

**Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Qarai Says That the Islamic Revolution Is a Great Role Model in the World And the Late Imam Khomeini Brought Dignity to Iranians**

# IRAN NEWS

**Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian Has Consulted With Relevant Saudi and Iranian Officials to Pursue the Latest Developments Regarding the Iranian Hajj Pilgrims**

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## Iran Dismisses U.S., Israel Outrage Over Election as VP of UNGA

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat has roundly dismissed the outrageous remarks by U.S. and Israeli diplomats concerning the appointment of the Islamic Republic as the vice president of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"A country, which has flaunted unilateralism and undermined multi-lateralism for decades, and eroded the credibility of the UN by means of abusing its veto power in support of the Zionist apartheid regime, is enraged over member states of the organization voting for Iran to hold some positions in the body," Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani wrote in a post published on his Twitter page on Saturday. He added, "The wind of change is not blowing in favor of the U.S. and Israel."

The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday appointed the permanent envoy of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the vice president of the 78th meeting of the UN General Assembly. With this decision, Iran has been appointed as one of the first vice presidents of the General Assembly of Asia-Pacific Group in the upcoming meeting of the Assembly, which will begin next September with the participation of high-profile officials of countries.

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## Arrogant Powers' Enmity Toward Iran Not to End Even If Nation Retreats



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the arrogant powers will not stop their enmity toward the Iranian nation even if the country retreats from its stances, noting that they want a dependent and subservient Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks at Imam Khomeini's Mausoleum in southern Tehran on Sunday while addressing tens of thousands of Iranians who came to mark the 34th anniversary of the late leader's passing.

"The enmity of Arrogance against Iran's nation will not be eliminated with our retreats. Many times, our retreats made them come forward and become more aggressive. The enemies are not satisfied with our retreats, they want to take Iran back to the way it was before the Revolution," he said.

They want an Iran that is "subservient" and has "no identity", stressed the leader.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the enemies seek to "disappoint" Iranian youths by focusing on problems in the country. The Leader praised Imam Khomeini as "one of the preeminent figures in our history and not just in our time." Such figures, maintained the leader, "cannot be erased from the history's memory ... and cannot be removed or distorted."

He hailed Imam Khomeini's preeminence in various fields, such as religious knowledge, jurisprudence, philosophy, theoretical mysticism, faith, and piety, noting that none of the prominent figures in Iran's history had all these features at the same time.

Imam Khomeini died at 86 years old in 1989, nearly ten years after the Islamic Revolution triumphed and toppled the Pahlavi regime in Iran, which was supported by the US and led by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, known as the Shah.

Imam Khomeini lived in exile for many years in Iraq, Turkey and France, where he guided a growing movement of people, who finally removed the Shah and created the Islamic Republic.

He founded the Islamic Republic after a referendum in 1979 when more than 98 percent of Iranians who could vote said 'yes' to the Islamic Republic.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said that the late founder of the Islamic Republic brought about three "unprecedented" changes in Iran, the Islamic Ummah and the world.

He said Imam Khomeini transformed Iran from a monarchy that was subservient to powers into a democracy that was independent and proud, ignited the Islamic awakening movement among the Islamic Ummah and made the Palestinian cause the foremost issue of Islam.

The Leader added that Imam Khomeini revived spirituality even in non-Muslim countries against the materialist trends. Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the riots that broke out last September after the death of a young Iranian woman, Mahsa Amini.

The Leader said that the enemies have made several attempts against Iran but have failed in most of them, the latest being the riots last autumn.

He said that the riots were "devised in Western think tanks" and supported by "extensive financial, media, and weaponry" help of Western security bodies.

Ayatollah Khamenei further noted that those behind the riots "thought that the Islamic Republic was over and that they could recruit the Iranian nation; the ignorants were wrong again."

Iran's intelligence community has said several countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, have used their spy and propaganda apparatuses to provoke violent riots in the country.

## Iran's Oil Output in March Hits 2.750b bpd

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The International Energy Agency (IEA) in its latest report announced that Iran's crude production volume reached 2.75 million barrels per day (bpd) in the fourth month of 2023.

According to the report, Iran's daily oil production increased 60,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) in April 2023, according to which, Iran became the fourth largest oil producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

In its monthly report of the global oil market, the Agency put the total volume of oil produced by OPEC member states in April 2023 at 28.850 million barrels per day (bpd).

Accordingly, the total oil volume produced by 13 OPEC member-states in April 2023 has decreased as many as 310,000 barrels of oil per day compared to a month before.

In this regard, OPEC's five members including Iran increased their oil output in April.

## Iran to Form Naval Alliance With Regional States to Ensure Security

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani says the country will form new regional and extra-regional alliances to enhance security.

"A joint alliance with naval forces of Iran and regional countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Iraq, will be set up soon," Irani said in a televised interview on Saturday.

"Today, regional countries have realized that the establishment of security in the region requires synergy and cooperation."

The commander said Iran and Oman have held several joint naval drills in the past but other countries are now eager for collective naval cooperation, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Pakistan and India.

He said Iran, Russia and China are expanding a previously formed naval coalition.

Irani said virtually all the countries located in the northern areas of the Indian Ocean have come to the conclusion that they should stand by Iran and jointly establish security through enhanced synergy.

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## Pakistan Facilitates Barter Trade With Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Pakistan Ministry of Commerce issued Statuary Regulatory Order (SRO), allowing barter trade with Iran and Russia from June 1, 2023.

According to the SRO, application for authorization of import and export of goods under the B2B barter trade facility shall be submitted online by traders or their authorized agents through the online BT Module in WeBOC system to the regulatory collector.

Accordingly, the application shall contain the following information: name and address of importer; name and address of exporter; description, quantity and value of goods to be imported; description, quantity and value of goods to be exported; validity and expiry dates of the contract; and declaration that the goods shall originate from the respective countries for which the Barter Trade facility has been allowed.

The Ministry of Commerce may impose country or commodity specific conditions or restrictions for imports and exports of goods under this B2B barter trade mechanism.

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## U.S. Imposes Fresh Sanctions on Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The United States has announced new sanctions against Iran, targeting tech firms and two of their senior employees for their alleged role in "censorship or other activities" on the Internet.

The US Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said on Friday that it slapped sanctions on Iran-based technology company Arvan Cloud, its co-founders, and their affiliated company in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The OFAC named the two individuals as the CEO of Arvan Cloud, Pouya Pirhosseinloo, and Farhad Fatemi, the company's tech lead and senior site reliability engineer. The Treasury also sanctioned ArvanCloud Global Technologies L.L.C., an affiliate company based in the UAE.

The fresh embargos come in continuation of the US's sanction policy against Iran as Tehran says Washington is "addicted" to imposing sanctions. Various Iranian institutes and individuals have been targeted by sanctions since the victory of the Islamic Revolution 44 years ago under various pretexts.

In a statement following the new announcement, US Treasury's under-secretary, Brian E. Nelson accused Tehran of undermining "freedom of expression".

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## BRICS, SCO Can Play Major Roles as Unilateralism Coming to End

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian says the era of unilateralism is coming to an end, and that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS group of countries will play major roles in the future as a new world order is emerging.

Amirabdollahian made the remarks in a Persian-language post published on his Instagram page on Sunday.

He said he had met with his counterparts from Brazil, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, the Comoros, and Gabon on the sidelines of his two-day visit to Cape Town, South Africa, where he attended a BRICS foreign ministers' meeting and a 'Friends of BRICS' meeting.

The senior diplomat highlighted that important bilateral, international and economic issues were discussed during the meetings. He also described Friends of BRICS as friends of multilateralism. "Nowadays, all independent countries have realized that they should not rely on one political bloc in international relations," he said.

He added, "The era of unilateralism is ending, and coalitions like the SCO and BRICS can have a significant role in future partnerships." The chief Iranian diplomat highlighted that the BRICS group of countries has found an important position in international affairs due to its credibility and its efforts to address the shortcomings of the international system and promote multilateralism.

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## FM Felicitate His New Counterpart in Turkey

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has congratulated appointment of Hakan Fidan as new foreign minister of Turkey.

In a message on his Twitter account, Amirabdollahian wrote on Sunday that they had held talks on several occasions and described Hakan Fidan as a professional and wise diplomat.

The Iranian FM tweeted: I sincerely congratulate the appointment of my brother Hakan Fidan as the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey. We have met and spoken times and again. He is a professional and wise diplomat. I tell my brother Mevlut Cavusoglu well done. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won presidential race for the third time in a row, and he appointed Fidan to replace Mevlut Cavusoglu, who served in this post from 2014.

## U.S. in Decline as New Powers, New Order Emerging

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

**TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi says a new world order in favor of the resistance front is emerging and Iran will be a major player in this new order, as the power of the United States continues to wane.**

Raisi made the remarks while addressing a ceremony held to commemorate the 34th passing away anniversary of founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini.

He said Imam Khomeini's ideas led to a major development in the global political arena, and his revolution changed all the political equations and gave birth to new ones and a new world order.

"All the indexes of the United States' unilateralism show that its power is in decline and emerging powers, including regional organizations, are on the rise across the globe, especially in Asia. There is no doubt that the Islamic Revolution is a major player in this new order, which is taking shape in favor of the resistance [front]," the Iranian president said.

Raisi said, "Those who claim to be powerful are now admitting to the [increasing] power of the Islamic Republic of Iran and our power in the region is undeniable, and no equation can take shape except with Iran playing a role in it."

He added that "resistance" is now among prominent political terms in the world and the key to resistance is to become strong in the face of the enemies, not to submit to them.

"The word 'resistance' had no place in the political jargon [of the world], but today 'resistance' and 'steadfastness' are among prominent political terms," Raisi noted.



He added that the key to resistance is that "the path [to overcoming problems] does not go through submission to the enemy, but it requires [us] to appear strong against the enemy, because only a strong society can resist conspiracies and all kinds of sedition."

"We have announced time and again that we are ready to establish relations with countries that have indicated their willingness to have relations with Iran. However, we will resist against those countries that may want to confront us," Raisi added.

He noted that Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has clearly analyzed the root cause of hostilities against the Islamic Republic, saying the enemies conspire against Iran because it is a progressive country.

Noting that the spokesperson of the White House has admitted that the so-called maximum pressure policy against Iran has miserably failed, Raisi said, "It was you people, who thwarted and defeated the sanctions" that were imposed on the country by the US and its allies.

