

Data From the International Energy Agency (IEA) Show That Iran's Crude Oil Output Has Increased by About 350 kb/d Since The Beginning of 2023 in Spite of U.S.-Led Sanctions Targeting the Country's Oil Sector

IRAN NEWS

Iran's Shiraz University Signed a Cooperation Agreement With the Russian Kazan Federal University As a Scientific Step Forward to Boost Education and Research, And Boosting Academic Relation Between the Two Countries

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Role of Mafia Blamed for Return of Iran Gasoline From Afghanistan



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Mora Holds Intense Talks With Iran Top Negotiator

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Enrique Mora, the European Union's coordinator of talks over the revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, has said that his latest talks with Iran's top nuclear negotiator have been "intense" covering a range of "difficult bilateral, regional and international issues."

Mora made the comment in a twitter post, a day after he began talks with Iran's top negotiator and Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani in Qatar's capital Doha.

"Intense talks yesterday and today with Vice Minister Bagheri Kani in Doha on a range of difficult bilateral, regional and international issues, including the way forward on the JCPOA." *See Page 7*

Range of Iran Hypersonic Missile Could Increase to 2,000 km



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force said that the range of the recently-unveiled domestically-made Fattah hypersonic missile could increase to 2,000 km from 1,400 km.

General Amir Ali Hajizadeh made the remarks at a gathering of Babolsar University's professors and

students in Mazandaran Province on Thursday.

General Hajizadeh stressed the need for a proper understanding of the enemy.

He noted that to know the enemy one does not need to refer to the pre-revolution era and the American betrayals such as the 1953 Iranian coup d'état.

"Rather, in this more than forty years after the revolution, if the history of the revolution is studied, then the enmity of the US and Britain is clear", he pointed out.

According to General Hajizadeh the support of the US and Western countries during the Holy Defense era led to the prolongation of the war and the martyrdom of many young people in Iran.

He emphasized that had the US and the West not supported Saddam, more than 20 or 30 thousand of young Iranians would not have been martyred.

Stating that Iranians can solve the problems inside the country with their abundant talents and elites, the Iranian commander further added that in the hard defense industry sector, Iran was able to make good progress by relying on domestic capabilities despite sanctions and pressures.

"Today we have achieved all the complicated technologies in the field of the defense industry, so we can solve problems in other fields such as industry and agriculture, which are much simpler," he further pointed out.

He stressed that to solve problems internally, we must increase the recognition of the enemy and not trust it.

"We should not look toward abroad for progress within the country. Power grows in the IRGC on a daily basis. We must follow up Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's call for becoming stronger day by day," the IRGC commander asserted.

"For this reason, we will definitely have good news for our beloved people in the field of missiles, and we will promptly announce our achievements."

Elsewhere in his remarks, General Hajizadeh referred to the expansion of foreign policy relations in the incumbent government, adding that several programs in the field of foreign relations, including relations with Saudi Arabia and issues related to the nuclear agency are resolved.

The IRGC Aerospace commander said later said that the range of the recently unveiled Hypersonic missile named Fattah could increase to 2,000 km from the previously announced range of 1,400 km.

"Fattah is a hypersonic missile with a range of 1400 km. However, the range of the missile can be increased to 2000 km." Fattah hypersonic ballistic missile has been produced by IRGC Aerospace Force specialists.

It has a range of 1,400 kilometers and is able to infiltrate in all anti-missile shields and destroy them.

4 INTERNATIONAL

Biden, Modi Salute Defining Partnership as U.S. Invests Big in India



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Murray Not to Overreact To Early Queen's Exit



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Israeli Regime to Be Brought To Its Knees in West Bank

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has praised the remarkable achievements of Palestinian resistance groups and the sacrifices made by the youth in the occupied territories, saying the West Bank is where the Israeli regime will be brought to its knees.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a meeting with Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, and his accompanying delegation in Tehran.

The Leader commended the strong sense of responsibility among the young and faithful Palestinian generation, as well as their individual and collective struggle against the Israeli occupation.

He emphasized that recent events in Jenin, where Palestinian youths have surrounded the Zionist military, serve as clear examples of a new era and signal "a bright future with complete victory." *See Page 7*

Iran Urges Constructive Engagement With Taliban

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saied Iravani has called for "constructive engagement" with the de facto Taliban government in Afghanistan.

Although the Taliban have failed to fully meet their commitments, it is necessary to maintain constructive engagement with them, as this approach benefits everyone from the Afghan people to the country's neighbors, the entire region and the international community, Iravani said on Wednesday.

He made the comments as he addressed a UN Security Council session that discussed the situation in Afghanistan.

The following is the full text of the Iranian ambassador's speech at the Security Council meeting held in New York City:

Madam. President,

I thank UAE for convening this meeting. I also thank Ms. Otunbayeva, the Special Representative, for her briefing. We note the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2023/453).

The report indicates that de-facto authorities have maintained internal stability and managed the Afghanistan economy. However, the magnitude of humanitarian needs in Afghanistan remains substantial and pervasive.

The seizure of Afghanistan's foreign assets and unilateral sanctions have significantly exacerbated the current situation, posing substantial external obstacles to effectively addressing the humanitarian situation in the country. *See Page 7*

CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company: Hormozgan Steel Co. to Be Center of Gravity Of Our Developmental Projects



The CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) addressing the general meeting of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) said: "Serious investments have been seen in the implementation of the developmental plans of Hormozgan Steel Company, and we have considered a very good future for this company, and HOSCO will be the center of gravity of the developmental plans of Mobarakeh Steel Group." According to the public relations of HOSCO, the CEO Mobarakeh Steel Company Mr. Mohammad Yaser Tayyebnia, who attended the annual general meeting of the shareholders of Hormozgan Steel Company for the first time, referring to the Mobarakeh Group's strategy in increasing production, said: "Last year was difficult for the steel industry because steelmakers, on the one hand, They faced a sharp increase in production costs, such as the growth of raw material prices, an increase in the price of energy carriers, and even a 70% jump in transportation. To these obstacles, we should add electricity and gas restrictions, which were even more severe than in previous years. However, Mobarakeh Group, especially HOSCO, took full advantage of the opportunity to reduce energy restrictions and were able to exceed their nominal capacity. Tayyebnia emphasized: The difference of Mobarakeh Steel Group compared to other producers is that we use opportunities to use the best

way and with the investments made in the chain, especially in the supply of raw materials, we have a long-term view to the steel industry. Referring to the plans of Mobarakeh Steel Group in HOSCO, Tayyebnia noted: Fortunately, serious investments have been seen in the implementation of development plans of HOSCO and these projects have been implemented in the past one or two years and are progressing at a relatively acceptable speed. These plans are according to the plan and sometimes even ahead of the schedule. In the end, he emphasized: HOSCO Steel is very important for Mobarakeh Steel Group, and we have included water-bearing development plans in the steel chain for HOSCO. We have considered a very good future for this company, and Hormozgan Steel Company will be the center of gravity of Mobarakeh Steel Group's developmental plans. The two plans to increase the capacity to 3.2 million tons and hot rolling are our biggest plans for the future development of HOSCO.



CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company stated: Increasing the namism of Hormozgan Steel Company by implementing developmental projects

The CEO of HOSCO Mr. Ataollah Maroufkhani said in the company's annual general meeting: "The implementation of development plans will lead to stabilization of survival and increasing the competitiveness of HOSCO in the domestic and international markets, and will increase the company's dynamism." The annual ordinary general meeting of the shareholders of HOSCO, referring to the presence of Dr. Tayyebnia in the meeting of this company, which is the first time that the CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Company

attending a subsidiary company's meeting, stated: The presence of the CEO of MSC in the HOSCO's general meeting shows that Mobarakeh Group is very serious in implementing development plans for HOSCO and the honorable CEO of this company supports these plans in a special way. Because many developmental plans of HOSCO have been started after his presence in the management of MSC. He added: The implementation of development plans will ensure the survival of producers in the domestic and international markets and increase their competitive power against other producers. Today we are witnessing a dynamism in HOSCO and big projects have been implemented in this company. The most important of these projects are the increase of steelmaking capacity from 1.5 million tons to 3.2 million tons, the direct recovery plan of 1.72 million tons in HOSCO, the construction of industrial gases 2 with a capacity of 10 thousand normal cubic meters, the project of sponge iron silos with a capacity of 30 thousand tons, the project of lime production in Hormozgan Steel and Iron Ore Company, the 1.72 million ton direct revitalization project of Star Simin Hormoz and finally the continuous hot rolling project. Maroufkhani stated that in the previous year, he faced relatively more serious challenges for production compared to previous years. He said: Electricity restrictions were more severe in the previous year and the electricity outage schedule was announced earlier than in the past. At the same time, due to the export of raw materials from suppliers and the high traffic of railway lines, we faced the challenge of transporting raw materials along with the significant growth of transportation prices. Despite all these problems, production in HOSCO did not stop even for a day due to the lack of raw materials, and we were able to break more than 30 production records in five months, and at the end of the year, by exceeding the nominal capacity, we also set an annual production record.

Iran Rejects Biased UN Rights Report

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's permanent representative to the UN office and other international organizations in Geneva has slammed a "biased" report by the world body on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic, saying it is based on anti-Iran media outlets.

Ali Bahraini made the remarks on Wednesday in an address to the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council, during which UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada al-Nashif presented the secretary general's latest report on Iran.

Covering the period from August 2022 to April 2023, the report alleged that there is "a worsening human rights landscape in Iran coupled with the chronic lack of meaningful and effective avenues for the population to voice grievances or indeed to seek remedies." *See Page 7*

Iranian, Swedish FMs Discuss Bilateral Ties Over Phone

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Swedish counterpart Tobias Billström have held talks over the phone to discuss latest issues in bilateral ties.

