support its military campaign in Ukraine and a wall of Western sanctions on its oil and gas exports have hit government coffers.

Rising military production and huge state spending are keeping Russia's industry buzzing along, helping soften the economic impact of Western sanctions and allowing Moscow to plough on with its campaign in Ukraine.

The finance ministry stopped publishing individual monthly budget fulfilment data last year, but based on the figures, Russia posted a deficit in April of 1 trillion roubles (\$12.9 billion).

That compares with a 181 billion rouble surplus in March and deficits of 821 billion roubles in February and 1.76 trillion roubles in January.

Just four months into the year, the spending gap in April took Russia's deficit 17% above the government's plans for a 2.9 trillion-rouble deficit in 2023 as a whole.

Spending was 26.3% higher in the first four months of the year compared with 2022, the preliminary data showed, while income was down 22.4%.

Finance Minister Anton Siluanov has repeatedly said Russia's budget deficit this year would be no more than 2% of GDP, although most analysts disagree. The International Monetary Fund is among those expecting Russia to see a sharply wider budget deficit this year.

Siluanov recently said oil and gas revenues - down 52.3% year-on-year according to Wednesday's data - would be crucial in Russia meeting the 2% target.

### Notice of tender for export sale No. 05/1402/Z

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 60,000 metric tons of Iron Ore concentrate (%Fe:66.50) on basis of F.O.B at Shahid Rajaee Jetty Bandar-Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: ww.gog.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 14:00 P.M. on 22th May, 2023 to the Golgohar complex in Sirjan. (50 km in Shiraz road)

Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 10:00 A.M. on 23th May, 2023 at the office of the Seller.

شرکت معدنی و صنعتی گل گهر (سهامی عام)  
golgohar mining and industrial co.

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

## Iran Minister of Justice in Russia to Attend Legal Forum

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Minister of Justice Amin Hossein Rahimi has arrived in Russia to participate in Saint Petersburg International Legal Forum.

Rahimi arrived in Moscow on Thursday. He will then go to Saint Petersburg. During his three-day stay in Russia, the Iranian justice minister is scheduled to have bilateral meetings with his counterparts from other countries. Saint Petersburg International Legal Forum will open in the Russian city later in the day in presence of justice ministers and judicial delegations from 22 countries.



## Chevron Aims to Boost Venezuela Oil Output to Accelerate Debt Recovery

HOUSTON (dispatches) - Chevron Corp's renewed oil operations in Venezuela begin a new phase next month that will boost production with the goal of accelerating a plan to recover all of the \$3 billion of debt owed by the OPEC member by the end of 2025, four people close to the matter said.

Washington in November issued a six-month, automatically renewing license to the U.S. oil company to revive largely dormant operations in Venezuela and resume crude exports to the U.S. under an exemption to sanctions on the South American country.

To back up its license application, Chevron last year signed an oil-for-debt swap with Venezuela's state-run PDVSA.

Under the deal, Chevron aims to recover some \$750 million in unpaid debts and dividends by year-end, and all \$3 billion outstanding by the end of 2025, one of the people said. So far, it has recovered some \$220 million, the source said.

The plan shows both Chevron and PDVSA are getting what they wanted from the agreement: Venezuelan oil flowing to the U.S. and the OPEC nation getting royalties, worker benefits and a chance for future profits.

Chevron this year has reactivated crude output at its four joint ventures with PDVSA, exported an average 102,500 barrels per day (bpd), taken a role in procuring supplies and appointed new managers to the ventures' boards.

The initial exports have rapidly drained the ventures' oil inventories, which had built up for years. Chevron plans to continue pushing up heavy crude output mainly at oilfields in eastern and western Venezuela belonging to its Petropiar and Petroboscan projects, according to the sources.

In the second phase, Chevron plans to drive crude production to up to 160,000 bpd this year and about 200,000 bpd in 2024, one of the people said.

To optimize exports, the oil major has proposed to help Venezuela prepare a study on dredging Lake Maracaibo's navigation channel, which would let it load larger tankers, three of the people said.

Chevron also has asked PDVSA to assign it dedicated storage tanks for its joint ventures to improve handling of imported diluents and crude from the Orinoco Belt, Venezuela's largest producing region.