The Iranian president then assured the nation that the hybrid and media war launched against the Islamic Republic by its enemies will also fail and prove futile, as the Iranian nation continues to tread the trail that has been blazed by its martyrs.

## Iran Freed Danish Prisoner, Two Iranians on Humanitarian Grounds

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has freed a Danish prisoner as well as two Iranians on humanitarian grounds, according to a senior judiciary official.

The announcement was made on Friday by Kazem Gharibabadi, the secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights and the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs.

Gharibabadi identified the two Iranian nationals as Masoud Mosaheb and Kamran Ghaderi. They had served most of their term, 4.5 and 7.5 years, respectively. The Judiciary official did not name the Danish individual.

Iranian media reports said the two Iranians had been convicted of espionage and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Earlier on Friday, a spokesperson for the Belgian government had reported the release of the three, saying the two Iranians had dual Austrian nationality. The spokesperson claimed the three were released by Iran in return for Iranian diplomat Assadollah Assadi as part of a prisoner swap which also saw Iran releasing Belgian national Olivier Vandecasteele last week.

The Belgian government said in a statement the Danish was arrested in Iran in November 2022, and Ghaderi and Mosaheb in 2016 and 2019, respectively.

The statement thanked Oman for mediating the swap, and said Belgium is organizing their evacuation via Oman to Belgium. Oman has long been an interlocutor in interactions between the West and Iran. The country has so far mediated the release of several foreign citizens and dual nationals.

## Egyptian, Jordanian Parliamentary Groups Invited to Visit Tehran

TEHRAN (IFP) - An Iranian lawmaker says the country's legislative chamber has invited parliamentary delegations from Egypt and Jordan to visit the Islamic Republic, amid growing signs of the Tehran-Cairo plans to resume diplomatic ties.

Abbas Golrou, head of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said although Iran-Egypt ties are officially at the level of the interests sections for the moment, both sides have already introduced diplomatic representatives at the ambassador level, and they have direct relations.

In the Committee, he said, "we tried to pursue parliamentary consultations with countries with which diplomatic relations are at a lower level. In this regard, I had a meeting last week with the envoys of Egypt and Jordan and invited the parliamentary groups of these two countries to visit Tehran, and we hope that these visits will take place as soon as possible."

In March, Iran and Saudi Arabia announced a China-brokered agreement for the reconciliation and resumption of diplomatic ties, following a 7-year-long rupture.

Interactions between Iran and the Persian Gulf neighbors have since witnessed a significant boost.

Iran has been pursuing similar agreements with Bahrain and Egypt, too.

Last week, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said in a meeting with Oman's visiting Sultan that he would welcome the restoration of full diplomatic ties with Egypt, raising the prospect of Cairo and Tehran normalizing relations after decades of strain.

## Pakistan PM, Iran VP Discuss Deepening Trade Ties

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has met with Iran's Vice President Mohammad Mokhber, when he underlined the need for pursuing barter mechanism in bilateral trade.

Pakistani Prime Minister's Office in Islamabad reported on Sunday that Pakistan's premier and Iran's VP held talks on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday.

Shehbaz Sharif described his meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in joint border point, as well as the opening of a border market as a step forward to consolidate mutual trade ties. The premier noted that pursuing the barter mechanism would be beneficial for both nations, adding that Islamabad is committed to upgrading ties with Tehran.

## Brussels Ready for Deeper Iran-Europe Ties

TEHRAN (Brussels)- Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib says her country is ready to foster closer ties between Iran and Europe, expressing her gratitude for Tehran's assistance in resolving the issue of European prisoners' release.

In a phone conversation with her Iranian counterpart Hossein Amirabdollahian on Saturday, Lahbib commended Iran's humanitarian move to release one Dane and two Austrian-Iranian citizens and hoped it would open a new chapter in relations between Tehran and Brussels.

Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights and the Judiciary chief's deputy for international affairs Kazem Gharibabadi said on Friday the country freed the three prisoners on humanitarian grounds.

He identified the two Iranian nationals as Masoud Mosaheb



and Kamran Ghaderi, who had served most of their terms, 4.5 and 7.5 years, respectively. The Judiciary official did not name the Danish individual.

They were released few days after Assadollah Assadi, an Iranian diplomat detained in Belgium on false terror-related charges, was freed following an Omani-brokered deal.

Pointing to Iran's rich history and civilization, the Belgian minister expressed hope to travel to Tehran at an appropriate time.

During the phone call, Amirabdollahian said Tehran expects "purposeful and effective" dialogue based on mutual respect would be put on the agenda of Iran and the European sides given Belgium's role in the European Union. The top Iranian diplomat also hailed joint efforts by Iran and Belgium which resulted in the release of the two countries' inmates.

## Iran Could Curb COVID-19 Despite Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Health and Medical Education has said that the Islamic Republic defeated COVID-19 pandemic despite being under sanctions.

Bahram Einollahi made the remarks while attending the sod-cutting ceremony for the construction of healthcare projects in Shahrekord County.

He said that Iran, now, is considered a successful country in the health and medical field in the region.

Iran has achieved self-sufficiency in many areas, he said, noting that while the country dependent in the pre-Islamic revolution era.

In February 2021, WHO Regional Director for Eastern Mediterranean, Ahmad al-Manzari, said that Iran is a role model in West Asia for taking measures to control non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Al-Manzari stressed the need to transfer Iran's knowledge and experience to other countries in the region, especially experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic and non-communicable diseases by setting up regional and global networks.

## Saudi FM to Visit Iran Soon

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud says he will pay an official visit to Tehran in the near future as top diplomats from the two regional heavyweights are determined to mend relations between their respective countries, facilitate mutual cooperation and reopen their diplomatic missions.

Prince Faisal made the announcement during a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amirabdollahian on the sidelines of a meeting of the BRICS group of emerging countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in Cape Town, South Africa, on Friday evening.

He extended his gratitude to the Iranian side for warmly welcoming the Saudi technical delegation and providing valuable assistance as to the reopening of the Saudi embassy and consulate general in Iran.

"Thanks to very good cooperation between the two sides, we could quickly name respective ambassadors and prepare the ground for the reopening of diplomatic and consular missions. We are moving towards a new stage of mutual relations, which will serve the interests of the two nations and the entire region," the Saudi foreign minister pointed out.

Prince Faisal also emphasized that he will soon visit Tehran in response to the invitation he has already received in this regard.

For his part, Amirabdollahian expressed satisfaction over the course of the rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh, saying, "Envoys from both countries have been appointed and formally introduced, and the groundwork has been laid for the reopening of embassies and consulates general."

He also appreciated the facilities offered by Saudi authorities to Iranian pilgrims to attend the Hajj rituals.

## Iran Cautions Against Inimical Israeli Schemes to Fuel Regional Insecurity

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian has cautioned against inimical schemes by the Israeli regime to fuel insecurity in the Persian Gulf region.

Amirabdollahian was meeting with his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan on the sidelines of a meeting of the Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers in Cape Town, South Africa.

The minister said Israel seeks to secure its interests at the expense of regional insecurity. Amirabdollahian praised the positive new

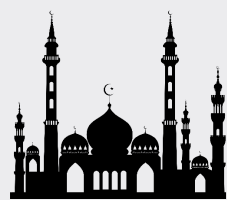
atmosphere in relations among the regional countries.

He also hailed the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for efforts to expand mutual relations and invited his Emirati counterpart to visit Tehran.

The Iranian minister placed a premium on holding a meeting of the two countries' joint economic committee in the near future.

Meanwhile, the Emirati minister said the UAE is set to hold an international summit on climate change and would invite Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to take part.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:38
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:03
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:48

53. Have they a share in dominion or power? Behold, they give not a farthing to their fellow-men?  
54. Or do they envy mankind for what Allah hath given them of his bounty?  
but We had already given the people of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and conferred upon them a great kingdom.

Surah 4. Women (53 - 54)

## Tehran, Moscow Boost Use of National Currencies In Trade by 60%

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** The Head of Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce, Hadi Tizhoush Taban, said that the share of the Russian ruble and the Iranian rial in mutual settlements between Russia and Iran currently exceeds 60 percent, according to head of Iran-Russia Chamber of Commerce.

Referring to the development Iran-Russia relations, Hadi Tizhoush Taban said that after the start of regional conflicts with Ukraine, the Russian Confederation was sanctioned by Western countries, exactly like Iran, which resulted in interest in cooperation between the two countries.

During the Iranian President's visit to Russia, the two countries agreed to increase the volume of trade exchanges to \$10 billion, and Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the head of the Economic Commission of the Iranian Parliament visited Russia to expand economic, monetary and banking relations between the two countries, he added.

Tizhoush Taban stated that during the visit, the CBI Governor met and discussed



with the deputy prime minister of Russia, the minister of economic development and the head of the central bank of the country, and discussed various issues, including the development of monetary and banking cooperation, solutions to remove some obstacles and expansion of investment.

The Head of Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce in his remarks added that this process not only bypasses the western sanctions, but also solves issues related to beneficial bilateral cooperation and increasing trade, which according to official statistics is now more than 40% of trade between the two countries in rubles.

He emphasized that Russia has become the largest foreign investor in Iran, having invested \$2.7 billion in two Iranian oil projects, and this is about 45 percent of the total foreign investment in Iran from October 2021 to January 2023.

Tizhoush Taban further said that the Russian projects in Iran are multifaceted and include energy, railways, automobile manufacturing, and agriculture, and in parallel, Iran supplies Russia with food and automobile products.

## MAPNA Group Hosts Chairman of People's Council of Turkmenistan



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** MAPNA Group last week hosted Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, the chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, and during this visit the Turkmen official got acquainted with the capabilities of MAPNA Group.

According to the reports, the CEO of MAPNA Group Mr. Abbas Aliabadi welcomed Mr. Berdimuhamedow and briefed him of the capabilities of the group in the different industrial and economic fields.

He then pointed to the capacities of the group in the fields of engineering, building and producing equipment and implementation of macro projects and announced readiness of the group for sharing its technical and engineering experiences with Ashgabat.

Aliabadi further said that using skillful and expertise forces, achieving state-of-the-art global knowhow, developing advanced productions and exporting technical and engineering services and compliance with the modern global progresses in technology transfer and partnership with the international industrial enterprises as well as indigenization are of the main properties of the group.