During the telephone conversation held on Thursday, the two foreign ministers discussed the regional developments and the issues of mutual interests. The two also exchanged views about consular cooperation between Tehran and Stockholm and stressed the need for further expansion of bilateral relations.

Iranian foreign minister held the telephone conversation while he is now in the United Arab Emirates on the last leg of a regional tour that started on June 20.

President Slams U.S. Interference in Sovereign Nations

TEHRAN (IFP) - President Ebrahim Raisi has strongly criticized the US over its interference in the internal affairs of independent nations.

Speaking to Venezuela's Telesur Television Channel, the president said Iran's policy is to respect the independence of nations but the US's vision is based on domination.

Raisi added that whoever refuses to abide by this vision is called a rogue by Washington.

Raisi added that Tehran seeks to boost economic and political ties with independent nations. The Iranian president noted that the dark record of the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan is obvious.

He said it was the U.S. that killed millions of people in Iraq and Afghanistan and maimed 35 thousand Afghans.

Iran's president added the arrogant powers are bent on weakening the independence of nations like those in Latin America through their puppet groups and also via



ignoring the vote and will of people there.

Elsewhere, Raisi spoke about Iran's nuclear program. He underlined the civilian nature of the Islamic Republic's atomic activities.

Raisi said the UN nuclear oversight body, the IAEA, has confirmed on 15 occasions that Iran's nuclear program has not diverted from its peaceful path.

The president noted that Iran stuck to its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, but the U.S. reneged on its commitments.

Raisi said the European countries also failed to stick to their part of the JCPOA. The Iranian president underlined that the Islamic Republic of Iran has never been and is never after nuclear arms.

Leader Urges Intelligence Entities To Have Cooperation at All Ranks

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Supreme Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution has called on the Intelligence Ministry and the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) to have cooperation at all of their ranks.

According to a Thursday report by IRNA, the supreme leader termed intelligence as one of the key issues of the country, saying that the Intelligence Ministry and the IRGC Intelligence Organization are currently enjoying "serious understanding" and cooperation at their top levels.

But, he added, the two entities need to have cooperation at all of their ranks.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the comments in a message to a joint meeting by the Intelligence Ministry and the IRGC Intelligence Organization.

That meeting was held in the holy city of Mashhad on June 15 and was aimed at boosting cooperation between the ministry and the IRGC-linked organization in the face of plots by enemies of the Islamic Revolution.

Envoy Inaugurates Diabetes Center in Eastern Afghanistan



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's special envoy to Afghanistan has inaugurated a diabetes center funded by the Islamic Republic in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

Hospitals across Afghanistan are facing a growing crisis. The poor economy has also generated a wide array of health problems, not least chronic cases of malnutrition.

Iran's diplomatic mission in Kabul announced in a post published on Twitter on Thursday that the 'Khatam-ul-Anbiya' diabetes diagnosis center was opened by Hassan Kazemi-Qomi, in the presence of Taliban officials.

The medical center was renovated and equipped through the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and handed over to local authorities in Nangarhar province..

The diplomatic mission said the center was built within the framework of medical cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) Dari radio station reported the center can render services to 60 diabetic patients on a daily basis.

"The inauguration of the center marks opening the path for other forms of assistance from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the health sector in the eastern part of Afghanistan, especially Nangarhar province," Kazemi-Qomi said.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to assist the center until it develops the capacity to operate independently."

For his part, the deputy minister of public health in the Taliban government appreciated Iran's contributions to Afghanistan's health sector, calling for the construction of similar centers in other provinces.

Mohammad Hassan Ghiyathi said 12 doctors and health workers, including four women, are working in the Khatam-ul-Anbiya center who have been trained in Iran.

Afghanistan's healthcare system is at risk of collapse, after international donors including the World Bank and European Union stopped providing aid following the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

Health workers, both public and private, who remain in Afghanistan are battling a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions, with dwindling personnel and resources.

Development of Ties With Neighbors Iran's Top Priority

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister has said the current Iranian administration attaches special importance to the development of the country's ties with its neighbors.

Hossein Amirabdollahian made the remarks during a meeting with Kuwaiti Prime Minister Ahmad Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah in Kuwait City on Wednesday. The top diplomat is staying in the Kuwaiti capital as part of a regional tour, which will next take him to the United Arab Emirates.

Amirabdollahian said the administration of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi considered the expansion of the Islamic Republic's relations with its neighbors to be an essential priority.

Iran would seriously address the priority since it believes that the country's neighbors, especially the Persian Gulf's littoral states, enjoy numerous instances of commonality and capacities for cooperation with the country, he added.

The foreign minister, meanwhile, identified the enhancement of economic, commercial, and transit cooperation with Kuwait alongside the two sides' political and security consultations as a serious necessity.

Iran faces no limits in the development of its relations with Kuwait in the areas of common interest between the countries, he said, extending senior Iranian officials' invitation to their Kuwaiti counterparts for the latter to visit the Islamic Republic.

Iran, Amirabdollahian noted, has proposed the formation of a regional assembly



featuring the countries that border the Persian Gulf to the north and south.

Upon formation, such an assembly could play a constructive role in the promotion of convergence and cooperation among the region's countries, he said, adding that Kuwait could play an important role in shaping up such a body given the positive role that it has been playing in this regard.

For his part, the Kuwaiti official expressed delight over the Iranian official's visit to his country, describing the countries' relations as historical and marked by good neighborliness.

Tehran and Kuwait City should strive towards the reinforcement of the ties in all existing areas, Al Sabah said.

He considered the residency of around 30,000 Iranian nationals in Kuwait as the main reason for the depth and good-neighborly quality of the countries' ties.

The Kuwaiti premier, meanwhile, admired the recent rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, saying the development served to contribute positively to regional

relations, and stated that his country welcomed Iran's initiatives that are aimed at reinforcement of the Islamic Republic's relations with Arab states.

Iranian Firms Double Their Presence in Business Fairs in Moscow

MOSCOW (Dispatches)

- A Russian official has announced that the number of Iranian companies attending business and trade exhibitions in Moscow has doubled during the first five months of 2023 compared to the same period last year.

Acting Director General of Russia's EXPOCENTRE Alexey Vyalkin said at a preliminary meeting held in Moscow on Wednesday that the increased presence of Iranian firms in fairs in Moscow indicates a willingness to expand trade ties with Russian trade partners.

Vyalkin made the comments in a preparatory meeting ahead of the second edition of Tehran- Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) exhibition. He underlined that Iran and Russia have exchanged some important trade delegations this year to upgrade the level of economic cooperation between the two countries.

Like Iranian companies that are willing to have access



to the Russian market, the Russians are after having increased presence in Iran and in other Asian countries, Vyalkin added.

He said that Moscow supports the participation of Russian companies in the Tehran EAEU exhibition slated to take place early December this year.

Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali,

who was also present in the meeting, invited companies in Russia and in other Eurasian states as well as companies from countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Persian Gulf region to take part in the exhibition.

According to remarks of the director of the Tehran EAEU exhibition, Ali-Reza Jafai, the international gathering is to be held in the Iranian capital on December 4 for four days.

Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia are members of the EAEU, while Uzbekistan, Moldova, and Cuba are the Union observers.

Iran, India Hold New Round of Political Talks in New Delhi

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran and India have held a new round of "political negotiations" in New Delhi, outlining their plans for the next six months in various areas of bilateral relations, an Iranian Foreign Ministry official has said.

Seyyed Rasoul Mousavi, who is the director-general of the Foreign Ministry's West Asia Department, said on Wednesday that he had met with G.P. Singh, head of the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran division in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, earlier in the day, to explore ways of improving bilateral ties.

"During this session, a wide range of bilateral, regional, and international issues were discussed, and we have set our plans for the next six months in various aspects of bilateral relations," he said.

A member of the BRICS group of emerging economies, India is an important trading partner for Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian met with his Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, earlier this month on the sidelines of a BRICS summit in Cape Town, South Africa, where the two focused on efforts to expand of economic ties between Iran and India.

Leader Says Proud of Stationery Manufacturers Achievements

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has responded to a letter from Iranian manufacturers of stationery, hailing them for their achievements in meeting domestic needs.

A group of Iranian stationery manufacturers presented a report of new achievements and successes they had made in the field of producing stationery last year in a letter to the Leader of the Revolution.

The text of the response of the Leader of the Revolution to the letter was published on Thursday morning in which Ayatollah Khamenei says he is proud of stationery manufacturers' achievements.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said that he was happy to see their high-quality products, adding that he was grateful for their efforts.

The Leader further urged them to continue the path they have stepped in.

Tehran, Islamabad Pledge Stronger Bonds Through Hajj, Religious Tourism

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Pakistan and Iran have pledged to further enhance cooperation in facilitating pilgrims and promoting religious tourism.

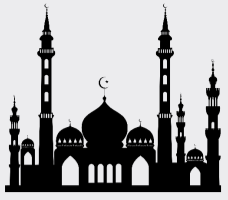
Radio Pakistan's correspondent Javed Iqbal reports from Saudi Arabia that the resolve was expressed during a meeting between Minister for Religious Affairs Talha Mehmood and Iran's Minister for Pilgrimage and Ziarat Syed Fateh Nawab in Makkah.

Speaking on the occasion, Talha Mehmood said the Memorandum of Understanding regarding Ziarat of sacred places in Iran has been sent to Iranian Embassy in Pakistan.

He expressed his utmost desire for the MoU to evolve into a formal agreement, aiming to foster an enriching cultural exchanges between the two countries.

The Iranian Minister highlighted his country's role in hosting and assisting Zaireen on their journey to Iraq.

He assured to provide further facilities to the Zaireen after the finalization of the memorandum of understanding.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	03:03
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	04:49

84. Then fight in Allah's cause - Thou art held responsible only for thyself - and rouse the believers. It may be that Allah will restrain the fury of the Unbelievers; for Allah is the strongest in might and in punishment.