To motivate their joint venture workers, Chevron and PDVSA have agreed to pay bonuses for food and personal care to the staff, and improve their health insurance coverage, they added.

Venezuela's oil ministry and PDVSA did not reply to a request for comment. Chevron said it continues to conduct business "in compliance with all laws and regulations, as well as the sanctions framework provided by the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control."

More robust work and investment plans will have to wait, according to the sources.



At the Petropiar joint venture, urgent repairs are needed to its crude upgrader, which converts the Orinoco heavy crude into exportable grades. But major maintenance at the facility and a long-delayed new drilling plan are not expected in the short term, the people said.

"They will continue doing well workover only," one person said.

Chevron CEO Michael Wirth last month said the company's output in Venezuela was expected to reach 150,000 bpd this year without significant new investment and under existing license terms.

Chevron's license broke a four-year U.S. prohibition on Venezuelan oil exports to the United States designed to oust President Nicolas Maduro.

Even though the license bans any cash payments to Maduro's administration, it has helped Venezuela stabilize its currency by injecting U.S. dollars into its economy and benefited U.S. Gulf Coast refiners receiving the oil.

According to the oil-for-debt swap's terms, sales proceeds since January are going to the ventures' foreign bank accounts, Reuters has learned.

From there, one portion goes to debt repayment, a second to taxes and royalties through foreign currency exchange transactions by banks in Venezuela, and a third covers operational expenses, the sources said.

Because the license automatically renews every month for six more months, Chevron has dealt with fewer policy changes compared with the system it had until 2020, which required a full renewal of terms at every license's expiration.

The license will keep renewing unless the U.S. decides to rescind it or changes its terms, sources in Washington, Houston and Caracas said.

## Yazd Province Officials Visit Iran Alloy Steel Co. Pavilion At IRAN EXPO 2023

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Deputy Governor General and Governor of Yazd Province visited Iran Alloy Steel Company's pavilion at the fifth exhibition on Iran's exporting capabilities IRAN EXPO 2023.



Deputy Governor General on political affairs Ali Akbar Azizi and Governor Seyed Mohammad Reza Modarresi visited Iran Alloy Steel Company's achievements and capabilities which had been put on display at IRAN EXPO 2023.

Meanwhile vice-chairman of board of directors of the company Mr. Ali Doostan also visited the pavilion of Yazd Province State Government in the exhibition and during his visit hailed the actions taken by the state government in line with creating jobs and materialization of the slogan of production growth by this company and called for cooperation for accelerating the ongoing production projects in the Iran Alloy Steel Alloy.

IRAN EXPO 2023 was held with presence of over 150 investors from different countries and it was aimed at increasing interactions and trade exchanges with the goal of attracting investors and reinforcing markets.

Iran Alloy Steel Company partook in the event and put on display its latest achievements and products in the IRAN EXPO 2023.

## Pakistan's Deepening Political Crisis Douses Hopes for IMF Relief

KARACHI (Dispatches) - The political crisis engulfing Pakistan is eroding hopes that the South Asian country can get its much needed program with the International Monetary Fund back on track soon and escape a full-blown debt crunch, analysts said.

Deadly clashes between supporters of Imran Khan and police spread across the country after Pakistan's anti-corruption agency arrested the former prime minister on Tuesday.

The rupture in Pakistan's febrile politics comes as the 230-million-population nation prepares to hold tightly fought elections in the autumn while facing its worst economic crisis in decades, with dwindling reserves and a stalled \$6.5 billion IMF program that is expiring in June and scarce other financing sources in sight.

"With protesters on the streets, the IMF will be even more wary about restarting the loan deal," said Gareth Leather, senior economist for Emerging Asia at Capital Economics.

The turmoil since Khan was ousted just over a year ago has scarred the country's economy and markets. Pakistan's rupee has lost nearly 50% over the past 12 months. The main stock index (.KSE) has suffered a double-digit decline over the same period.

On Wednesday, the rupee tumbled some 2% to a fresh record low of 290 to the dollar. The country's international bonds, already in deeply distressed territory of as little as 32 cents, dropped more than 1 cent in the dollar on the day.

While noisy politics generating volatility was nothing new for Pakistan and its investors, they "really complicated the discussion with the IMF", said Cathy Hepworth, head of emerging market debt at PGIM Fixed Income, which holds Pakistan bonds.