He then pointed to some of productions and services of the group like building power plant, building or reconstruction of thermal and renewable power plants, electrifying railway tracks, building locomotive, and freight and passenger wagons and called them potential fields for bilateral cooperation with Turkmenistan.

Meanwhile Berdimuhamedow visited the exhibition on the technological capacities of the group in different fields.

## Iran, Uzbekistan Discuss Bilateral Ties

**TEHRAN (IRNA) -** Iran's Caretaker Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mehdi Niazi has met with Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov for talks focused on ways to expand bilateral relations in political, economic, trade and cultural fields.

The meeting took place at Uzbekistan's presidential palace in Tashkent on Thursday, a day after officials from both countries wrapped up the 15th meeting of Iran-Uzbekistan intergovernmental commission co-chaired by the Iranian caretaker minister and Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade Laziz Kudratov.

During talks with the Uzbek prime minister, Niazi announced Iran's readiness to welcome Uzbekistan's president in his upcoming visit to the Islamic Republic.

He also stressed that the Iranian government attaches paramount importance to the development of ties with neighboring and aligned countries including Uzbekistan.

The Uzbek premier on his part referred to the key role the Islamic Republic plays in the region. Aripov also said that his country is keen on using Iran's experience in industrial and cultural heritage fields.

## Official Highlights Advantage of PEISEZ for Foreign Investment

BY: V. BAHRAMI

**TEHRAN -** Closeness of Parsian Port to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE is an Advantage for Foreign Investment in this port of Parsian Energy Intensive Industrial Economic Zone (PEISEZ), the CEO of the zone Seyed Ali Asghar Alameh said.

Speaking in a press conference on Thursday, Mr. Allameh said that today the issues of transport is the key characteristic in the world trade and closeness of Parsian to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE is of the advantages of foreign investment.

He added that closeness to Assaluyeh as the energy hub and economic capital of Iran is considered as one of the other advantages of PEISEZ, adding that foreign investors in the zone do not pay tariff for importing goods to the zone. He noted by the way the cost of investment in the zone is lower comparing to the other zones.

Allameh said that foreign investors do not pay any custom operation cost and the zone has many distinguished advantages in terms of commercial. He added that PEISEZ works under supervision of IMIDRO and is located at the juncture of Hormozgan, Fars and Bushehr provinces.

Port of Parsian zone is the biggest specialized port of the country and the second port after Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas.



He then briefed the reporters on the history of the launch of this zone and noted that the zone started its activities in 1998 but in 12 to 13 years the project was progressed sluggishly while in recent two years, the 13th government has

attached special attention to this zone and the project has been accelerated.

He noted that today 40 small and big projects have been implemented in Parsian and investment in the form of 20 agreements have been signed which includes petrochemical, state and private sector projects and some part of the executive operation has been started, adding that today in this zone a fully-Iranian made port has been launched whose design, engineering, construction and financing have been all done in Iran and the port is considered today as one of the best Iranian ports.

Allameh reiterated that the port is the outcome of cooperation between IMIDRO and Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade which come on stream and 750,000-ton vessels can dock there easily.

He noted that this zone is not considered as the industrial zone and it can activate its capacity of tourism, noting that investors have expressed their interests for investments in the tourism sector of the zone and it can help domestic and foreign tourists in the future and earn forex for the country.

## Iran Adds 15 Ships to Its Merchant Fleet in North

**TEHRAN (PressTV) -** Iran has added at least 15 ships to its merchant fleet in the Caspian Sea amid growing trade ties with Russia and other countries located to the north of Iran.

Head of Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran (PMO) said on Saturday that expanding Iran's northern fleet of commercial vessels has become a priority for the country's transportation ministry, of which the PMO is a subsidiary.

"Given that the volume of trade with neighboring countries to the north is growing, the first priority for the Ministry is to expand the fleet and to increase the capacity in the Caspian Sea," said Ali Akbar Safaei.

Safaei said that Iran's Caspian Sea merchant fleet will further expand in the near future with the arrival of new ships from the Volga River.

The announcement comes amid growing shipping activity in the Caspian Sea as Russia and other countries have ramped up their exports and imports via Iran and its southern ports.

Media reports and statements by Iranian authorities show there has been a major surge in trade via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a route that connects the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to countries to the north of Iran via the Iranian road and rail transportation network.

Iran has created new infrastructure, including modern port operation systems, in its northern ports to both facilitate cargo transit via the INSTC and to increase its own exports to Russia and other countries.

Last month, Iran and Russia signed a contract to build a key railway along the Caspian Sea that would significantly boost trade via INSTC's western branch.

## Number of Cellular Subscriptions in Iran Increases to 148m

**TEHRAN (MNA) -** According to the statistics released Communications Regulatory Authority of Iran, the number of mobile (cellular) subscriptions in the country has increased to more than 148m.

The latest figures released on Saturday by the Communications Regulatory Authority of Iran for the end of 1401 in the Iranian calendar (ended on March 21, 2023) in the field of mobile phones show that the number of mobile (cellular) subscriptions in the country has increased to more than 148m and the penetration rate of mobile phone use in the country stands at 176%. The statistics show the number was eight million up from the year before the year 1400 (March 21-2021-2023), when the number of subscriptions was 140 million.

Mobile Telecommunication Company of Iran or Hamrahe Aval is first on the list with 52.88% of the subscriptions, Irancell stands in the second place with 43.33%, while the Rightel operator follows them with 3.78% of the subscriptions. According to the figures for the end of 1401, the coverage rate of the roads between cities and villages in Iran has now increased to 95%.

## Iran Businesses Welcome Pakistan's Approval of Barter Trade

**TEHRAN (PressTV) -** Iranian businesses expect a major surge in exports to Pakistan after Islamabad issued a special order that allows barter trade with three countries including Iran.

Amanollah Shahnavazi, who serves as deputy chairman of Iran-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, said on Saturday that barter trade with Pakistan will lead to a boom in trade between the two neighboring countries as it removes the need to use hard currencies to settle trade transactions. "In case this issue of barter trade becomes operational we will see a considerable increase in exports which is a big, important development," Shahnavazi was quoted as saying by the IRIB News.

He said that Pakistani businesses will also benefit from the barter mechanism in trade with Iran, adding that the decision will also enables Islamabad to spend less from its foreign exchange reserves for imports of essentials.

The Pakistani government on Friday authorized an order that allows barter trade for certain goods, including petroleum and natural gas with Iran, Russia and Afghanistan. The Pakistani Ministry of Commerce has said that state and privately owned entities would need approval to participate in the Business-to-business (B2B) Barter Trade Mechanism 2023.



## Germany to Send Two Warships To Indo-Pacific in 2024

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany will send two warships to the Indo-Pacific in 2024, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said, amid rising tensions between China and Taiwan and over the disputed South China Sea.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Asia's most important security conference, Pistorius said countries needed to stand up for the rules-based international order and the protection of major maritime passages.

"To this end, the German Federal Government sent a frigate to the Indo-Pacific in 2021, and will again, in 2024, deploy maritime assets - this time a frigate and a supply ship - to the region," he said, according to a script of his speech distributed by the defence ministry in Berlin.



## Indonesia Proposes UN Referendum For Ukraine Peace Plan

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - Indonesia's defense minister proposed a peace plan to end the war in Ukraine, calling for a demilitarized zone and a United Nations referendum in what he called disputed territory.

Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko dismissed the plan, reiterating Kyiv's position that Russia should withdraw its troops from Ukraine. Prabowo Subianto called on defense and military officials from around the world, gathered at the Shangri-La Dialogue defense meeting in Singapore, to issue a declaration calling for a cessation in hostilities.

He proposed a multi-point plan including a ceasefire and establishing a demilitarized zone by withdrawing 15 kilometres (nearly 10 miles) from each party's forward position.



## At Least 288 Killed in Deadly Indian Train Crash



BALASORE (Dispatches) - The cause of India's deadliest train disaster in decades was linked to the signal system, the railway minister said, as families scoured hospitals and morgues for missing relatives and deaths were expected to top 288.

Mounds of debris were piled high at the site of Friday night's crash near Balasore, in the eastern state of Odisha, as workers repairing the tracks cleared the smashed carriages and blood-stained wreckage where hundreds were also injured. Hospitals have been overwhelmed by the number of casualties.

"We have identified the cause of the accident and the people responsible for it," India's Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told news agency ANI. He said it was "not appropriate" to give details before a final investigation report. There was confusion about the exact sequence of events but reports cited railway officials saying a signalling error had sent the Coromandal Express running south from Kolkata to Chennai onto a side track.

It slammed into a freight train and the wreckage derailed an express running north from India's tech hub Bengaluru to Kolkata that was also passing the site.

Sudhanshu Sarangi, director general of Odisha Fire Services, said the death toll stood at 288 but was expected to rise further, potentially approaching 380.

Odisha's chief secretary Pradeep Jena confirmed that about 900 injured people had been hospitalised.

Vaishnaw said the "change that occurred during electronic interlocking, the accident happened due to that", referring to a technical term for a complex signal system designed to stop trains colliding by arranging their movement on the tracks.

"Whoever did it, and how it happened, will be found out after proper investigation," he said.

Local media have quoted a preliminary investigation report, with the Times of India reporting on Sunday that "human error in signalling may have caused the collision between three trains".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the crash site and injured passengers in hospital on Saturday and said "no one responsible" would be spared.

"I pray that we get out of this sad moment as soon as possible," he told state broadcaster Doordarshan.

The rescue effort was declared over on Saturday evening after emergency personnel had combed the mangled wreckage for survivors and laid scores of bodies beside the tracks.

A high school close to the crash site was turned into a makeshift morgue, but officials said many of the bodies were so disfigured that several distraught families could only identify their loved ones by pieces of jewellery.

Family members look at photographs to identify bodies at a temporary morgue after a train disaster in the eastern state of Odisha killed at least 288 people.

"There were bodies with only a torso, an entirely burnt face, disfigured skull and no other visible identity markers left," said Ranajit Nayak, the police officer in charge of releasing the bodies at the school.

In sweltering heat, unidentified bodies were being transferred to bigger centres and officials suggested some would only be identified by DNA testing.

Mohammad Abid, 35, said his 18-year-old son had somehow survived the crash without injuries but he was looking for his cousin, who had been travelling with him.

"I want to know how two trains were allowed on the same track... someone should be punished for this," Abid said.

He was waiting at a morgue after touring every hospital that he could.

"I don't know if I'll find my son," he said.