85. Whoever recommends and helps a good cause becomes a partner therein; And whoever recommends and helps an evil cause, shares in its burden: And Allah hath power over all things.

Surah 4. Women (84 - 85)

Role of Mafia Blamed for Return of Iran Gasoline From Afghanistan

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union blames the role of mafia groups in return of Iran's oil products from Afghanistan and reiterated that Iran's oil products are all standard.

Speaking to ILNA, Mr. Ahmad Maroufkhani reacted to recent reports that Taliban government has returned all gasoline imported from Iran and said that Iran's oil products are all based on the international standards and the country exports its products to countries in the Persian Gulf without any problem.

He added that last year Iran exported oil products worth of \$11m liters but he has no exact date about how much of the export belongs to private or state sectors. He added that members of the union exported \$8.4b of oil products, adding that the real private sector exported \$4.6b and if the petrochemical sector which is mostly state-private is added to the figure it will hit \$9b.

Maroufkhani added that Persian Gulf states, Al-Hamrieh and Pakistan were major destinations for exports and small amount was also Afghanistan-bound.

He added that the private sector does not export something called gasoline and gas oil, adding that export of gasoline and gas oil is only in the authority of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company that the figure is almost zero. He noted that the products which are produced by the private sector are like gas oil and gasoline but they are not the final product.

On return of Iran's exported gasoline to Afghanistan, he said that those were the transited goods which had been sent via Kurdistan of Iraq which were rejected by



Taliban government. He added that unfortunately in the Taliban government some mafia groups have taken the control which do unprofessional acts and based on their own taste return the products which are even in the international standards and they approve some other products through lobbying. He added therefore Afghanistan market is not a yardstick for Iranian products and all reports on the low quality of Iranian gasoline products are not correct.

Maroufkhani went on to say that current one product of one of the petrochemical complexes has been exported to Afghanistan in large number with non-standard quality which has been approved and being consumed in Afghanistan because mafia is behind it and since in other fields there are no mafias, there have been no problems and exports are underway. He reiterated that so the issue of disapproval of Iranian gasoline in Afghanistan is a mafia issue and it is not considered as a yardstick for being non-standard.

He reiterated that the product which is exported to Afghanistan under the name of gasoline is not the product of refinery and it is a petrochemical company's product.

He added that the returned product is not used in the domestic market at all and they are sent to the Persian Gulf states where something is added to it to become a good and quality product and in fact it is exported as the raw material for producing gasoline.

Minister Calls for Strengthening Foreign Currency Sources of Global South

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Iran's minister of economy has emphasized that the foreign currency resources of the Global South countries should be used to strengthen these countries to withstand global unilateralism.

Speaking at the meeting of the OPEC Fund Development Forum 2023 in Vienna, Ehsan Khandouzi described the forum as an opportunity for representatives of member states to come together to sketch the horizons of cooperation and exchange of ideas. He noted that the Fund's efforts in line with the sustainable development goals and promotion of development in less developed countries are emphasized by all member countries.

Pointing to the Iranian incumbent government's emphasis on more support for less developed Muslim countries, he noted that this is aimed at achieving comprehensive development in the entire Islamic Ummah.

He underlined that given that the key to the development of any country is the private sector, OPEC Fund must have more support for this sector.

Lack of Minerals Exploration the Achilles' Heel of Steel Industry



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Iran Alloy Steel Company pointing to the condition of capital market said that to increase productivity in the financial tools being used in the market like bonds, the hybrid methods should be used.

Eng. Mohammad Kamalzadeh stated that creating stability in the rate in the market leads to psychological security of investors, adding that using hybrid methods gives a peace of mind to the mineral industries especially steelmakers for providing raw materials.

The CEO of Iran Alloy Steel Company who was speaking in the specialized panel in a conference on financing projects in the mineral and mining sector said that lack of minerals exploration in Iran is the Achilles' Heel of the steel industry, reiterating that lack of balance in the steel production chain is a historic malady and absence of stability in the policy-making is a big challenge for financing.

Kamalzadeh emphasized that they should move in a direction to create profits for the investors but for the time being, some financing systems which are profitable are more challenge than helping industries.

MAPNA Group Rejects Reports on New CEO

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – MAPNA Group in a statement rejected some reports in the media and social networks on appointing the new CEO of the Group.

The CEO of MAPNA Group Abbas Aliabadi was picked by President Ebrahim Raisi as new Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade which got the vote of confidence of Majlis.

After his departure from MAPNA Group, some media outlets have claimed the group has appointed its new CEO by the Group in a statement refuted all reports on new CEO of MAPNA Group and called it just media assumptions.

The statement, issued by the communications and market management of MAPNA Group, reiterated that the group after choosing its new CEO will officially announce it and any assumption and reports on the new CEO of the group is baseless and invalid.

Iran, UAE Sign Aviation Cooperation Agreement

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Iran and the United Arab Emirates have signed a major agreement to cooperate on air transport services as the two Persian Gulf countries seek to deepen their economic and trade ties amid a regional détente.

The agreement was signed on Thursday in Dubai between head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization Mohammad Mohammadi Bakhsh and director-general of UAE's General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) Saif Mohammed Al Suwaidi.

The agreement will help Iran and the UAE expand their aviation connections in order to boost trade and tourism opportunities in the two countries.

Suwaidi said after signing the agreement that it would be a major step forward in efforts to bring to order the flights between Iran and the UAE, according to comments covered in a report by the RT Arabic.

He said the agreement stipulates that aviation authorities in Iran and the UAE should commit to highest standards existing in the industry about safety and quality of transport services.

The signing of the agreement came during a visit by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian to the UAE.

Iran Ramps Up Gold Imports in 6 Months to Late June

TEHRAN (PressTV) – Iran has ramped up its imports of gold amid efforts by the country to offset the impacts of US sanctions on its economy.

Figures by the Iranian customs office (IRICA) released on Wednesday showed that the country had imported 3.262 metric tons of gold in the six months to late June.

The figures indicated that the gold ingots imported into Iran over the period were worth over \$202 million.

The figures come six months after the Iranian government eased its bans on gold imports to allow exporters in the country to use gold to pay their hard currency liabilities to the government.

Under normal circumstances and before the easing of the bans, Iranian businesses were supposed to supply part of their export proceeds to a system where importers could access hard currency they needed at subsidized prices. Exporters had complained of difficulties in repatriating their hard currency earnings to Iran mainly because of US sanctions that restrict Iranian banks' access to the international banking system.

Easing the ban on gold imports is part of measures adopted by the Iranian government in recent years to lessen the impacts of US sanctions on its trade ties with the rest of the world.

IRICA figures showed that gold imports into Iran had accelerated over the past three months as some 1.877 mt of gold worth over \$121 million had been imported into the country over the period.

Iran Plans to Raise Nuclear Electricity Output to 20 GW

TEHRAN (IRNA) – First Vice-President Mohammad Mokhber has directed the country's energy minister and nuclear chief to devise a comprehensive and phased plan for the production of 20 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear electricity.

At a meeting on Wednesday, Energy Minister Ali Akbar Mehrabian and head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami were also tasked with projecting the resources necessary to implement the plan in the next year's budget.

"The use of fossil fuels and conventional energy sources is losing its position day by day, while the significance of

nuclear energy is increasing," Mokhber said at the meeting while calling to address the development requirements of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant.

The senior officials agreed that efforts should be made to expedite the construction of two new units at the power plant, each with a capacity of 1.08 GW of nuclear electricity.

Eslami, meanwhile, presented a report on the ongoing programs at the AEOI, and said work has already begun to identify new sites with "technical and general" capacities required for the construction of new nuclear power plants across the country.

Iranian Firm Unveils World's Largest Glass Panel

TEHRAN (PressTV) – A major Iranian glass producer has unveiled what it says is the world's largest glass panel amid plans by the company to capture a larger share of the lucrative construction materials market in the Persian Gulf region.

The panel unveiled by Qazvin Glass on Thursday is 37.1 meters long and 1.6 meters wide, said the company's deputy CEO Mahmoud Najdat as he spoke to reporters in a ceremony dedicated to unveiling the panel in the northern city of Qazvin.

Najdat said the glass panel has a thickness of 50 millimeters and weighs around 7.42 metric tons and has a very low level of iron oxide.

"Manufacturing this glass (panel) with this size and specifications is a record in the world and only a Chinese company had previously managed to produce a



sector in recent years amid efforts by the country to diversify away from crude oil revenues and to rely more on domestic resources of the economy.

23-meter-long glass," he was quoted by the IRNA news agency.

He said the panel has been ordered by a development company in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, adding that Qazvin Glass plans to produce panels in similar sizes for export to countries in the Persian Gulf and Europe.

Qazvin Glass is one of the oldest and largest glass producers in Iran. The company, which started marketing its products in 1968, is also the first in Iran to manufacture glass bricks with a thickness of 53 mm, a product for which there is a large demand in the Persian Gulf.

Iran has seen a surge in activity in its manufacturing sector in recent years amid efforts by the country to diversify away from crude oil revenues and to rely more on domestic resources of the economy.

Iran, Algeria Ministers Review Ways to Boost Bilateral Trade

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Minister of Economy of Iran and his Algerian counterpart emphasized the increase in trade between the two countries.

Ehsan Khandouzi, who is in

Vienna to participate in the OPEC Fund Development Forum 2023, met and held talks with Algeria's Finance Minister.

The Iranian minister highlighted Iran's prioritized policy of developing economic relations with Muslim countries.

The two sides decided that the operational axes of increasing trade and investment between Iran and Algeria be examined by the expert teams of the two countries by the end of August. They also agreed to pave the way for meeting again and approve the axes of economic cooperation by the two nations economy ministers.

Scholz Warns China on Using Force Against Taiwan



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Chancellor Olaf Scholz told the German parliament that he had warned China during talks earlier this week against using force to achieve territorial changes, particularly against Taiwan.