"It just delays and complicates decisions."

Time is ticking down. Nearly 100 days have passed since the last IMF staff level mission to Pakistan and the two sides have yet to strike a preliminary deal - a key step to secure the next funding tranche. That is the longest such gap since at least 2008.

Meanwhile foreign exchange reserves at \$4.457 billion cover barely a month's worth of imports.

JPMorgan analyst Milo Gunasinghe said little relief was in sight while the IMF programme remained stalled. "The latest developments likely dampen any prospect of a political breakthrough across both sides," Milo said.

The bank recently lowered its 2023 growth forecast for the country from 1.3% to 0.1% and warned of "stagflation shock" due to delays in the IMF talks, while the central bank hiked its key interest rate to a record 21% to fight double-digit inflation.

At a local government bond auction on Wednesday, Pakistan was able to raise only 63 billion rupees (\$222 million) against a target of 100 billion rupees with the cut-off yield rising to nearly 20% for three-year maturities.

## Notice of tender for export sale No. 06/1402/Z

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 60,000 metric tons of Iron Ore Pellet (%Fe:65.00) on basis of F.O.B at Shahid Rajaei Jetty Bandar-Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: [www.gog.ir](http://www.gog.ir). All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 14:00 P.M. on 22th May, 2023 to the Golgohar complex in Sirjan. (50 km in Shiraz road)

Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 10:00 A.M. on 23th May, 2023 at the office of the Seller.

شرکت معدنی و صنعتی گل گهر (سهامی عام)  
golgohar mining and industrial co.



Analysis %		
Min	65.00	Fe
Max	1.20	FeO
Max	0.05	P
Max	0.01	S
Max	3.5	SiO2
Max	0.7	Al2O3
Max	0.9	CaO
Max	2.5	MgO
Ave 250		CCS(kg/p)
Min 90		8-16 mm%
Ave5		-6 mm%
Max 4.0		A.1%
Min 94		T.1%
19-24		Prosity%
Min 90		Reducibility%

GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.

## Palestinians Vow to...

FROM PAGE 1

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a regional grouping, likewise strongly condemned the continuation of the Israeli aggression, considering it to be a heinous crime and a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

It held the occupying regime fully responsible for the consequences of the continuation and escalation of its aggression and war crimes, saying the rise in the deadly Israeli violence constituted a threat to security, peace, and stability across the entire region.

The group, meanwhile, called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to accelerate those procedures that are aimed at prosecuting those who are responsible for war crimes.

## Iran Finance Minister...

FROM PAGE 1

On March 10, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to restore diplomatic ties seven years after they severed relations. According to the agreement, the two sides committed to reopening embassies in Tehran and Riyadh by May.

The landmark agreement, mediated by China, also included the implementation of a security cooperation agreement signed in 2001 and a 1998 pact to boost bilateral cooperation on trade, investment, technology, and culture.

On April 6, the foreign ministers of both countries met in Beijing and issued a joint statement, expressing readiness to remove all impediments to the expansion of bilateral ties.

## Iran-Pak Gas Pipeline...

FROM PAGE 1

Vice President ICCI Engineer Azhar ul Islam said that the Ministry of Industry is very important and can be helpful for improving the economic conditions of the country.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, Former President and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masood, Khalid Chaudhary, Saif ur Rahman Khan, Mahmood Waraich, Fayyaz Gul, Akhtar Abbasi, Zahid Qureshi, Babar Chaudhary, Malik Shabbir, Mirza Nisar and others also spoke on the occasion and gave useful suggestions for improving the country's economic situation.

## Tehran to Soon Appoint...

FROM PAGE 1

"Based on the agreement and the practical determination, we have had good progress in the process of making diplomatic missions ready," he said, adding that "more time" is needed because the buildings had not been used for years.

"We are in the final stages of preparing the missions," said the diplomat, hoping that they would be officially reopened in the "shortest time" possible.

"Political relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are practically in place," Kan'ani noted, adding that Tehran is "optimistic" about the continuation of this reconciliation based on both sides' determination and goodwill.

Technical delegations from Tehran and Riyadh have already visited the diplomatic missions in the past weeks to make the necessary arrangement and preparations for reopening.