## More Than 50 Ugandan Peacekeepers Killed in Somalia

MOGADISHU (Dispatches) - Some 54 Ugandan peacekeepers died when militants besieged an African Union base in Somalia last week, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni said, in one of the worst recent attacks by Al-Shabaab jihadists in the war-torn country.

"We discovered the lifeless bodies of 54 fallen soldiers, including a commander," Museveni said in a Twitter post late Saturday.

The veteran leader was speaking during a meeting with members of his governing National Resistance Movement party, the presidency told AFP.

The toll is one of the heaviest yet since pro-government forces backed by the AU force known as ATMIS launched an offensive against Al-Shabaab last August.

It was also a rare admission of a major military death toll by African Union members.

Al-Shabaab, which has been waging a deadly insurgency against Somalia's fragile central government for more than a decade, claimed responsibility for the May 26 attack, saying it had overrun the base and killed 137 soldiers.

Al-Shabaab is known to exaggerate claims of battlefield gains for propaganda purposes, and the governments of nations contributing troops to the AU force rarely confirm casualties.

The militants drove a car laden with explosives into the base in Bulo Marer, 120 kilometres (75 miles) southwest of the capital Mogadishu, leading to a gunfight, local residents and a Somali military commander told AFP.

Museveni had already said last week that "some of the soldiers there did not perform as expected and panicked" as some 800 assailants attacked.

That forced a withdrawal to a nearby base some nine kilometres (6 miles) away, he said, deploring "a missed opportunity to annihilate" the Qaeda-linked insurgents.

"The mistake was made by two commanders, Maj. Oluka and Maj. Obbo, who ordered the soldiers to retreat," Museveni said on Saturday, adding that they would face charges in a court martial. However, "our soldiers demonstrated remarkable resilience and reorganised themselves, resulting in the recapture of the base."



## Imran Khan Openly Accuses Military of Trying to Destroy His Party

LAHORE (Dispatches) - Pakistan's embattled former Prime Minister Imran Khan has accused the powerful military and its intelligence agency of openly trying to destroy his political party, saying he had "no doubt" he would be tried in a military court and thrown in jail.

Khan has hinted previously at the military's hand in a crackdown on his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party but his comments in an interview at his Lahore home were the most blunt yet.

"It is completely the establishment," the former cricket hero told Reuters, when asked who was behind the crackdown. "Establishment obviously means the military establishment, because they are really now openly - I mean, it's not even hidden now - they're just out in the open."

A spokesman for the military, which has run the country directly or indirectly for its 75-year history, and has seldom faced the sort of public challenge to its power as it has from Khan, did not respond to a request for comment.

A bruising year-long standoff between Khan, Pakistan's most popular leader according to polls, and the army came to a head when military buildings and property were ransacked last month, allegedly by his supporters.

The political unrest has increased uncertainty in the nuclear-armed country of 220 million, which is also beset by financial turmoil. Its \$350 billion economy is struggling to stave off default, control record inflation and deal with a plummeting currency.

Khan termed the violent protests, which erupted after he was briefly arrested, a "false flag operation" meant to target him.

Authorities have begun the process of trying dozens of people, including members of his party, suspected of involvement in the protests in military court - usually reserved for service members or those categorised as enemies of the state.

"That's the only way they are going to get me into prison," Khan said, adding that the military wanted to stop him from returning to power in elections due by November.

## China Warns NATO-Like Alliances Could Lead to Conflict in Asia-Pacific

SINGAPORE (Dispatches) - China's defense minister warned against establishing NATO-like military alliances in the Asia-Pacific, saying they would plunge the region into a "whirlpool" of conflict.

Li Shangfu's comments came a day after US and Chinese military vessels sailed close to each other in the flashpoint Taiwan Strait, an incident that provoked anger from both sides.

"Attempts to push for NATO-like (alliances) in the Asia-Pacific is a way of kidnapping regional countries and exaggerating conflicts and confrontations," Li told a security conference in Singapore also attended by US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

Li warned that these alliances would "plunge the Asia-Pacific into a whirlpool of disputes and conflicts".

Li's comments echoed long-held Chinese criticism of the United States' efforts to shore up alliances in the region and counter China's rise.

The United States is a member of AUKUS, which groups it with Australia and Britain.

Washington is also a member of the QUAD group, which includes Australia, India and Japan.

"Today's Asia-Pacific needs open and inclusive cooperation, not buddy-buddy up into small cliques," Li said at the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit.

Li sought to paint the United States as the trigger of

regional instability, and China as seeking to ease tensions.

"It cannot be denied that if a fierce conflict or confrontation occurs between China and the United States, it would bring unbearable pain for the world," he said.

On Saturday, Austin called for top-level defence talks with Beijing to prevent miscalculations.

"The more that we talk, the more that we can avoid the misunderstandings and miscalculations that could lead to crisis or conflict," Austin said.

Also on Saturday, the United States deployed a destroyer from its 7th Fleet along with a Canadian naval vessel through the Taiwan Strait.

China responded by sending one of its naval ships close to the US destroyer, the USS Chung-Hoon, according to the Pentagon.

The strait is one of the world's most tense potential military flashpoints. China claims Taiwan as its territory - vowing to take it one day, by force if necessary - and has in recent years ramped up military and political pressure on the island.

Austin on Sunday described the incident as "extremely dangerous", saying the Chinese vessel crossed "probably 150 feet (46 metres)" in front of the Chung-Hoon.

"I call upon the (Chinese) leadership to really do the right things to rein in that kind of conduct, because I think accidents can happen that could cause things to spiral out of control," Austin told reporters in Singapore.



## World's Spy Chiefs Meet in Secret Conclave in Singapore

SINGAPORE (Dispatches)

- Senior officials from about two dozen of the world's major intelligence agencies held a secret meeting on the fringes of the Shangri-La Dialogue security meeting in Singapore this weekend, five people told Reuters.

Such meetings are organized by the Singapore government and have been discreetly held at a separate venue alongside the security summit for several years, they said. The meetings have not been previously reported.

The U.S. was represented by Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, the head of her country's intelligence community, while China was among the other countries present, despite the tensions between the two superpowers.

Samant Goel, the head of India's overseas intelligence gathering agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, also attended, an Indian source said.

"The meeting is an important fixture on the international shadow agenda," said one person with knowledge of the discussions. "Given the range of countries involved, it is not a festival of tradecraft, but rather a way of promoting a deeper understanding of intentions and bottom lines."

"There is an unspoken code among intelligence services that they can talk when more formal and open diplomacy is harder - it is a very important factor during times of tension, and the Singapore event helps promote that."

All five sources who discussed the meetings declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter.

A spokesperson for the Singapore Ministry of Defence said that while attending the Shangri-La Dialogue, "participants including senior officials from intelligence agencies also take the opportunity to meet their counterparts."

"The Singapore Ministry of Defence may facilitate some of these bilateral or multilateral meetings," the spokesperson said. "Participants have found such meetings held on the sidelines of the (dialogue) beneficial."

The U.S. Embassy in Singapore said it had no information on the meeting. The Chinese and Indian governments did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand operate what is called the Five Eyes network to gather and share a broad range of intelligence, and their intelligence officials meet frequently.





# AI Poses Extinction Risk



PARIS (Dispatches) - Global leaders should be working to reduce "the risk of extinction" from artificial intelligence technology, a group of industry chiefs and experts warned.

A one-line statement signed by dozens of specialists, including Sam Altman whose firm OpenAI created the ChatGPT bot, said tackling the risks from AI should be "a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war".

ChatGPT burst into the spotlight late last year, demonstrating an ability to generate essays, poems and conversations from the briefest of prompts.

The program's wild success sparked a gold rush with billions of dollars of investment into the field, but critics and insiders have raised the alarm.

Common worries include the possibility that chatbots could flood the web with disinformation, that biased algorithms will churn out racist material, or that AI-powered automation could lay waste to entire industries. The latest statement, housed on the website of US-based non-profit Center for AI Safety, gave no detail of the potential existential threat posed by AI.

The center said the "succinct statement" was meant to open up a discussion on the dangers of the technology. Several of the signatories, including Geoffrey Hinton, who created some of the technology underlying AI systems and is known as one of the godfathers of the industry, have made similar warnings in the past.

Their biggest worry has been the rise of so-called artificial general intelligence (AGI) — a loosely defined concept for a moment when machines become capable of performing wide-ranging functions and can develop their own programming.

The fear is that humans would no longer have control over superintelligent machines, which experts have warned could have disastrous consequences for the species and the planet.

Dozens of academics and specialists from companies including Google and Microsoft — both leaders in the AI field — signed the statement.

It comes two months after Tesla boss Elon Musk and hundreds of others issued an open letter calling for a pause in the development of such technology until it could be shown to be safe.

However, Musk's letter sparked widespread criticism that dire warnings of societal collapse were hugely exaggerated and often reflected the talking points of AI boosters.

US academic Emily Bender, who co-wrote an influential papers criticising AI, said the March letter, signed by hundreds of notable figures, was "dripping with AI hype".

Bender and other critics have slammed AI firms for refusing to publish the sources of their data or reveal how it is processed — the so-called "black box" problem.

Among the criticism is that the algorithms could be trained on racist, sexist or politically biased material. Altman, who is currently touring the world in a bid to help shape the global conversation around AI, has hinted several times at the global threat posed by the technology his firm is developing.

"If something goes wrong with AI, no gas mask is going to help you," he told a small group of journalists in Paris last Friday.

But he defended his firm's refusal to publish the source data, saying critics really just wanted to know if the models were biased.

"How it does on a racial bias test is what matters there," he said, adding that the latest model was "surprisingly non-biased".

# Has There Finally Been Progress in Treating Schizophrenia?



REIMS (Dispatches) - For decades there has been almost no improvement in the medical treatment of schizophrenia, one of the most serious and devastating of all mental illnesses, but recent advances have raised hopes of progress.

The condition often only hits the headlines after violent attacks by sufferers, such as a schizophrenic patient who stabbed a nurse to death last week in the French city of Reims.

But French psychiatrist Sonia Dollfus emphasised that such cases of violence by people with schizophrenia are "extremely rare".

"All the work done over the years trying to de-stigmatise this disease — it is swept away in 24 hours," Dollfus told AFP.

Around one in every 300 people worldwide are affected by schizophrenia, according to the World Health Organisation.