Scholz hosted a large Chinese delegation led by Premier Li Qiang in the first face-to-face summit since the pandemic this week, at a time of rising geopolitical tensions between the West and China.

"We firmly reject all unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East and South China Seas by force or coercion. This is especially true for Taiwan," Scholz said, according to prepared remarks.

"We are also concerned about the human rights situation and the state of the rule of law in China," he added.

Restaurant Explosion Kills 31 In Northwest China



BEIJING (Dispatches) - At least 31 people were killed when an explosion ripped through a restaurant in the northwestern Chinese city of Yinchuan, state media said.

"A leak of liquefied petroleum gas... caused an explosion during the operation of a barbecue restaurant," state news agency Xinhua said of the Wednesday evening blast, citing the regional Communist Party committee.

Seven more people were receiving medical treatment, the agency said, with one of them in a "critical condition". Two others had suffered severe burns, two had minor injuries and two had scratches caused by flying glass, Xinhua said.

Biden, Modi Salute Defining Partnership as U.S. Invests Big in India



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. President Joe Biden hailed a "defining partnership" with India as he rolled out the red carpet for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sealing major defense and technology deals as Washington bets big on New Delhi as a counterweight to China.

Modi is being feted with the pomp of a state visit, only the third of Biden's presidency, in a calculated show of full-throated US support - despite quiet unease over India's refusal to break with Russia and what rights groups see as growing authoritarianism by the Hindu nationalist leader.

With around 7,000 Indian-Americans gathered on the White House's South Lawn to cheer him on, Modi, sporting a flowing white kurta with a sky-blue jacket, walked a red carpet to a military salute as Biden welcomed him.

"I have long believed that the relationship between the U.S. and India will be one of the most defining relationships of the 21st century," Biden said.

"The challenges and opportunities facing the world in this century require that India and the United States work and lead together," he said.

Modi, India's most powerful prime minister in decades, said that the two countries "are committed to work together for the global good and for global peace, stability and prosperity."

"Our strong strategic partnership is a clear proof of the power of democracy," said Modi, who unlike most of India's post-independence leaders spoke Hindi rather than English on the global stage.

Modi will later address a joint session of Congress and return to the White House for a gala dinner, with First Lady Jill Biden tapping a star Californian plant-based chef, Nina Curtis, to cook for the strictly vegetarian prime minister.

The White House said the two leaders will take questions from the press, while stopping short of calling the event a press conference. Modi has nearly always avoided scripted interactions with reporters during his nine years in office.

In one of the biggest agreements of the visit, described by a US official as "trailblazing," the United States signed off on a technology transfer for engines as India begins producing homegrown fighter jets.

General Electric will have the green light to produce its F414 engines jointly with state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics.

A US official said India would also buy MQ-9B SeaGuardians, high-precision armed drones. India in 2019 broke precedent with an airstrike in Pakistani territory against an alleged extremist camp.

Washington hopes a tighter defense relationship will help wean India off Russia, New Delhi's primary military supplier during the Cold War.

India has refused to join Western efforts to isolate Russia over its invasion of Ukraine and instead has seized on the crisis to buy discounted Russian oil.

In one long-running point of contention, India has been angered by US sales of F-16 fighter jets to its historic rival Pakistan.

In another agreement, U.S. chip giant Micron will invest \$800 million in a semiconductor assembly and testing plant in India, which is expected to reach \$2.75 billion after contributions from New Delhi.

A US official said the plant would help diversify supply chains of advanced semiconductors, as Biden leads a concerted effort to deny exports of top-end chips to China.

Micron nonetheless also recently announced a \$600 million investment in a factory in China.

India, a growing power in space, also agreed during Modi's visit to join the Artemis Accords, a US-led multinational effort to put a human back on the Moon by 2025.

As part of the cooperation, India's space program will work with NASA on a joint mission to the International Space Station next year, the White House said.

Ukrainian Strike Hits Key Russian-Held Bridge



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - A Ukrainian strike damaged a bridge that connects southern Ukraine to the annexed Crimean peninsula, a Russian official said on Thursday, as fresh tensions ballooned over a Moscow-held nuclear power plant.

Fighting has increased in occupied parts of Ukraine's south and east with the start of Kyiv's counteroffensive and that has included strikes far behind enemy lines.

"During the night a strike hit the Chongar bridge. There are no victims," Sergei Aksyonov, the Russia-installed governor of Crimea, said on Telegram. The bridge connects Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, to a part of the southern Ukrainian region of Kherson that is partly held by Moscow.

Vladimir Rogov, a Russian-installed official in the southern Ukrainian region of Zaporizhzhia, said a second strike had damaged a disused bridge nearby.

The Kremlin announced last year that Kherson was also part of Russia, even as fighting was raging there. Ukraine recaptured the regional capital shortly after.

The Russia-installed governor of Kherson, Vladimir Saldo, said that Ukrainian strikes had hit "bridges" near the village of Chongar, using British-supplied Storm Shadow cruise missiles.

Crimea has been regularly targeted by strikes, mostly using drones, over recent months.

Moscow last year blamed Ukraine for a blast on the main bridge connecting Crimea to the Russian mainland.

The deputy head of the Kherson regional council said the strike on the Chongar bridge was of "great importance".

"Firstly, it is a blow to the military logistics of the occupiers," Yuriy Sobolevskyi said on social media.

"Secondly, the psychological impact on the occupiers and the occupying authorities is even more important.

"There is no place on the territory of Kherson region where they could feel safe," he added.

Ukrainian military intelligence spokesman Andriy Yusov said "there will be more" attacks targeting Russian-controlled territory.

EU Holds Talks With Kosovo, Serbia Leaders Amid Tension

LONDON (Dispatches) - The European Union has summoned the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo for emergency talks to try to bring an end to a series of violent clashes near their border that is fueling fears of a return to open conflict.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that urgent meetings with Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic were under way in Brussels.

"The parties are expected to defuse tensions and deliver on their obligations without preconditions," Borrell said on Twitter before the meetings.

"Today, we aim to find solutions for immediate de-escalation and way forward." The situation in the north of #Kosovo continues to be very tense.

Today, we aim to find solutions for immediate de-escalation and way forward. Earlier, Borrell said: "We need immediate de-escalation and new elections in the north with participation of Kosovo Serbs. This is paramount for the region and [the] EU."

The 27-nation bloc has for years been leading talks aimed at reconciling the two foes, but with little success.

Serbia and its former province Kosovo have been at odds for decades. Their 1998-99 conflict left more than 10,000 people dead, mostly Kosovo Albanians. Belgrade has refused to recognise Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence.

Tensions flared anew last month after Kosovo police seized local municipality buildings in northern Kosovo, where Serbs represent a majority, to install ethnic Albanian mayors who were elected in a local election that Serbs overwhelmingly boycotted.

The EU had threatened Kosovo with political consequences, such as suspending high-level visits and financial cooperation, if it does not reverse course on the elections.

Serbia has put its troops on the border on the highest state of alert amid a series of recent clashes between Kosovo Serbs on one side and Kosovo police and NATO-led peacekeepers on the other. In recent weeks, NATO has sent in reinforcements.

Bolsonaro Faces Political Ban as Brazil Trial Opens

BRASILIA (Dispatches) - Ex-president Jair Bolsonaro faced an eight-year ban on running for office as Brazil's top electoral court began trying the far-right leader over his unproven allegations against the voting system during last year's elections.

Bolsonaro, 68, was not in court as the Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE) opened his trial on charges he abused his office and misused state media when he convened foreign diplomats to warn of the alleged risk of large-scale fraud in the October elections, which he went on to lose to veteran leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The proceedings in Brasilia began with Judge Benedito Goncalves reading a summary of the case against the former president, which was brought by the left-wing Democratic Labor Party (PDL).

The accusation against Bolsonaro is that the meeting with ambassadors "was aimed at undermining the credibility of the upcoming election result in the eyes of the international community, at a moment when (Bolsonaro's) adversary led in opinion polls," he said.

Lawyers on both sides then began presenting their arguments, after which the court's seven judges will deliver their rulings one by one.

At the July 2022 meeting, Bolsonaro spent nearly an hour making his argument to the assembled

ambassadors, armed with a PowerPoint presentation but no hard evidence to back his claim that the electronic voting machines Brazil has used since 1996 compromised the "transparency" of the elections.

Prosecutors say the event violated electoral law, given that it was organized with state resources, held in the official presidential residence and broadcast live on public TV in the middle of the polarizing election campaign.

Insiders say Bolsonaro will almost certainly be convicted, taking him out of the next presidential elections, in 2026. The ex-army captain reiterated Wednesday that he had done nothing wrong.

"There was no criticism or attack on the electoral system" at the meeting, he told journalists.

Bolsonaro was following the trial from the southern city of Porto Alegre, where he was holding political meetings, his press office told AFP.

His Liberal Party (PL) posted a video on Twitter of the former president cracking jokes and taking pictures with the crew of his flight to Porto Alegre Thursday morning before takeoff.

The TSE's judges are unlikely to finish delivering their rulings Thursday, sources said. Further hearings have been scheduled for June 27 and 29 if necessary -- and the case could be extended longer.

China Formally Protests Biden's Depiction of Its Leader



WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - China said it had registered a formal protest over President Joe Biden's reference to Chinese leader Xi Jinping as a "dictator," while Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen stressed the critical importance of the two rival powers maintaining relations despite their disagreements.

Biden's remarks at a 2024 reelection fundraiser Tuesday opened a new rift just after Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing that was meant as a step toward stabilizing ties and improving communications with China.

Biden called the Chinese president a dictator, depicted him as out-of-touch during last winter's tumult over a Chinese spy balloon, and dismissed China as having "real economic difficulties."