## Gaza Raid to...

FROM PAGE 1

The Israeli regime has been staging back-to-back aerial assaults against the blockaded Palestinian enclave since Tuesday.

At least 25 Palestinians have been killed and 76 others injured as a result of the incessant aggression.

The fatalities include civilians as well as several commanders of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement.

Kanaani also posted pictures of the aftermath of the fatal Israeli attacks. "Palestine and its resistance groups are united, determined and equipped. The occupying regime and the usurping residents of the occupied lands will get nothing except a defeat for their current crimes, as was the case in the past," he wrote.

"Nevertheless, the Palestinian nation's sustainability and struggle against the aggressors do not absolve Islamic governments and nations from the responsibility to provide strong and effective support for Palestine."

## UAE's bin Zayed Shocked...

FROM PAGE 1

Days after the attack, the military attache at the US embassy arrived for a meeting with senior UAE military officials in which they handed their Emirati counterparts a bill for the refueling.

The American news website said the incident was "deeply offensive" to the UAE as it was further proof of Mohammed bin Zayed's growing feeling that Washington had abandoned Abu Dhabi in a time of need.

"Sheikh Mohammed was understandably upset," State Department counsellor Derek Chollet was quoted as saying by Axios.

"I felt bad that so much time had elapsed, that he was feeling upset and we didn't have an indication that this was the case. We certainly took it very, very seriously and felt that we responded in a way that we thought was responsive to our friends in need. Sheikh Mohammed did not feel that way," Chollet said. Washington's request last year was made during a low point in the US-UAE relationship, with Abu Dhabi signalling unease over what it perceived as the United States' declining commitment to the security of its partners in the region.

The Emirati ambassador to the US said in March 2022 that the relationship between the two countries was going through a "stress test."

The two sides began to mend fences and returned to a normal course after US President Joe Biden's meeting with Mohammed bin Zayed in the Saudi city of Jeddah last July.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies - including the UAE - launched a brutal war against Yemen in March 2015.

**Switchboard:**  
(+98) (21) 44253448  
**Public Relations Tel:**  
(+98)(21) 44253450  
Editorial Board: 44253449  
**Public Relations Fax:**  
(+98)(21) 44253395  
**Advertising Department:**  
Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234  
**Website:**  
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

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## PGA Adds Myrtle Beach Event for 2024 Seasons

**M**IAMI (Dispatches) - The US\$3.9 million Myrtle Beach Classic will debut as a PGA Tour event in the 2024 campaign under a four-year deal announced. Dates for the full-field tournament to be played at The Dunes Golf and Beach Club will be revealed when the PGA releases a complete 2024 season schedule. The club hosted an event on the 50-and-over PGA Champions Tour in the 1990s.

## Woods Not Included in Field List For PGA Championship

**L**ONDON (Dispatches) - Tiger Woods was not on the full field list for next week's PGA Championship, the golf major's organizers said, as the 15-times major champion continues to recover from an ankle surgery. Woods, who withdrew from the Masters midway through last month's tournament due to injury, underwent fusion surgery on a bone in his ankle to address his post-traumatic arthritis from a previous talus bone fracture.

## Inter Eye Champions League Final After Seeing Off Milan

**M**ILAN (Dispatches) - Inter Milan have one foot in the Champions League final after an impressive 2-0 win over AC Milan in yesterday's pulsating last-four derby. Inter have the upper hand ahead of Tuesday's second leg of the biggest Milan derby of a generation thanks to strikes in the first 11 minutes from Edin Dzeko and Henrikh Mkhitaryan. Inter could have won by a wider margin as Hakan Calhanoglu smashed a shot off the post and Dzeko wasted a great chance early in the second half, but they are still heavy favourites to reach the final of Europe's top club competition for the first time since they last won it 13 years ago. "Sometimes I don't score goals and that's all anyone talks about, but I also give something else," Dzeko told Prime Video after his third goal since January. "Today I worked for the team and that was what was needed in such a big match." Reaching the final would be extra sweet for Inter as it would avenge semi- and quarter-final eliminations at the hands of Milan in 2003 and 2005. The winners of the tie will face holders Real Madrid or Manchester City in the June 10 showpiece in Istanbul. The first leg of that semi-final finished 1-1 in Spain on Tuesday. Milan, who also struck the woodwork through Sandro Tonali, have their work cut out if they want to have a chance at being crowned European champions for the eighth time and will hope Rafael Leao is available for next week's decisive clash. The absence of star man Leao left Milan without their key attacking threat and allowed Inter to play more on the front foot knowing their opponents didn't have the Portugal winger's pace in their armoury. "We conceded two quick goals, and against Inter that's difficult to come back from," Milan defender Fikayo Tomori told Prime Video. "We're disappointed, we could have done better, especially at the beginning, but we need to believe if we're going to reach the final."