It causes a wide range of distressing delusional disorders, which vary in intensity between patients but often hugely disrupts their lives.

At least five per cent of schizophrenia patients are estimated to die by suicide.

The condition is usually treated with a combination of anti-psychotic drugs, social support for reintegration, and psychological therapy.

Scottish psychiatrist Robin Murray, who has spent decades researching schizophrenia, told AFP that when it came to medication, "treatment has not changed dramatically" over the last 20 or 30 years.

He added that psychological therapy had improved in that time.

But unlike numerous other mental disorders — particularly neurotic conditions — taking serious drugs remains the cornerstone in treating schizophrenia.

For drugs, there has been a "blank period since the 2010s, when pharmaceutical laboratories really withdrew from psychiatry," Dollfus said.

But there has been some innovation recently, she added.

One development have been apps that can track patients' progress, ensure timely follow-up sessions and contact psychiatrists if necessary.

Another is a new treatment approved by the US Food and Drug Administration last month.

The treatment, developed by the Israeli pharmaceutical firm Teva and France's MedinCell, involves the drug risperidone which has long been used for schizophrenia.

It has traditionally been prescribed as a daily pill, but the new treatment is administered via injection, allowing the drug to be gradually released in the body over several weeks.

This makes it impossible for patients to miss a daily pill.

Interruptions to medication, often brought about by the psychosis the illness causes, are a common problem in treating schizophrenia.

For example, the attacker in Reims had been off his medication, according to several sources.

This new way of administering an old medication is not the kind of revolution that a new drug would represent. But progress may soon be made in that area.

Dollfus said that some drugs currently being investigated are "really interesting" because they work in a different way than those of the past. Traditionally, anti-psychotic drugs used to treat schizophrenia aim to block the action of dopamine, a molecule that acts as a chemical messenger in the brain.

## Ketamine Nasal Spray May Help Treat Migraine

LONDON (Dispatches) - Ketamine nasal spray may be effective in treating chronic migraines, according to a new study.



Publishing in the open access journal *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine*, researchers wrote that several clinical trials had shown the spray to be effective, but cautioned against overuse. They also said it wasn't clear if ketamine could be used to treat chronic migraines.

"This retrospective study suggests that [intranasal ketamine] may offer a pain-relieving effect with limited side effects for [refractory chronic migraine] in the outpatient setting," the study concluded.

The researchers worked in the Department of Neurology at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia; Ohio Health; and Rush University in Chicago.

One of the key authors was Dr. Michael Marmura, an associate professor in the Department of Neurology at Thomas Jefferson and director of outpatient operations at the Jefferson Headache Center, as well as co-chief of the Division of Headache.

The researchers cautioned that the study involved primarily young White women and that most of the participants used the spray alongside other medications, which made it difficult to address the benefits of the spray itself.

The primary goal was to try to find out if ketamine could be used for chronic migraine that is resistant to treatment.

The researchers retrospectively reviewed the outcomes and experiences of people given nasal ketamine spray for chronic refractory migraine -- a persistent headache or one that fails to respond to treatments -- between January and February 2020 at the Jefferson Headache Center.

During the two months, 242 people were prescribed a nasal ketamine spray, and 169 of whom agreed to be interviewed. Eighty percent were women with an average age of 44.

More than 67% reported daily headaches and almost 85% had tried more than three kinds of preventive drugs. They currently used roughly two of these.

The most common reasons for wanting to use nasal ketamine spray included "partial responses to reliever painkillers (100, or 59%) and preventive drugs (52, or 31%), previous benefit from intravenous ketamine (38, or 22.5%), and the failure of intravenous lidocaine (22, or 13%)," the study said.

## Scientists Use X-Ray to Identify Single Atom for First Time

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - For the first time, scientists have taken the first X-ray signal of a single atom, with such detection having the potential to revolutionize such areas of science like quantum information, nanotechnology, and environmental and medical science research, authors of a new study said.

Results from the research conducted by a team led by Argonne National Laboratory scientist Saw Wai Hla on the groundbreaking X-ray achievement were posted in the scientific journal *Nature* on Wednesday.

The smallest mass an X-ray can typically detect is an attogram, which is about 10,000 atoms, but scientists have long looked for a way to identify smaller masses.

In their paper, Hla and fellow researchers used a purpose-built synchrotron X-ray instrument at the XTIP beamline of Advanced Photon Source and the Center for Nanoscale Materials at the Argonne lab.

"Atoms can be routinely imaged with scanning probe microscopes, but without X-rays, one cannot tell what they are made of," Hla, a physics professor at Ohio University, said in a news release.

"We can now detect exactly the type of a particular atom, one atom-at-a-time, and can simultaneously measure its chemical state.

"Once we are able to do that, we can trace the materials down to the ultimate limit of just one atom. This will have a great impact on environmental and medical sciences and maybe even find a cure that can have a huge impact for humankind. This discovery will transform the world."

As a test, the researchers took an iron atom and a terbium atom, and then inserted both in their respective molecular hosts.

To detect the X-ray signal of one atom, they supplemented conventional detectors in X-rays with a specialized detector made of a sharp metal tip positioned at extreme proximity to the sample to collect X-ray excited electrons, known as synchrotron X-ray scanning tunneling microscopy or SX-STM.

Hla has worked for the past 12 years helping fine-tune SX-STM.

"The technique used, and concept proven in this study, broke new ground in X-ray science and nanoscale studies," said Tolulope Michael Ajayi, the first author of the paper, who is doing the research as part of his doctoral thesis.

"More so, using X-rays to detect and characterize individual atoms could revolutionize research and give birth to new technologies in areas such as quantum information and the detection of trace elements in environmental and medical research, to name a few.

"This achievement also opens the road for advanced materials science instrumentation."

Along with scientists at Ohio University and the Argonne lab, other researchers participating in the study were from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Atom identification represents a new breakthrough for X-ray use, which has been employed in a wide variety of fields, from medical examinations to security screenings in airports, to examine the composition of rocks remotely on Mars.

## Nutrients in Chocolate, Berries May Help Ward Off Memory Loss

NEW YORK (UPI) - You'll likely lose some of your memory and thinking abilities as you age, but nutrients called flavanols might help thwart that decline, a new study suggests.



Dr. Scott Small, a professor of neurology and director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. "We show in this study, because we had biomarkers of flavanols, that if you're relatively deficient in your flavanols, that seems to be driving your age-related memory decline."

This study was funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and Mars Edge, a subsidiary of the candy company.

It's possible that just as babies need certain nutrients for their developing brains, the aging brain also requires specific nutrients for optimal health, Small said.

Now that people live longer, scientists are looking into a series of recommendations of nutrients that are beneficial for the aging body and brain, he noted.

"I'd like to believe that this is one of the first studies that is beginning to establish that dietary recommendation," Small said.

Besides berries and dark chocolate, other flavanol-containing foods include apples -- particularly the peels -- grapes, citrus fruits, cocoa and green tea. Good vegetable sources of flavanols are onions, hot peppers, kale, broccoli, rutabagas and spinach, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"I believe that you could consume enough flavanols to prevent yourself from being deficient," Small said.

However, he urged people not to focus on getting this nutrient through chocolate. "There's no way you can eat enough chocolate to have this benefit. In fact, if you tried, you would die first," Small said.

Prior research in mice found that a particular substance in flavanols called epicatechin enhanced the growth of neurons and blood vessels, improving memory.

In humans, a small study linked the dentate gyrus to cognitive, or mental, aging. A larger trial found that flavanols improved memory, having the greatest impact on people who had a poor-quality diet to start.

To study this further, researchers randomly assigned 3,500 healthy older adults to receive either a placebo or a daily flavanol supplement in pill form. The supplements contained 500 mg of flavanols, including 80 mg of epicatechins (an amount that's recommended you get from food).



## Russia's Seaborne Diesel Exports Plummet in May

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's seaborne diesel and gasoil exports fell 21% in May from April levels, to 3.1 million tons as refinery maintenance and a surge in domestic demand cut into volumes available for exporting, new Refinitiv Eikon data showed.

Russia had roughly 5 million tons of refining capacity idled in May, compared to plans for 4.5 million tons, as several refineries extended their scheduled maintenance.

Loadings to all declared destinations were down, with most of the 3.1 million tons going to Turkey and Brazil, with Africa receiving 500,000 tons. Around 200,000 tons of diesel loaded from Russia in May do not have a confirmed destination, Reuters said. 325,000 tons were destined for STS loadings near Kalamata without a declared destination—traders told Reuters that these were likely heading to Asia or the Middle East.



## 'U.S. Employers Boost Hiring in May; Unemployment Rate Jumps to 3.7%

WASHINGTON (dispatches) - U.S. job growth accelerated in May, but a jump in the unemployment rate to a seven-month high of 3.7% suggested that labor market conditions were easing, which could give the Federal Reserve cover to forgo an interest rate hike this month. The increase in the unemployment rate from a 53-year low of 3.4% in April reported by the Labor Department on Friday was mostly driven by Blacks. It was also partly the result of more people entering the labor force, an increase in supply that is reducing pressure on businesses to raise wages.

Wage growth moderated last month, which should offer some comfort to Fed officials battling to bring inflation back to the U.S. central bank's 2% target. The closely watched employment report offered more evidence that the economy was far from a dreaded recession, despite weakness in the interest-rate sensitive manufacturing sector and the housing market.

"American businesses are still aggressively hiring, likely to meet resilient consumer demand," said Sal Guatieri, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto.

"However, the other areas of softness in this report suggests that the labor market is losing steam. There's likely enough pockets of softness in this report for the Fed to pass on raising rates at the next meeting."

The survey of establishments showed nonfarm payrolls rose by 339,000 jobs last month. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls increasing by 190,000. The economy created 93,000 more jobs in March and April than previously estimated.

The economy needs to add 70,000-100,000 jobs per month to keep up with growth in the working-age population.

Despite massive layoffs in the technology sector after companies over-hired during the COVID-19 pandemic and the drag from higher borrowing costs on housing and manufacturing, the services sector, including leisure and hospitality, is still catching up after businesses struggled to find workers over the last two years. Industries like healthcare and education also experienced accelerated retirements.

The backfilling of these retirements and increased demand for services are some of the factors driving job growth. Pent-up demand for workers was underscored by Labor Department data this week showing there were 10.1 million job openings at the end of April, with 1.8 vacancies for every unemployed person.