China's embassy in Washington said it had delivered a formal protest, with Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng telling senior White House and State Department officials Wednesday that Washington "should take earnest actions to undo the negative impact" of what Biden said or "bear all the consequences."

"With the latest irresponsible remarks about China's political system and its top leader, people cannot help but question the sincerity of the U.S. side" in seeking to stabilize relations, the embassy statement said. "The Chinese government and people do not accept any political provocation against China's top leader and will resolutely respond."

The diplomatic dispute with China comes as Biden hosts Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a lavish state visit where a central theme will be a shared wariness of China.

As an official government-to-government communication, the ambassador's message to the Biden administration carries more weight than the critical comments made a day earlier by a Chinese government spokesperson to reporters. China gave no further details of how the ambassador delivered his message, whether it was seeking an apology from the Biden administration, or what the consequences would be.

China and the U.S. in recent years have been cycling in and out of diplomatic flare-ups. China has used measures ranging from cutting diplomatic ties to staging military maneuvers off Taiwan to show its displeasure.



Ancient Maya City Discovered In Mexican Jungle

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - A previously unknown ancient Maya city has been discovered in the jungles of southern Mexico, the country's anthropology institute said, adding it was likely an important centre more than a thousand years ago.

The city includes large pyramid-like buildings, stone columns, three plazas with "imposing buildings" and other structures arranged in almost-concentric circles, the INAH institute said.

INAH said the city, which it has named Ocomtun — meaning "stone column" in the Yucatec Maya language — would have been an important centre for the peninsula's central lowland region between 250 and 1000 AD.

It is located in the Balamku ecological reserve on the country's Yucatan Peninsula and was discovered during a search of a largely unexplored stretch of jungle larger than Luxembourg. The search took place between March and June using aerial laser mapping (LiDAR) technology.

The Maya civilisation, known for its advanced mathematical calendars, spanned southeast Mexico and parts of Central America. Widespread political collapse led to its decline centuries before the arrival of Spanish conquistadors, whose military campaigns saw the last stronghold fall in the late 17th century.

A view shows a part of a stone facade after archaeologists from Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) discovered an ancient Mayan city inside the Balamku ecological reserve in Campeche State, Mexico in this photo released and distributed by Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History on June 20, 2023. — Picture by Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History/Handout via Reuters

The Ocomtun site has a core area, located on high ground surrounded by extensive wetlands, that includes several pyramid-like structures up to 15 meters high, lead archaeologist Ivan Sprajc said in a statement.

The city also had a ball court. Pre-Hispanic ball games, widespread throughout the Maya region, consist of passing a rubber ball representing the sun across a court without the use of hands and getting it through a small stone hoop. The game is believed to have had an important religious purpose.

Sprajc said his team had also found central altars in an area closer to the La Riguena river, which may have been designed for community rituals, though more research is needed to understand the cultures that once lived there.

The site probably declined around 800 to 1000 AD judging from materials extracted from buildings, he said, adding this was likely a reflection of "ideological and population changes" that led to the collapse of Maya societies in that region by the 10th century.



Short Daytime Naps Could Keep the Brain Healthy

LONDON (Dispatches) - Is taking a nap good for your health or not? It's a vast subject that has given rise to a host of scientific studies, some of them contradictory, but all of which attempt to determine the benefits of this short snooze typically taken after lunch. The latest study examines the benefits of napping on cognitive function and brain volume.



And the results could encourage many to adopt this typically Mediterranean lifestyle habit.

Some people struggle to fall asleep after a busy day, tossing and turning in bed unable to drop off, while others are able to doze anywhere, anytime, just by closing their eyes, even if only for a few minutes. According to a new study conducted by researchers at University College London (UCL) and the Universidad de la Republica de Montevideo, Uruguay, the latter may be more alert as they age thanks to these brief periods of sleep, which appear to play a role in brain health.

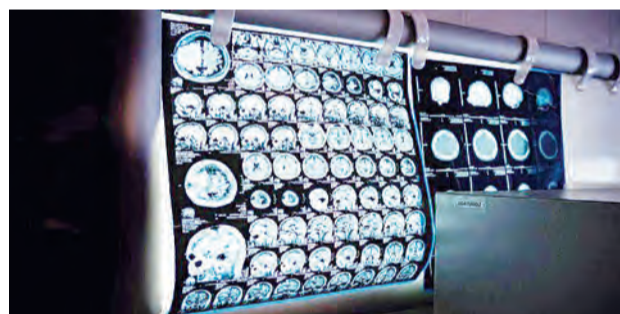
Published in the journal *Sleep Health*, the research is based on a large panel of 35,080 people aged between 40 and 69, drawn from UK Biobank data. The researchers first analysed participant responses as to how often they napped during the day — regularly, sometimes, rarely or never — and then verified them via sleep trackers. Their genetic profile was then established using data from previous studies. The scientists used this data to determine which people napped regularly based on 92 genetic differences, and then looked at their brain size.

And the results are surprising, to say the least. In particular, they suggest that the brain volume of people who regularly indulge in the art of napping is greater (15.80 cm³ on average), compared with those who get little or no shut-eye during the day. Assuming that the brain declines, or shrinks, by 0.2 per cent to 0.5 per cent per year from the age of 35 onwards, the researchers estimate that regular nappers could benefit from a brain that is 2.6 to 6.5 years younger. The scientists add: "this difference approximately equates to the difference in brain volume between people with normal cognitive function and mild cognitive impairment."

Note, however, that the researchers refer to "short naps" without specifying the duration or frequency with which people should indulge in these daytime siestas to reap real benefits. Still, the study confirms that regular rest periods of this kind should ultimately help preserve brain health, while reaffirming that benefits are apparent after a nap of 5 to 15 minutes.

A previous scientific study, conducted by researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital and published in April, revealed that taking long naps can be detrimental to health. It's precisely naps lasting longer than 30 minutes that reportedly increase the risk of obesity, high blood pressure and metabolic syndrome. Napping therefore seems to be beneficial to health, provided you don't sleep for too long.

Electrical Brain Stimulation May Prevent Damage From Stroke



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Could an electrical zap to the brain limit the damage a stroke inflicts?

Yes, claims a small new study that found this noninvasive procedure increased blood flow to the areas around the clot that caused the stroke, thus protecting them from further damage.

"This treatment can be efficiently applied in the emergency setting. It was well tolerated and shows really promising signs of rescuing brain tissue affected by the stroke," said lead researcher Dr. Mersedeh Bahr-Hosseini, a vascular neurologist at UCLA Health in Los Angeles.

"Hopefully, in the not too far future, we will be able to further test the safety and effectiveness of this treatment," she said.

Bahr-Hosseini said the treatment works by boosting blood flow in the brain.

"We think it's not just the brain tissue or brain nerve cells that respond to electrical currents. Blood vessels also respond to the electrical current, usually in the form of vessel dilation," she said. By expanding the size of the blood vessels in the brain, more blood flows into the brain and protects blood vessels from damage, thus preventing more damage from the stroke.

Bahr-Hosseini said that electric stimulation might also protect brain tissue by stopping the extra nerve activity in brain cells as they react to the brain being under attack.

Moreover, increasing blood flow and expanding blood vessels may also help to dissolve the clot that caused the stroke, she added.

Electric brain stimulation has been used to treat psychiatric disorders such as depression, Bahr-Hosseini said.

She noted that many patients are not eligible for the two common treatments available for ischemic stroke, namely clot-busting drugs and a device that reaches into the blood vessels and pulls out clots. Among patients who are eligible for those treatments, about 20% to 30% end up with disabilities months after their stroke, Bahr-Hosseini noted.

Low-Dose Aspirin Associated With Anemia in Older Adults

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Using low-dose aspirin was associated with a 20% increased incidence of anemia and decline in ferritin, or blood iron levels, in otherwise healthy older adults, according to a new analysis of a study conducted a decade ago.

Publishing their findings in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* on Monday, 15 researchers from Australia, New Zealand and the United States determined that low-dose aspirin appeared to reduce the levels of ferritin, a blood protein in cells that contains iron, and increase anemia.

"Aspirin may contribute to an increased anemia risk through occult blood loss, resulting in anemia," the researchers wrote. "To our knowledge, this is the first large-scale prevention trial to examine the effect of long-term, low-dose aspirin use on ... anemia."

Headed by lead author Zoe K. McQuilten, of Monash University in Melbourne, they added: "Although the risk for overt bleeding due to aspirin has been well-characterized, very few studies have measured the effect of aspirin on anemia, particularly in older populations."

Symptoms of iron-deficiency anemia, or having too few red blood cells, include feeling tired, weak or dizzy, and perhaps having pale skin and cold hands and feet.

Other symptoms include headaches, swollen legs, restless leg syndrome and dry and brittle hair and nails, according to the non-profit Parsemus Foundation.

Researchers noted that some 50% of older people in the United States take aspirin for preventative reasons, including what is commonly called thinning the blood to counter cardiovascular disease and prevent stroke.

However, because of the risk of bleeding, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force last year recommended against initiating low-dose aspirin use for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease in adults 60 years and older.

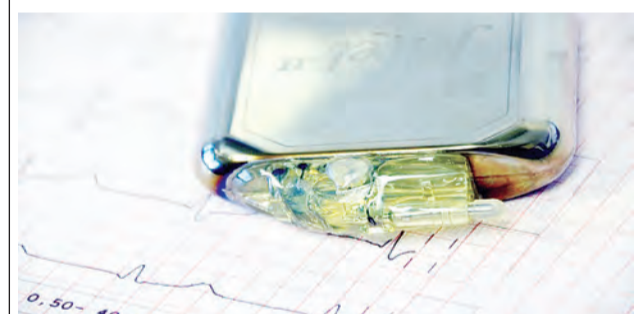
For the new research, investigators from Monash University conducted a new analysis of the 2010-2014 ASPREE trial, which employed placebos for some of those studied and was double-blinded, meaning the researchers did not know who was getting the aspirin and who among the 19,114 subjects aged 70 and older was getting the sugar pill.