A colourful San Siro was nearly full an hour before kick-off, with both sets of fans exchanging chants and insults before the huge displays traditional to the fixture were unfurled as the teams came out. But once the match was underway there was really only one team on the pitch, with nominal away side Inter looking the more settled and dynamic off the back of five straight wins and the recent hot form of their attack. It didn't take long for the away side to open the scoring and it was a fabulous Dzeko goal which did it in the eighth minute. The Bosnia striker held off Davide Calabria and met Calhanoglu's inswinging corner with a perfect volley which left Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan with no chance. With their tails up and their fans falling over each other with joy in the Curva Nord, Inter went for Milan and three minutes later Mkhitaryan doubled their lead. Federico Dimarco was set scampering down the left flank and his low cut-back was first left by Lautaro Martinez and then collected by Armenian midfielder Mkhitaryan, who smashed in his fifth goal of the season. Milan escaped being three goals down after just a quarter of an hour when Calhanoglu nearly silenced the boos of his former supporters with a long-range drive which crashed out off the post. And Martinez then won a penalty which was rightly overturned by referee Jesus Gil Manzano following a look at the pitch-side monitor. Dzeko should have all but sealed the tie when one-on-one with Maignan in the 53rd minute and not long after, while Milan's fans unleashed a volley of flares and explosives, Tonali held his head in despair after striking the bottom of the post. However that was the last major chance of the game for Milan as Inter comfortably held off their rivals for the final half an hour and then bathed in the applause of their supporters who are dreaming of a trip to Turkey.

## Iran Drawn With the UAE For AFC Asian Cup 2023



**T**EHHRAN - In a draw ceremony that was held in Doha on Thursday, Iran was drawn with Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, and Palestine in Group C for the AFC Asian Cup 2023. Three-time winners Islamic Republic of Iran, 1996 runners-up United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, and Palestine will vie for the knockout stage spots in Group C while record four-time winners Japan, Indonesia, 2007 champions Iraq and Vietnam were drawn in Group D. Twice champions Korea Republic, the top-seeded team in Group E, will have Malaysia, Jordan and Bahrain to contend with while Group F will have three-time winners Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic, and Oman fighting for the knockout stage spots. The top two sides from each group and the four best third-placed teams will advance to the Round of 16 at Qatar 2023. The 24 teams in the tournament are divided into the following six groups are: Group A: Qatar, China, Tajikistan, Lebanon Group B: Australia, Uzbekistan, Syria, India Group C: Iran, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Palestine Group D: Japan, Indonesia, Iraq, Vietnam Group E: South Korea, Malaysia, Jordan, Bahrain Group F: Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic, Oman

## Italian Open Must Offer Women Equal Pay Before 2025

**R**OME (Dispatches) - World number seven Ons Jabeur said women players should not have to wait to receive the same prize money as their male counterparts at the Italian Open after tournament organizers announced plans to achieve pay parity by 2025. Tennis has sought to be a leader in the battle for equality in the last couple of decades with equal prize money offered to men and women at the four Grand Slams. WTA Tour events, however, still often offer less prize money than those on the separate men's circuit. In the Rome tournament, the total "financial commitment" for the men is \$9.51 million while for the women it is \$3.5 million.

Italian tennis federation chief Angelo Binaghi said last month the event had started a process that would lead to equal prize money over three years, but Tunisian Jabeur called for immediate change. "I don't see why we have to wait," Jabeur told the New York Times. "It's really frustrating. It's time for change. It's time for the tournament to do better." Reuters has contacted the tournament organisers for comment. Both men's and women's competitors at the tournament - which is one tier below the majors - play best-of-three set matches and the draw for both events features 128 players. Similar events at Indian Wells, Miami and Madrid offer equal pay for women, although they are listed as mandatory tournaments for players. Spain's Paula Badosa said she did not understand why there was prize money disparity in Rome, which attracts some of the world's top names. "I don't know why it's not equal right now," Badosa said. "They don't inform us. They say this is what you get and you have to play."