U.S. stocks opened higher. The dollar was steady against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices fell.

Last month, professional and business services added 64,000 jobs, with temporary help, seen as a harbinger for future hiring, rebounding. Government employment increased by 56,000, but remains 209,000 jobs below its pre-pandemic level.

The healthcare sector added 52,000 jobs, most of them in ambulatory healthcare services and at hospitals. Leisure and hospitality payrolls increased 48,000, boosted by restaurants and bars. Employment in this industry remains 349,000 below its pre-pandemic level. Construction employment rose 25,000, while transportation and warehousing added 24,000 jobs.

## Venezuela's Oil Exports Drop as Heavy Crude Processing Sags

HOUSTON (Dispatches) - Venezuela's oil exports fell 14% in May from the previous month as crude upgraders at its main oil region produced less exportable grades and state-run oil firm PDVSA struggled to replenish inventories, according to shipping data and documents.

PDVSA is under a widespread anti-corruption probe that uncovered billions of dollars in unpaid cargoes and led to a temporary suspension of some contracts. The investigation has led to more than 60 people arrested and a management overhaul.

In May, PDVSA and its joint ventures shipped an average of 606,258 barrels per day (bpd) of crude and refined products, below the prior two months, but higher than the first two months of the year when the contract suspension halted some exports, data based on vessel tracking showed.

PDVSA and other state companies separately exported some 209,000 metric tons of methanol, urea and petroleum coke, the lowest amount so far this year.

U.S.-based oil major Chevron Corp, which has ramped up exports of Venezuelan crude since receiving a U.S. authorization in November, shipped some 149,000 bpd last month to the United States and to a storage terminal in the Bahamas. In April, it had exported about 141,000 bpd.

PDVSA also increased its deliveries of crude and fuel to political ally Cuba, to 58,100 bpd in May from 45,250 bpd in April, data and internal company documents showed.



## Global Food Prices Drop to 2-Year Low in May

ROME (Dispatches) - World food prices dipped to their lowest in two years, the United Nations's food agency said, as a slump in prices of vegetable oils, cereals and dairy outweighed increases for sugar and meat.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) price index, which tracks the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 124.3 points in May against a revised 127.7 for the previous month, the agency said on Friday. The April reading was originally given as 127.2.

The May score marked the lowest since April 2021 and meant the index was now 22% below an all-time peak reached in March 2022 following the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

FAO's cereal price index dropped by nearly 5% in May from the prior month, pressured by ample supply prospects and the extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative allowing shipments from Ukraine.

But international rice prices continued to increase in May, partly because of tighter supplies in some exporting countries, said FAO. The agency last month expressed concern over rising prices of the staple.

FAO's vegetable oil price index slid almost 9% month on month, reflecting large oilseed supplies and weak demand for palm oil, while global dairy prices eased over 3% amid a seasonal upturn in northern hemisphere milk output, the agency said. Sugar prices, in contrast, showed a 5.5% increase from April in a fourth straight monthly gain, as concerns over the El Nino weather pattern added to global supply risks, FAO said.

However, improving weather in Brazil and lower crude oil prices have curbed sugar markets, it added. Sugar futures ended May lower after a 12-year high in late April.

## Turkey Logs Best May Ever as Exports Hit \$21.7b

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's exporters have achieved their best May sales ever despite a fallout after devastating earthquakes in early February and challenges plaguing the global economy.

Outbound shipments rose 14.4% year-over-year to nearly \$21.7 billion (TL 453.12 billion), Trade Minister Mehmet Muş said. "This is the highest May export value of all time. Our exports will continue to be the driving force of growth," Muş wrote on Twitter.

Imports rose 16% year-over-year to \$34.3 billion in May, the official data showed, driving a 19% increase in the foreign trade deficit to nearly \$12.7 billion.

Low growth in the global economy and persistent inflation have made the recovery fragile, the ministry said in a separate statement. It also stressed the recent turmoil in the financial sector, which it says has worsened expectations.

However, it expressed optimism given the fall in energy prices from 2022 peaks and China's reopening.

Turkey is trying to emerge from catastrophic twin quakes on Feb. 6 that killed more than 50,000 people and flattened hundreds of thousands of buildings besides inflicting severe infrastructural damage.

The disaster had disrupted production and supply chains across 11 affected provinces, but the Trade Ministry said data showed economic activity had recovered faster than expected.

The region accounts for more than 20% of the country's food production, nearly 15% of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) and almost 20% of the country's agrifood exports.

Meanwhile, the data showed Turkey's energy imports dropped 23.6% year-over-year to \$5.3 billion in the same period. Gold imports surged 114.1% year-over-year to \$3 billion in May. Gold imports, which contributed to the trade deficit last year, have been on the decline since January due to restrictions on such imports. While gold imports in May were double those in April, the number remains below \$5.1 billion in January.

Among others, the data also showed imports of motor vehicles rose 113.6% year-over-year to \$2.9 billion. Purchases of machinery jumped 51.1% annually to \$6.4 billion.

In January-May, outbound shipments rose 0.2% versus the same period a year ago to \$102.5 billion.

Imports increased 8.9% to \$158.6 billion, the data showed, taking the five-month foreign trade gap to \$56.1 billion, an increase of nearly 30% from a year ago.

## Europe's Inflation Eases to 6.1%, Consumer Relief Still Distant

LONDON (Dispatches) - Europe's inflation took a positive turn with a significant drop to 6.1%, but prices still pose a pinch to shoppers who are yet to see real relief in what they pay for food and other necessities.

The annual figure in May eased from 7% in April for the 20 countries that use the euro currency, the European Union's statistical agency Eurostat said.

It was a welcome sign that the explosion in price increases - which peaked in record double digits last October - is heading in the right direction.

But economists warned it would be many months before disgruntled consumers see more normal levels of inflation reflected on price tags in shops. While prices are rising more slowly, they are coming on top of already-high costs triggered by Russia's war in Ukraine and other factors.

Relief is far off for people like 76-year-old Brigitte Weinbeck, who was shopping this week at an open-air market in Cologne, Germany.

"I shop more consciously - for instance, I always make a plan at the beginning of the week about what I'm going to cook and when and then I go shopping," she said. "Otherwise, you sometimes make impulse purchases."

Meanwhile, the food bank at Berlin's St. Wilhelm Roman Catholic Church has gone from serving 100-120 households before the war in Ukraine to 200.

"Now, there are people coming who are at the limit of their income," coordinator Christine Klar said. "They say the prices have risen so much now. And now they know or heard that they are entitled to use the food bank, so now they come."

Food prices in the eurozone rose by a painful 12.5% in May from a year earlier but still eased from the 13.5% increase recorded in April.

Key to the lower overall inflation figure was energy prices, which fell 1.7% from a year ago following an increase of 2.4% a month ago.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy, fell to 5.3% from 5.6% in April. That figure is seen as the better indication of price pressures in the economy from demand for goods and higher wages. It's high enough that the European Central Bank is expected to approve another interest rate increase at its June 15 meeting.

Inflation fell in the three biggest economies where the euro is used: Germany to 6.1%, France to 5.1% and Italy to 7.6%. The decline was "broad-based, with food, energy and core inflation all contributing to the easing," economist Rory Fennessy wrote at Oxford Economics.

Inflation took off in mid-2021 as fears that Russia might invade Ukraine sent natural gas and oil prices higher on fears of losing Russian supplies and as the global economy bounced back from the worst of the pandemic, straining supplies of parts and materials.

## Russia's Taman Port Set to Suspend LPG Exports Over Drone Danger



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's Black Sea port of Taman is poised to suspend exports of highly-explosive liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) because of concerns linked to drone attacks, three sources with knowledge of the situation told Reuters.

Russia has come under repeated attack in recent weeks, suffering a major cross-border incursion and drone attacks including on Moscow, oil refineries in southern Russia and a fuel depot near a strategic bridge that links Russia's mainland with Crimea.

Russia says Ukraine was behind the attacks, including on the Kremlin last month. Kyiv denies it. Rail operators in Russia and Kazakhstan have already declared plans to restrict cargo shipments towards Taman, which accounts for around 7.5% of Russia's total LPG exports.

Three sources with direct knowledge of the situation told Reuters that Taman will suspend handling of LPG, also referred to as propane and butane, because of the explosive nature of the fuel. All the sources spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

"Taman is suspending LPG transshipment as it is dangerous after all those (drone) attacks - the gases are most explosive," one of the sources said.

The sources did not specify when the port would stop handling LPG, saying existing stockpiles would be shipped first.

Tamanneftegaz, the operator of the Taman transshipment complex, which also handles crude oil and oil products, did not respond to a request for comment.

The concerns over drone attacks on Russian infrastructure are the latest instance of how the conflict in Ukraine affects energy supplies and how dependent they are on security in the Black Sea through which Russia sends fuel to world markets.

LPG is mainly used as fuel for cars, heating and to produce other petrochemicals.



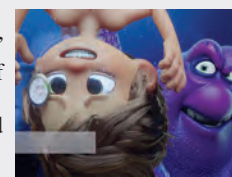
## 5 Iranian Films to Go on Screen At Shanghai Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – Five Iranian films namely ‘The Annoyed’, ‘Cause Of Death: Unknown’, ‘1.5 Horsepower’, ‘Dolphin Boy’ and ‘The Passion Of Mahmoud’ will be screened at different sections of the 25th Shanghai Film Festival in China.

Written and directed by Mehdi Fard Ghaderi, the Iranian movie ‘The Annoyed’ will compete with films from Japan, India, the UK, Spain,

Georgia, Belgium and Italy in the competition section of the festival. ‘1.5 Horsepower’ by Rasoul Kahani and ‘Cause Of Death: Unknown’ by Ali Zarnegar will be screened in the Asian New Talent section of the Shanghai Film Festival which is slated to be held on June 9-18.

The Iranian animation ‘Dolphin Boy’ directed by Mohammad Kheirandish will go on screen in the animated features section.



## Global Airline Summit to Tackle Travel Boom, Climate Goals

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - Airlines will ride the crest of a faster-than-expected recovery and discuss ways of translating climate pledges into action at a summit buoyed by a return to business as usual next week.

The influential International Air Transport Association (IATA) holds its annual meeting on June 4-6 with many of its 300 carriers enjoying higher fares following the pandemic, tempered only by plane shortages and faltering supply chains.