ASPREE stands for "Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly," and involved giving some participants 100 mg. of enteric-coated aspirin. Much of the low-dose aspirin in this country is sold in 81-mg. tablets, though some people take two a day.

During the trial, hemoglobin was measured annually, and ferritin was measured at baseline and three years after randomization.



Mood Disorders Plague Some Implanted Heart Device Recipients



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - New research finds that many of those who have received an implanted cardiac device to extend their life also have mood disorders, including anxiety, depression and PTSD.

"Implantable cardioverter defibrillators [ICDs] are effective at extending patients' lives, but we need to make sure that's a good quality life," said study author Hannah Keage, a professor of psychology at the University of South Australia in Adelaide.

"Rates of mood disorders in people with an ICD are much higher than in the general population, suggesting that psychological assessment and therapy should be integrated into the routine care of these patients."

In the study published Tuesday in *EP Europace*, a journal of the European Society of Cardiology, the researchers found that nearly one-third of patients had anxiety in the first year after their device was implanted. Depression affected 1 in 5. More than 1 in 10 had PTSD.

Anxiety and depression are associated with higher likelihood of premature death in these patients who had a device implanted because of risk of a life-threatening heart rhythm.

The researchers analyzed 109 studies involving nearly 40,000 ICD patients. They examined prevalence of mental health issues from the time the ICD was implanted to one year of follow-up, finding that rates of anxiety were 23%, depression was at 15% and PTSD at 12%.

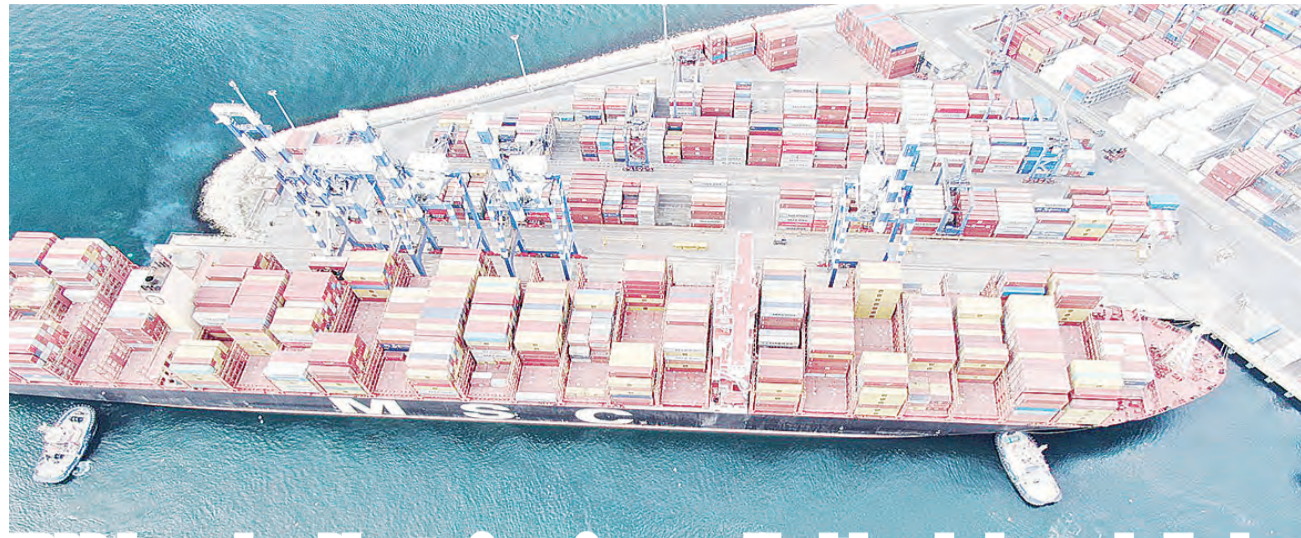
In the general population, the rates of these conditions are 13%, 7% and 1% to 2%, respectively.

Rates of anxiety and depression were higher at the initial stages after implantation, reduced by six to 12 months and lower still after 12 months.

Patients who had a shock to return their heart rhythm to normal after their ICD detected a dangerously fast heart rhythm were four times more likely to have anxiety and nearly twice as likely to have depression as those who did not experience shocks, the study showed.

Argentina to Make \$1.9b Payment to IMF as Scheduled

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Argentina will make scheduled payments totaling some \$1.9 billion to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)...



EBRD Launches Plan to Spur Greener Maritime Industry in Turkey

LONDON (Dispatches) - European development bank said it had launched a program aimed at modernizing the maritime sector in Turkey...

German Recession Will Be Sharper Than Expected

BERLIN (Dispatches) - The German economy will contract more than previously expected this year as sticky inflation takes its toll on private consumption...



The lender said the program would support both private and public-sector investments capable of having a positive impact...

Change is continuous, but never easy. The EBRD is pleased to be joining forces with the EU and Turkey's Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure...

The EBRD remains the leading institutional investor in Turkey, with a cumulative investment in the country to date of more than 17.3 billion euros.

Over half of the lender's 2022 investments in Turkey were part of its Green Economy Transition approach, focusing on projects that aim to accelerate the country's shift to a greener, low-carbon and resilient economy.

EU's Powerful Lending Arm Eyes First Debt-for-Nature Swap

LONDON (Dispatches) - The European Union's powerful lending arm, the European Investment Bank, expects to back its first 'debt-for-nature' swap this year...

Debt-for-nature swaps, which help countries cut their debt in return for conservation commitments, are attracting growing interest after Ecuador's record US\$1.6 billion deal last month to protect the Galapagos Islands.

Multilateral development banks play a crucial role by providing 'credit guarantees' that allow cash-poor governments to borrow cheaply...

Due to the EIB's vast firepower - its balance sheet is more than double that of the lending arm of the World Bank - its entrance into this pocket of finance has long been on the wishlist of those wanting a rapid increase in debt swaps.

Shaw-Barragan declined to name the countries and likely amounts involved to avoid impacting bond prices - debt-for-nature swaps work best when existing bonds are bought on the cheap...

The first EIB deal is expected to be finalized around the end of the year or start of 2024, Shaw-Barragan added, or 'in the next 12 months' at the very latest.



Italy is the only country dragging its feet over the approval of the treaty that reviews the so-called European Stability Mechanism (ESM)...

The Treasury document, transmitted to the Foreign Affairs committee and released by some opposition lawmakers, argues that ratifying the treaty would not entail additional spending for Italy's strained state coffers...

They are set to receive more backing at a summit in Paris on Thursday hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and Barbados' Prime Minister Mia Mottley...

Pakistan Expects Over \$20b From Saudi Arabia, UAE to Stave Off Economic Crisis

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The Pakistani government is expecting over \$20 billion in investments from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar...



Cash-strapped Pakistan faces its worst economic crisis to date, with months of delay in securing funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)...

'We have been seeking deposits and loans from our friendly countries, but from now onwards, they will be investing in different fields in Pakistan.'

The council is initially expecting over \$20 billion in investments from Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar. We already have investment pledges from these countries...

Afzal, however, did not provide a specific timeline for when Pakistan would receive the investments. The official said that Pakistan's friendly countries are 'keen to invest'...

In recent months, Saudi Arabia and the UAE deposited billions of dollars in Pakistan's central bank to shore up the country's foreign exchange reserves and keep its economy afloat.

The council also provides the military a seat at the economic table, with the army chief being a member of its apex committee, and the army itself serving as the national coordinator for both the apex and executive committees.

Pakistan army's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), did not respond to calls and texts seeking comments for this story.

Afzal defended the army's inclusion in the council, saying that the presence of its officials in the SIFC would help expedite the investment process.

Brazil Central Bank Keeps Interest Rate Unchanged



Sao Paulo (Dispatches) - Brazil's central bank kept its key interest rate unchanged at a six-year high and stopped short of endorsing imminent reductions...

Policymakers kept the benchmark Selic at 13.75% for a seventh straight meeting as widely anticipated late on Wednesday. In an accompanying statement, the central bank removed language pledging to resume rate hikes...

The board 'judges that the strategy of maintaining the Selic rate for a long period has been adequate to ensure the convergence of inflation,' they wrote.

Brazilian central bankers, who were among the first to raise borrowing costs in the aftermath of the pandemic, are remaining cautious despite signs their strategy is paying off.

The board indicates that they need to see additional developments and improvements in the outlook before starting to discuss cuts.

Lula has been campaigning for lower borrowing costs since taking office in January. After repeatedly calling current interest rate levels 'absurd' and saying they're propelling unemployment, his criticism started to resonate beyond the government.

U.S. to Stop Violating UNSC Resolution on Iran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has said that it is very important for Russia to see that the United States fully implements the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 about Iran.

Ryabkov made the remarks among journalists on Thursday as he was speaking about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA), an international agreement on Iran's nuclear program that has suffered since 2018 because of US withdrawal from the deal.

He said, "The most important thing for us today is that the United States returns to full implementation of [UN Security Council] Resolution 2231," Russia's TASS news agency quoted the diplomat as saying.



Iran Warns Israel Over Ongoing Crimes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman has condemned Israel's criminal acts against Palestinians, saying the occupying regime is shortening its own lifespan through ongoing atrocities and acts of evil.

Nasser Kanaani made the remarks in a tweet on Thursday, a day after the Israeli regime carried out a deadly drone attack in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, killing three Palestinians.

"One who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind," he wrote, as he hailed the Palestinian resistance groups for confronting the Israeli regime's aggression.

He further emphasized that resistance is "the legitimate response of the Palestinian nation against terrorism, occupation and apartheid."

"The oppressed but resilient Palestinian nation will not leave the Israeli regime's acts of evil unanswered," Kanaani said. "The Zionist regime is shortening its lifespan by continuing its crimes and acts of evil."