Murray, who had been hoping to boost his world ranking with a deep run in Rome and be seeded for Roland Garros, said it had been a "pretty patchy match" against the Italian. "There was some good stuff in there, but also some pretty average stuff," he was quoted

## Murray Exits Rome After Patchy Display Against Fognini

**R**OME (Dispatches) - Andy Murray's chances of being seeded for the French Open were dented when the former world number one lost to Fabio Fognini in the first round of the Italian Open. Just days after winning the second-tier Aix-en-Provence Challenger Tour crown, his first title since 2019 and first on clay since 2016, Murray delivered another inconsistent claycourt performance in a 6-4 4-6 6-4 defeat by Fognini. Murray, who had been hoping to boost his world ranking with a deep run in Rome and be seeded for Roland Garros, said it had been a "pretty patchy match" against the Italian. "There was some good stuff in there, but also some pretty average stuff," he was quoted

as saying by The Guardian. "He played well in the third set. My level was OK, but he played really well in the third." Three-times Grand Slam champion Murray, who also suffered early defeats in Monte Carlo and Madrid, has not played at Roland Garros since 2020 following two hip surgeries. In the past he has opted to skip tournaments during the claycourt season to focus on the grasscourt swing heading into Wimbledon. Murray said he was undecided about what he would do next and would discuss with his team whether to take a wild card into another tournament before next week. "I'd still like to play but we did agree that we would talk and make a decision as a team after Rome," he added. "That is what I wanted, to see how my game felt, how I was playing and physically how I was doing in some of the longer matches before making a definitive call on it. "We'll have those discussions in the next few days."

## Curry, Warriors Stave Off Elimination

**S**AN FRANCISCO (AP) — Draymond Green loved Golden State's defensive energy against LeBron James and knows the Warriors must bring that same urgency back to Los Angeles with another chance to save this topsy-turvy season and defend their title. They need the same focus again whether or not Lakers star Anthony Davis is clogging up the middle after he suffered a head injury in the fourth quarter. Stephen Curry had 27 points and eight assists, Andrew Wiggins added 25 points, seven rebounds and five assists, and the reigning champion Warriors staved off elimination by beating the Lakers 121-106 in Game 5 of the Western Conference semifinals Wednesday night. The Warriors have rallied before with this core group on the big postseason stage, becoming the first defending champion to come back from 2-0 down to beat Sacramento in the first round. "We're champions, so there's pressure every time you step on the floor," Green said. "You go out there, you don't win people are ready to crush you. People forget about the things that you've done in the past." James had 25 points and nine rebounds for Los Angeles. Davis added 23 points and nine rebounds but went to the locker room late after getting hit in the head by Kevon Looney as they fought for position in the paint on D'Angelo Russell's layup with 7:43 remaining.



## Embiid, Giannis, Doncic, Tatum Named to All-NBA First Team

**N**EW YORK (Dispatches) - NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid of Philadelphia, Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, Dallas star Luka Doncic and Boston's Jayson Tatum were among those named to the All-NBA First Team. The elite squad, among three chosen in voting by a global media panel, also included Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander. Greek star Antetokounmpo, a two-time NBA MVP, was the only unanimous first-team selection with 100 votes and 500 points and was joined among forwards by US standout Tatum, who was second with 98 votes and 484 points. Embiid, the star big man from Cameroon, was named to his first All-NBA First Team with 87 first-team votes and 474 total points. Canadian guard Gilgeous-Alexander had 63 first-team votes and 407 points to 60 first-team ballots and 403 points for Slovenian guard Doncic. It marked the first first-team selections for Embiid and Gilgeous-Alexander, the second for Tatum, the fourth for Doncic and the fifth for Antetokounmpo. The All-NBA Second Team included Denver center Nikola Jokic, a two-time NBA MVP from Serbia; guards Stephen Curry of Golden State and Donovan Mitchell of Cleveland and forwards Jimmy Butler of Miami and Jaylen Brown of Boston.