After global airlines stared into the abyss with cumulative losses of \$190 billion and increased debts during the pandemic, their Istanbul summit marks a turning point for the \$800-billion industry, which is set to return to profit this year.

“There is strong confidence in demand for aviation still, and it’s ... a trend around the world,” Qantas Chief Executive Alan Joyce, a veteran crisis manager who will be attending his last IATA gathering before retiring in November, told investors.

Global tensions including war in Ukraine and economic uncertainty have done little so far to halt the ticket rush in many markets, prompting experts to declare the recovery more permanent than last year’s post-lockdown “Revenge Travel”.

“Demand to travel is off the charts. It’s at record levels as people not only catch up from three years of not travelling but put travel and experiences at the top of their wish list,” said travel expert Paul Charles, founder of The PC Agency.

“Prices will continue to be sky-high as well,” Charles said.

Last year’s IATA meeting brought together an industry still reeling from its worst crisis, having been moved to Qatar from Shanghai at a time when China’s borders remained closed.

Against the steadily improving backdrop, IATA is due to update widely watched industry forecasts at this year’s event, which will be hosted by Turkey’s Pegasus Airlines (PGSUS.IS).

It is among the first times a budget airline has led the gathering, whose formality and U.N.-style rows of delegations reflect IATA’s roots as an international body of state carriers.

Low-cost carriers are seen among the biggest winners from the COVID-19 pandemic due to their greater flexibility.

IATA currently sees the whole industry returning to a profit of \$4.7 billion in 2023 from last year’s \$6.9 billion loss.

Domestic travel has regained pre-pandemic levels and overall passenger traffic grew 46% in April, the group said on Thursday.



Despite strong summer bookings, many analysts say risks remain. And air transport remains in the firing line of environmentalists and some politicians, especially in Europe.

The head of the world largest aircraft leasing company, AerCap CEO Aengus Kelly, told Reuters on the eve of the meeting that supply constraints could last for “many years”.

Oil meanwhile remains 20% above pre-crisis levels and many wonder how long consumers can ignore rising borrowing costs.

Longer term, airlines face pressure to set out at the summit how they aim to meet a target of net-zero emissions in 2050.

Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker last week questioned whether the goal could be reached, citing inadequate production of alternative Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). He stressed however that new-generation jets were cleaner than those they replaced.

There is also little consensus on who should pay to ramp up SAF output, while environmentalists say the plans are flawed.

## China Urged to Ease Visa Requirements for Iranian Businesspeople

### IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has underlined the need for China to ease visa requirements for Iranian businesspeople as a prerequisite for further enhancement of economic and trade exchanges between the two countries.

Niloofer Assadi, the caretaker of the international affairs of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (center left) is seen in a meeting in Tehran with Xu Qisong, the commercial counselor at the Chinese embassy in Iran.

Assadi, the ICCIMA caretaker of international affairs department, said that as China is emerging from the coronavirus pandemic, demands for receiving Chinese visa is on the rise which has more prolonged the process.

She made the remarks in a meeting in Iran Chamber of Commerce headquarters with Xu Qisong, the commercial



counselor at the Chinese embassy in Tehran.

Development of business cooperation between Iran and China requires close cooperation and special planning between the commercial sectors both in the governments and in the private sectors, Assadi said.

Majidreza Hariri, the head of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, who was also present at the meeting, noted that a joint economic commission between Iran and China

is scheduled to convene within the next few months. The issue of obtaining visas should not consume the time and energy of the commercial departments of the two countries and it is necessary to solve this problem as soon as possible, he said.

Hariri further noted that the issuance of visas has to be further accelerated which he said relies on the governments of both countries to reach an agreement in this regard.

The Chinese diplomat, for his part expressed hope that the commercial sector of the Chinese embassy, in cooperation with Iran Chamber of Commerce and Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce, can provide more facilities to solve the problem of Iranian businesspeople active in China.

Noting that issuing visa is not the sole objective of the embassy, Xu stressed the need for further planning to facilitate trade between the two nations as well as cooperation between different provinces of the two countries.

## Iran, Iraq Agree on Sealed Road Transport to Boost Trade

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran and Iraq are discussing new measures to expand their trade ties, a senior Iranian official has said, amid signs that the two countries will ease restrictions at borders to help boost shipments.

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari said that trade between Iran and Iraq had increased by 10% year on year in the two calendar months to late May.

Safari said that officials in three provinces in western Iran and counterparts in Iraq’s Kurdistan region had agreed to set up joint companies to allow sealed road transport from Iran to Iraq.

He said the new arrangement will allow Iranian companies to supply their products,

especially perishable food, directly to Iraqi customers without any need to change trucks at the borders with Iraq.

The diplomat said the transport mechanism could lead to a major rise in trade between Iran and Iraq.

Safari said Iran had also agreed to ease its restrictions on transit of Iraqi oil products via Iran’s port of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf.

The comments came in a meeting in the city of Orumiyeh in northwest Iran where governors of border provinces of Iran and Iraq’s Kurdistan region discussed measures to expand trade.

During the meeting, senior Iraqi Kurdish officials said they have plans to open a new border crossing to Iran’s city of Oshnavieh to help boost bilateral trade.

### BRICS, SCO Can Play...

#### FROM PAGE 1

“This position will be further strengthened with the accession of other regional and aligned heavyweights [to the grouping],” he added.

“Iran, with its unique geopolitical location and its remarkable economic capacities, can be an important partner for BRICS. We will not miss any opportunity to secure our national interests,” he said.

The SCO was founded in 2001 by China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. It is the world’s largest regional market with eight official members and three observer states. Iran started a formal process to join the bloc in March 2020 and its membership was later approved by the Iranian government. Iran signed a memorandum of commitment for joining the SCO in mid-September 2022.

The BRICS group includes five emerging economies - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - which account for about half of the world’s population and 30 percent of its land area.

The significance of this group and its leading role in the world economy has caused several countries including Iran to show their tendency to join the trade and economic organization.

Amirabdollahian also said that Iran’s objectives are in alignment with those of the BRICS and Tehran -- along with other like-minded countries -- could be a “reliable partner” for the group of emerging economies. The top Iranian diplomat made

the remarks in an address to a meeting of the Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers in Cape Town, South Africa, on Friday.

He said Iran can be influential given its “rich experience of active participation in international organizations, abundant energy resources, short and cost-effective transport and transit networks, educated and skillful human workforce, remarkable scientific and technological achievements, and above all, strong dedication and determination for contribution into a fair world order.” The Iranian foreign minister said the Islamic Republic would soon organize a conference through coordination with the embassies of BRICS countries “to elaborate on existing potentials for cooperation between Iran and the group.”

Amirabdollahian said Iran’s political and economic relations with the BRICS countries remain satisfactory as the trade value exceeds 30 billion dollars.

He said Tehran was determined to expand relations with the three BRICS countries of Russia, China and India within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Describing Iran, India and South Africa as active members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Amirabdollahian said the three countries are cooperating in various economic sectors. Iran, China, India, Brazil and South Africa are among like-minded and active members of

the group of developing countries (G-77), he said. Elsewhere in his speech, Amirabdollahian said Iran is among the pioneers of multilateralism. He said Tehran and some of the BRICS countries are members of major arrangements for multilateral cooperation.

“For the Islamic Republic of Iran, BRICS can be the next significant target of our multilateralism policy. This is why we are among the first states that have officially declared interest to join BRICS and its frameworks of cooperation.”

BRICS has secured an important position in global relations thanks to the “combined capabilities and its serious efforts to strengthen multilateralism,” the Iranian minister said.

Amirabdollahian underscored the importance of the joining of other regional like-minded powers to the BRICS, saying, “An extended BRICS can come up with ‘Collective and Inclusive Governance’, ‘New South-South Cooperation’ and ‘Coalition of Emerging Economies.’”

The BRICS includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which hold about half of the world’s population, accounting for 30 percent of the total land area of the world. The significance of this group and its leading role in the world economy has caused several countries including Iran to show a tendency to join.

### Iran Dismisses U.S...

#### FROM PAGE 1

The General Assembly also unanimously appointed the candidate of Iran as the rapporteur of the Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Committee of the General Assembly and a member of the board of this committee.

U.S. Representative for UN Management and Reform, Chris Lu, angrily objected to Iran’s appointment as a vice president for the 78th session of the General Assembly, stating that Washington dissociates from the appointment.

U.S. Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs Robert Wood also echoed Lu’s remarks, expressing what he described as the White House’s deep concern over the selection of Iran as Rapporteur for the First Committee Bureau.

Moreover, Israeli regime Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon used the podium to speak against the election and level accusations against Iran.

Iran’s appointments defy the U.S. mission in New York, which had been busy lobbying in diplomatic circles over the past few weeks to block the Islamic Republic’s election to the two positions.

Earlier, Iran’s candidacy for the post had received the endorsement of 56 members of the Asia-Pacific group.

The UN General Assembly is one of the six pillars of the UN and the only one where all 193 member states have a voice.

It has broad authority in the fields of political, economic, cultural and social cooperation; has the right to discuss and make recommendations on matters falling within the scope of the Charter or any matter within the competence of any organ of the UN, for the purpose of promoting international cooperation on a global scale.

### Iran to Form...

#### FROM PAGE 1

The contours of the regional alliance is coming into shape a year after the Israeli regime announced that it, together with the United States and their regional Arab allies, would establish what they called a “Middle East NATO” to counter the influence of Iran in the region.

The concept was hyped by American and Israeli military officials ahead of President Joe Biden’s visit to the Middle East last July. The aim was to forge better coordination between the allies to defend each other against perceived Iranian threats.

The Israeli dream of an anti-Iran alliance, however, has been shattered as a number of Persian Gulf Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, have since begun shifting their alliances and restoring their relations with Iran.

### Pakistan Facilitates...

#### FROM PAGE 1

Export and import under this order shall be allowed in respect of the commodities and from the countries as specified in Appendix-A to this Order.

Trade of goods under a B2B BT arrangement shall be allowed on the principle of “import followed by export”.

The export would be made to the extent of value of imported goods, subject to the tolerance mechanism provided hereinafter for any exigency.

However, a Pakistani trader shall be responsible to net-off value of goods on quarterly basis, i.e., within 90 days after issuance of authorization.

The barter exchange has been among the important issues that has been discussed in Iranian and Pakistani negotiations.

### U.S. Imposes Fresh...

#### FROM PAGE 1

The Treasury accused Arvan Cloud company of having close ties with Iran’s intelligence services, helping the government allegedly control and monitor the Internet.