On Wednesday, the Israeli military targeted a vehicle near the Al-Jalama checkpoint north of the occupied West Bank of Jenin, accusing its occupants of belonging to a "terrorist cell."

Palestinian resistance groups condemned the strike, saying the Israeli regime should pay for the criminal act.

Over the past months, Israel has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested.



Most of the raids have been into the cities of Nablus and Jenin, where Israeli forces have been trying to stifle a growing Palestinian resistance against occupation.

Mora Holds Intense Talks...

FROM PAGE 1

The JCPOA, or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is the official name of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal which the Islamic Republic clinched with the EU as well as the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, namely the US, the UK, France, Britain, China, Russia plus Germany.

The JCPOA was thrown into disarray in May 2018 when the US withdrew from it and reinstated the anti-Iran sanctions lifted under the accord.

Iran began talks with the remaining signatories in April 2021. Those talks however stalled since last year over what Iran has called the lack of a political will from the Western side to abide by its commitments and lift the sanctions in a verifiable manner.

Earlier on Wednesday, Bagheri Kani spoke of "serious and constructive talks" with Mora on the removal of the sanctions.

Israeli Regime to Be...

FROM PAGE 1

Underscoring the centrality of the Palestinian issue, Ayatollah Khamenei stated, "Progress in resolving the issue of Palestine will also translate into progress on other matters concerning the Islamic Ummah."

Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to the noticeable changes in the conditions of Palestine over the past couple of years, particularly the increased presence of youths in the field, who draw strength from their faith in Islam.

Highlighting the importance of enhanced unity and coordination among all resistance groups, the Leader said, "During the recent battle of Gaza, we witnessed the enemy's attempts to sow discord and divisions among the resistance groups. However, by the grace of God, their efforts were in vain."

"Therefore, we should concentrate more on the issue of unity and coordination and tread this right path with strength," he noted.

Ayatollah Khamenei described the Gaza Strip as the "epicenter of resistance," but added that "it is the West Bank region that will bring the enemy to its knees."

"Who would have ever imagined that one day the Palestinian youths in Jenin could tighten the noose on Zionist troops to the extent that they would be forced to use fighter jets to break the siege of the young fighters, but this happened a few days ago in Jenin," the Leader noted.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that despite all pressures, the international community stood by the Palestinian people.

"On this year's Quds Day, in addition to Islamic states, rallies were even held in European countries, and the people of Europe voiced their opposition to the Zionist regime," he pointed out. The Leader reiterated the Islamic Republic's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and said the late founder of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini supported Palestine from the very beginning.

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "The Palestinian land belongs to all Muslims, so it is incumbent upon all Muslims to enter the scene [of fight] to liberate it, and this is a religious duty."

Haniyeh, for his part, expressed his gratitude for Iran's unflinching support for the Palestinian cause and briefed the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on the latest developments in the occupied territories, not least the occupied West Bank.

"Gaza is at the heart of the resistance, yet the forefront of today's pivotal and decisive battle lies within the West Bank," he stated.

"The upper hand of the young fighters in the West Bank leaves the regime with no choice but to face either one of two scenarios, namely the bad scenario and the worse one," he added.

Haniyeh assured the Leader that the resistance groups will steadfastly hold their ground in every inch of Palestinian territory. He affirmed that the unwavering path of struggle and resistance will persist until the ultimate liberation of al-Quds.

FM Wraps Up Persian Gulf Tour in UAE

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's foreign minister concluded a three-day tour of Persian Gulf Arab neighbors, saying the visit will bear "very good news" for the countries and the region.

Hossein Amirabdollahian on Thursday visited the UAE, where he discussed "bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation" in a meeting with President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi.

Amirabdollahian extended an invitation from President Ebrahim Raisi for Sheikh Mohammed to visit, Iran's foreign ministry said.

He later met with his Emirati counterpart, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, who emphasized "the significance of establishing an international approach to multilateral action based on cooperation and partnership."

The two top diplomats placed a premium on the need for the promotion of cooperation between the two neighbors as they discussed issues of mutual

interest, regional developments, and expansion of bilateral relations.

The areas of cooperation between Iran and the UAE in various political, economic, commercial, consular, cultural and scientific fields were among the matters of discussion.

The trip followed stops in Qatar, Kuwait and Oman -- the latest in a flurry of diplomatic moves by Tehran to improve relations with neighbors and secure the region.

"In the framework of economic and commercial cooperation, we will have very good news for our beloved nation and the nations of these four countries in the future," Iran's Tasnim news agency quoted him as saying.

"The cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the countries on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf has entered a new chapter. In each of these countries, we have seriously put bilateral issues on our agenda," he added.

An agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia in March to restore ties after a years-long rupture has led to a dramatic shift in regional cooperation and a drive for fence-mending.

Amirabdollahian said in his visit, "we discussed with each of these countries about removing obstacles and facilitating economic, commercial, tourism, scientific and technological cooperation and other areas of interest."

"Regarding the regional cooperation between the northern and southern littoral states of the Persian Gulf, the idea of forming a dialogue and regional cooperation forum was proposed and it was welcomed by each of the four countries we visited."

minister said the first meeting of the foreign ministers of the neighboring eight countries, namely those on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf plus Iran and Iraq, will be held in September at the initiative of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. "We take this initiative of the Secretary General as a good omen," Amirabdollahian said.

Iran Urges Constructive...

FROM PAGE 1

Humanitarian aid must remain impartial and unconditional, ensuring that it reaches those in need without any interference from political or external factors.

It is crucial that the international community fulfill their humanitarian commitments and pledges, demonstrating solidarity and sympathy for the Afghan people and offering them hope and a path to a more stable and prosperous future.

Similarly, releasing frozen assets and lifting unilateral sanctions are vital for supporting and recovering Afghanistan's economy.

As a neighboring country with a long-shared border and hosting millions of Afghans, we are gravely concerned about the potential repercussions of the current situation on the security and stability of the entire region, especially for our neighboring countries.

Despite some relative improvements in security, the persistent presence of Daesh and Al-Qaida affiliates in Afghanistan, along with drug trafficking, continue to pose a significant and immediate threat not only to Afghanistan but also to neighboring countries and the entire region, as well as the international community at large.

According to a UN report, the ban on drug trafficking in Afghanistan has not been fully implemented, allowing the illicit trade of opium to continue across the country. Moreover, there is a growing concern regarding the spread of covert laboratories and locations involved in the production and trafficking of industrial substances like methamphetamine. The fact that some of these illicit activities spill across borders further exacerbates our concerns. We support UNODC in its ongoing efforts to monitor opium cultivation in Afghanistan.

Despite repeated international calls for an inclusive government, the de-facto authorities have made no progress towards genuine ethnic and political inclusion. Instead, they have imposed ever-severer restrictions and limitations on Afghan women and girls, severely limiting their access to education.

There are also concerns that de-facto authorities are deliberately attempting to erode Afghans' cultural, linguistic, and historical ties to the Farsi language, while also attempting to exert Pashtun culture's dominance over other ethnic groups and alter the demographic structure of Hazare and Tajik provinces.

These measures have negative consequences on Afghanistan's stability and security and should be reversed to protect the basic human rights of all Afghan people.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for the United Nations' ongoing efforts, including UNAMA, which are critical for ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan, especially given the current situation.

In this context, Iran commends the Secretary General's initiative held in Doha on the 1st and 2nd of May, which brought together Afghanistan's Special Envoys from concerned countries.

We extend our support for the upcoming second meeting on this initiative, and we remain hopeful that, under the UN leadership, the international community will continue to provide crucial humanitarian and developmental assistance to Afghanistan.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Feridun Sinirlioglu as the Special Coordinator entrusted with the crucial task of conducting an independent assessment on Afghanistan. We are ready to collaborate closely with him in fulfilling his mandate.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that we need to cooperate collectively to aid Afghanistan in rebuilding its economy and establishing favorable conditions for the people as well as for the safe return of Afghan refugees.

While acknowledging the Taliban's failure to fully meet their commitments, we must maintain our constructive engagement with the de facto authorities through UNAMA to pursue the best possible outcomes for the people of Afghanistan and the broader international community.

This approach benefits everyone: The Afghan people, the neighbors, the entire region, and the international community. Considering the lessons learned from past experiences of Taliban isolation, it is vital that Afghanistan does not suffer a similar fate.

Iran remains committed to close collaboration with other neighbors, relevant partners, and the UN to help bring durable peace, security, and stability to Afghanistan.

Iran Rejects Biased...

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Bahraini rejected the report as "politically motivated, biased and unfair," arguing that it "did not contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights."

He also dismissed the claim about Iran's "limited" implementation of recommendations of human rights mechanisms, saying such accusations "highlighted the biased and one-sided opinions of the report."

"Iran was committed to promoting and protecting human rights, and interacted and cooperated with the United Nations human rights mechanisms," the envoy asserted.

He further criticized the report for turning a blind eye to the illegal sanctions imposed on the Iranian nation.

"The unilateral measures enacted on Iran impacted all areas of the Iranian people's lives. The imposition of these measures against the Iranian nation was a crime against humanity, which was neglected by the report," Bahraini said.

The report claimed that last year's foreign-backed riots in Iran, which broke out after the death of young woman Mahsa Amini, brought to the fore issues such as "discrimination in law and practice against women and girls as well as minorities."

The ambassador said the allegation "painted an incorrect picture on the situation of human rights in Iran."

He also questioned the report's sources, saying, it "should not utilize fake news published by terrorist organizations."

"Out of more than 130 sources in the report's footnotes, less than 30 were cited from inside sources; more were from anti-Iranian outlets. Unfortunately, the claims made by the report regarding the recent riots in the country contained inappropriate terms, often used by media outlets which reported against Iran," he added.