The allegations come as a report shows the US government is bending the rules in its favor to suppress narratives that it does not like.

On Thursday, the Treasury targeted two senior officials of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Intelligence Organization as well as three individuals based in Iran and Turkey, and a Turkish company, claiming they were all linked to the elite Iranian military corps.

The Treasury’s Thursday sanctions had targeted IRGC’s Intelligence Organization’s head, Reza Seraj and Rouhallah Bazghandi, the former head of the Counter-Espionage Department of IRGC’s Intelligence Organization.

The IRGC, which is a vital part of the Iranian military, has been sanctioned in its entirety by the US.



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## Zhang Leads LPGA Mizuho Americas Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Rose Zhang, making her professional debut after a dominant amateur career, fired a six-under par 66 to take a two-shot lead heading into the final round of the LPGA Mizuho Americas Open. The 20-year-old Californian, whose amateur victories included back-to-back NCAA collegiate titles, the US Women's Amateur and this year's Augusta National Women's Amateur, had six birdies without a bogey to build a 54-hole total of 11-under par at Liberty National in Jersey City, New Jersey

## McIlroy Grabs Share of PGA Memorial Lead

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy birdied two of the last four holes to grab a share of the lead after the third round of the US PGA Tour Memorial Tournament. World number three McIlroy, who won at Dubai in January but hasn't taken a US PGA title this year, fired a two-under par 70 to stand on six-under 210 after 54 holes at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio. David Lipsky, an American chasing his first PGA title, closed with back-to-back bogeys and fell into sharing the lead with McIlroy and South Korean Kim Si-woo, who shot 71.

# Man City Edge Closer to Treble After FA Cup Final Win

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City moved to within one victory of completing a momentous treble as they deservedly beat arch-rivals Manchester United 2-1 in the FA Cup final thanks to Ilkay Gundogan's record-breaking double.

City captain Gundogan scored the fastest goal in FA Cup final history with a stunning volley after 12 seconds and struck what proved to be the winner seven minutes after halftime.

In doing so the 32-year-old, who is expected to leave City in the summer after seven trophy-laden years, became the oldest player to score an FA Cup final brace since Nat Lofthouse for Bolton Wanderers in 1958, also against United.

United, seeking to win both domestic cups in the same season for the first time in their history and wreck City's hopes of emulating their own historic 1999 treble, had levelled with a 33rd-minute Bruno Fernandes penalty.

Pep Guardiola's side resisted some late United pressure to win the trophy for a seventh time.

It is the 13th time the English league and FA Cup double has been achieved. But City now want more and travel to Istanbul to face Inter Milan seeking to be crowned European champions for the first time and to equal United's 1998-99 Premier League/FA Cup/Champions League sweep under Alex Ferguson.

"Now we can talk about the treble," Guardiola, who has won 11 trophies since arriving at City in 2016, said.

"Of course we still have to win the Champions League. We performed so well for our city and our fans. It was so important for us today. The FA Cup is so nice."

For the first time in 190 meetings the clubs were clashing for silverware, and not just bragging rights, and Wembley was decked in red and sky blue as fans braved rail strikes to descend en masse on the capital. Smoke from the pre-match pyrotechnics had not even cleared when City took the lead in spectacular fashion.

Keeper Stefan Ortega's long punt towards Erling Haaland and as the ball bounced into the path of Gundogan who did not hesitate to send a dipping right-foot volley arcing over a transfixed David de Gea.

"The ball just was placed amazingly for me and



I just had to hit it," he said. "Obviously it was quite a good strike and it went in and it was amazing."

It eclipsed the previous fastest FA Cup final goal scored by Louis Saha after 25 seconds for Everton against Chelsea in 2009 and City threatened to run riot against a stunned United.

Rodri and Jack Grealish both failed to convert good chances in the opening five minutes in which United barely touched the ball while Haaland and Kevin de Bruyne also went close for City before United were handed an unexpected gift.

United right back Aaron Wan-Bissaka headed a diagonal ball harmlessly across the area and as play continued referee Paul Tierney was instructed to check a pitch-side VAR monitor for a possible handball by Grealish. It was extremely harsh on Grealish, but Tierney pointed to the spot and Fernandes calmly shuffled up to send Ortega the wrong way with his penalty and spark celebrations at the east end of the stadium where United's fans were packed.

Briefly United looked City's match and Raphael Varane volleyed over from a corner as halftime approached.

But it proved an illusion. City needed slightly longer in the second half to re-establish their superiority and again it was Gundogan displaying his knack of scoring crucial goals.

This time he was picked out by De Bruyne's chipped pass and his left-foot volley, not struck anywhere near as perfectly as his earlier effort, bounced its way through a crowded area and crept inside De Gea's right-hand post.



## Khachanov Into French Open Quarters For Second Time

PARIS (Dispatches) - Russian 11th seed Karen Khachanov reached the French Open quarter-finals for the second time today with a four sets win over Lorenzo Sonego of Italy, setting up a potential clash with Novak Djokovic.

Khachanov came through 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (9/7), 6-1 to reach his third straight quarter-final at the Slams.

"I didn't know what to do in the first set but I said just fight my way through," said the Russian.

"I served for the third set, got broken and was 4-0 down in the tiebreak. It was just like the last match and I won that anyway."

Two-time champion and 22-time Grand Slam title winner Djokovic was facing Juan Pablo Varillas of Peru later today attempting to reach his 14th successive Roland Garros quarter-final.

Victory would also give him a place in the last eight of a Slam for the 55th time.

## Messi's Final Game for PSG Ends in Defeat

PARIS (Dispatches) - Lionel Messi was jeered by a section of Paris Saint-Germain supporters as he played his final game for the club in the Ligue 1 champions' 3-2 home defeat by Clermont.

Messi's expected departure from the French giants after two seasons was officially confirmed by PSG in a statement shortly before the game.

"His contribution to Paris Saint-Germain and Ligue 1 cannot be underestimated and we wish Leo and his family all the best for the future," said PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi.

Yet Messi's name was jeered by some fans as the teams were announced at the Parc des Princes and the Argentinian World Cup winner was again whistled sporadically during the match.

There was little riding on the game itself after PSG wrapped up a record 11th French title last weekend, and Christophe Galtier's side contrived to throw away a two-goal lead.

Sergio Ramos, whose own departure from PSG was confirmed on Friday, marked his final appearance by heading in a Vinha cross for the opener in the 16th minute.

Mbappe, looking to end a fifth consecutive season as Ligue 1's top scorer, then scored a penalty to make it 2-0 with his 29th league goal this season, which he marked by holding up goalkeeper Sergio Rico's number 16 jersey.

Spaniard Rico, PSG's back-up goalkeeper, is in a serious condition in hospital in Seville after being injured in a horse-riding accident last weekend.

"The most important thing was the tribute to Sergio," Mbappe told broadcaster Canal Plus.

"There are more important things than football, and on the pitch we were already champions. We could have lost 22-0 and that would not have changed anything for us."

"We had to pay tribute to Sergio. I think we have all been affected by what is an extremely serious situation. We have been worried about that all week and so we tried to pay tribute in the best possible way."



# Hazard to Leave Real Madrid After Injury-Blighted Stay

MADRID (Dispatches) - Eden Hazard will leave Real Madrid after four injury-ravaged seasons at the Spanish giants, the club announced.

Hazard, 32, joined Real from Chelsea in 2019 for a fee of €115 million and was presented to up to 50,000 supporters at the Santiago Bernabeu.

The Belgium international was on top of his game, scoring twice in his final match with Chelsea to help the English club win the Europa League by beating Arsenal 4-1.

But almost immediately the player voted

Premier League player of the season in the 2014-2015 campaign was hampered by injuries to his ankle in Spain.

He made just 54 league appearances, including six this season, and scored seven goals.

"Real Madrid Football Club and Eden Hazard have reached an agreement whereby the player will leave the club as of 30 June 2023," Real said in a statement.

"Real Madrid would like to express our affection to Eden Hazard and we wish him and his family the best of luck for the next stage of his career."

Forward Marco Asensio said yesterday he was also leaving Real Madrid at the end of his contract in June.

Asensio won La Liga and the Champions League three times each with Madrid, as well as the Copa del Rey this season for the first time, scoring 61 goals in 285 appearances.

The forward offered an explosive impact from the bench but never managed to establish himself as a key starter for Los Blancos.

## Benzema to Leave Real Madrid Amid Rumors of Saudi Deal

MADRID (Dispatches) - Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema has agreed a deal to end his glittering era at the club, the Spanish side said Sunday. The forward, 35, has been heavily linked this week with a lucrative move to Saudi Arabia.

"Real Madrid and our captain Karim Benzema have agreed to put an end to his brilliant and unforgettable era as a player at our club," said Los Blancos in a statement.

"Madrid want to show their gratitude and all their love to someone who is one of our greatest legends." The announcement comes after Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti had said Saturday there was "no doubt" about Benzema's future being at Madrid, noting the forward had one more year left on his contract.

And Benzema himself had said "not everything you read on the internet is reality" after reports emerged in the week about his potential departure to Saudi Arabia, where

The French forward joined Madrid in 2009 from Ligue 1 side Lyon.

Benzema established himself as a key player alongside Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale in the vaunted "BBC" attacking trident, before developing into the team's leader when the Portuguese striker left in 2018. Benzema has lifted 24 trophies with Madrid, including five Champions Leagues, four La Liga titles and three Copas del Rey and is the current holder of the Ballon d'Or for the world's best player.



## Nadal's Season All But Over After Hip Surgery

PARIS (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal's season is all but over after he underwent surgery on a hip muscle which will keep him out of action for an estimated five months, his representative said.

The 14-times French Open champion, who has won a men's joint-record 22 majors, has been out of action since January after hurting his hip flexor in his second-round match at the Australian Open.

"Rafa will begin his progressive functional rehabilitation in a few hours and the normal recovery process is estimated at five months, always taking into account respecting the biological times of said structure," Benito Perez-Barbadillo said.

The 37-year-old Spaniard has said 2024 is likely to be his last year as a professional player. He was initially set to miss up to eight weeks but skipped claycourt tournaments in Madrid and Rome to build his fitness after being ruled out of events at Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo and Barcelona this season.

In March, Nadal fell out of the top 10 in the world rankings for the first time since 2005 and is now 15th.