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Milak to Miss Swimming World Championships

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Kristof Milak, who won two golds at the 2022 world swimming championships, said Wednesday he will skip this year's event in Japan claiming: "I am currently neither physically nor mentally in a position to be among the best in the world."
The 23-year-old Hungarian won two butterfly golds last year before home fans. He is also the world record holder and Olympic champion in 200m butterfly and won the 2019 world title in the event.

Juventus Complete Permanent Signing of Milik

TURIN (Dispatches) - Juventus completed the permanent signing of Poland striker Arkadiusz Milik from Olympique de Marseille on a three year deal for 6.3 million euros (\$6.92 million), the Serie A club said.
Milik, who joined Marseille in 2021, had been on loan at the Italian side, who had an option to buy the player at the end of the season.
"Juventus has exercised the option right for the definitive acquisition of the registration rights of the player Arkadiusz Krystian Milik."

Murray Not to Overreact To Early Queen's Exit

LONDON (Dispatches) - Andy Murray said he will not "overreact" to his opening round exit at the Queen's Club Championships after 6-3 6-1 defeat by Alex de Minaur ended the three-time Grand Slam winner's hopes of securing a seeding at Wimbledon.
The 36-year-old Scot, who has won Queen's a record five times, came into the match on the back of winning back-to-back grasscourt titles at the Surbiton Trophy and Nottingham Open this month.
"Obviously after today, it's easy to overreact," said former world number one Murray, who has resurrected his career after hip resurfacing surgery. "I lost to a good player and it was obviously very comfortable."
"But at the same time, over the past couple of weeks, yes, it's obviously not the same level of opponents, but I won the (Nottingham Open) last week without dropping a set. "I only lost one set in Surbiton. Was holding serve very comfortably. Was moving well, hitting the ball well. There are a lot of positive signs there."
Murray, who is now ranked number 38 in the world, opted to skip tournaments in the recent claycourt swing to focus on the grasscourt season as he bids for a third Wimbledon title.
Meanwhile Carlos Alcaraz secured a hard-fought 4-6 7-5 7-6(3) win over Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech on his Queen's Club debut, bouncing back from a disappointing French Open.
The Spaniard, who will be one of the main contenders at the Queen's grasscourt tournament and Wimbledon next month, survived a wobble in the third set and then won the tiebreak.



"I came here to practice. I felt very good, but I would say I will be better in the next round," he added

The 20-year-old, who slipped to world number two after suffering cramps during his semi-final defeat by Novak Djokovic at Roland Garros, will try to reclaim top spot even though he is playing in only his third career grasscourt tournament.
Meanwhile Holger Rune halted Ryan Peniston's hopes of a second consecutive dream run at the Cinch Championships.
The second seed, who began the week with an 0-3 tour-level record on grass, defeated the home favorite 6-3, 6-4 to reach the quarter-finals at Queen's Club. He will next play sixth seed Lorenzo Musetti, who clawed past Ben Shelton in three sets earlier in the day.
"I think the most important is that I came with a very, very humble approach to the surface and [was] ready to adjust it at any moment," Rune said in his on-court interview. "I played Ryan last year, so I knew more of what I was coming into. Last year I didn't see him play so much, but I've seen him over the year now and he's a great player, especially on this surface."
"He's dangerous. He makes you move and we all know how tough it is to move on grass, so I'm happy to come through."

Mourinho Given Four-Match Ban for Insulting Referee

LAUSANNE (Dispatches) - Jose Mourinho has been suspended for four European matches for insulting referee Anthony Taylor after Roma's Europa League final defeat by Sevilla, UEFA announced.
The Portuguese confronted Taylor in a car park following Roma's penalty shoot-out loss after a 1-1 draw in Budapest.
Mourinho has been banned from "the next four UEFA club competition matches in which he would otherwise participate, for directing abusive language at a match official", European football's governing body said.
His team will play in the Europa League group stage next season.
Roma have also been fined 50,000 euros (\$54,744) and banned from taking away fans to their next European match "for the lighting of fireworks, throwing of objects, acts of damage and crowd disturbances".
The Italian club were also fined 5,000 euros over the "improper conduct of their team" and ordered to "contact the Hungarian Football Federation within 30 days" to agree a settlement regarding damages caused by their supporters in the stadium.



Williams and Svitolina Handed Wimbledon Wildcards

LONDON (Dispatches) - Seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams and former world number three Elena Svitolina were handed wildcard entries into Wimbledon, the organizers announced.
Williams, 43, has won the third major of the year five times and returned to action this month after a five-month injury layoff.
Williams is currently ranked 697th and is competing in the Birmingham Classic, having secured a victory against a top-50 opponent in nearly four years when she beat Italian Camile Giorgi in the round of 32 on Monday.
Ukrainian Svitolina reached the French Open quarter-finals following a maternity break before suffering a defeat against Czech teenager Linda Fruhvirtova on her return to grass at Birmingham earlier this week.
British number one Katie Boulter is among the other wildcard entries after winning her first Women's Tennis Association title at the Nottingham Open over the weekend.

Boulter will be joined by compatriots Jodie Burrage, Harriet Dart, Katie Swan and Heather Watson as wildcard entries.
In the men's tournament, Liam Broady, Jan Choinski, Arthur Fery, David Goffin, George Loffhagen and Ryan Peniston were handed wildcard entries.
The four outstanding wildcards - two men and two women - are yet to be announced.

New Zealand Need to Lift Ticket Sales for Women's World Cup

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - Women's World Cup co-hosts New Zealand need to lift ticket sales in coming weeks given the relatively modest "selling power" of the national Football Ferns team, FIFA executive Sarai Bareman has said.
Bareman, FIFA's chief women's football officer, said she had less concerns about co-hosts Australia where a record crowd of more than 40,000 are expected for the Matildas' World Cup warmup match against France in Melbourne on July 14.



Gundogan Set to Join Barcelona

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan is set to leave the treble winners to join Barcelona on a free transfer, according to reports.
Gundogan is believed to have been offered a three-year deal by Barcelona and is expected to complete his move to the Spanish champions when his City contract expires at the end of June.
City were reported to have been willing to give their 32-year-old captain a new one-year contract with the option of a further 12 months.
But Gundogan's impending move to the Camp Nou was revealed on the same day City agreed a £30 million (\$38 million) deal to sign Chelsea midfielder Mateo Kovacic.
Kovacic's versatility and experience would help compensate for the loss of the influential Gundogan, whose leadership and knack for scoring crucial goals played a key role in City's success in Pep Guardiola's reign.

Gundogan netted twice in City's FA Cup final victory over Manchester United this season before Guardiola's Premier League champions went on to beat Inter Milan in the Champions League final.
The Germany international played 51 games this term, scoring 11 goals including six in his last seven appearances during the tense treble run-in.
City are only the second English side to win all three major trophies in a single season. Gundogan will be fondly remembered by City fans as one of the understated touchstones of their club's golden era.

The former Borussia Dortmund midfielder has won five Premier League titles, two FA Cups, four League Cups and the Champions League in his seven years at City.
Guardiola was keen to keep Gundogan, who has a close relationship with the City boss after living in the same luxury Manchester apartment block for many years.
But, given Gundogan's age, City reportedly did not want to match Barcelona's offer and appear to have taken a pragmatic decision to let him leave.

Germany Coach Flick on Thin Ice

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany coach Hansi Flick had started his tenure in 2021 with an eight-game winning run and a promise to fans to get the four-time world champions back on the right track.

After Tuesday's 2-0 shock home loss to Colombia, however, Flick looks to have used up almost all of that early credit, with the Germans, hosts of Euro 2024, having lost to Poland and drawn 3-3 against Ukraine in their three international matches this month.
"Is he the right man for the job?," asked several German media in their online polls on Wednesday.
"A year before the Euro it looks like the coach and his team have lost all orientation," Kicker football magazine wrote in a comment.
Germany, who have less than a year to build a battle-hardened team for the continental tournament and shore up enthusiasm in the country, had needed two late goals to draw with Ukraine before Friday's 1-0 loss in Warsaw. They delivered an even worse performance against Colombia in Gelsenkirchen with Flick's players lacking urgency in their game and any punch up front.
Germany have won just one of their last five matches since their shock World Cup group stage exit in December. They have also won only three of their last 11.
When Flick took over two years ago Germany had just suffered a last 16 exit at the Euro in 2021 following their first World Cup first stage exit in more than 80 years in 2018.
Flick looked to be the perfect man for the job after his six-trophy run with Bayern Munich in 2020 and his years-long work with his Germany predecessor Joachim Loew as his assistant coach which was capped by the 2014 World Cup triumph in Brazil.



Federer Hails Unbelievable Djokovic

BERLIN (dispatches) - Roger Federer described Novak Djokovic's record-breaking 23rd Grand Slam title achievement as "unbelievable" on Wednesday but avoided anointing his old rival as the greatest player of all time.

"I think what Novak has done is unbelievable," said Federer, who racked up 20 Grand Slams before he retired last year.
Djokovic edged ahead of 22-time major winner Rafael Nadal when he won his third French Open in Paris earlier this month.
Federer, 41, speaking at the Halle grass-court tournament on Wednesday, admitted however it was "hard to say" who was best player of all time.
"The whole matter is difficult to answer," said Federer. "I asked a friend, what is more difficult, winning Wimbledon at 17, like Boris Becker, or the French Open at 36 like Novak?" "I don't know. It's a great time to be a tennis fan but also a player," added the Swiss great who was guest of honor in Halle for 'Roger Federer Day'.
"It means a lot to me," Federer said of his return to Halle, where he won a record 10 singles titles.
"Of course I'm overjoyed. I was able to shape this tournament myself with so many victories. It feels like a home away from home."
Federer spent over an hour signing autographs and posing for selfies on centre court in the sun but said he did not miss being in the heat of the action.
"Of course, you want to experience that again. But as long as you know your body cannot do it at this level, you don't feel the need to be out on the court," he said.

