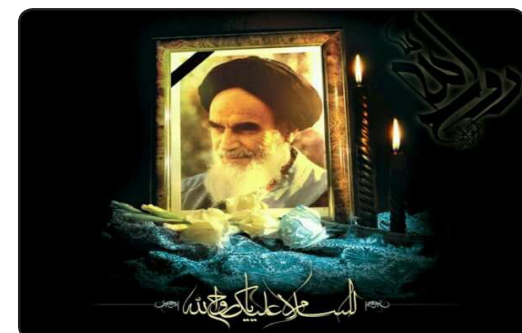


IAEA: Iran Resolved Two Outstanding Inquiries
 VIENNA (Dispatches) – A report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Wednesday Iran has resolved two outstanding inquiries of the Vienna-based UN atomic agency. The confidential quarterly report, which was seen by the AP, said that IAEA inspectors no longer had questions on uranium particles found to be enriched to 83.7 percent at the country's underground Fordow facility. "The agency informed Iran that, following its evaluation of the data, the agency had assessed that the information provided was not inconsistent with Iran's explanation...and that the agency had no further questions on this matter at this stage," the report said.

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Viewpoint
South America Reasserting Economic & Political Independence

Iran Ready to Export Defense Products to Friendly Countries

Esmailnejhad Breaks 100 Meters Iran Women Record

EU Accused of 'Staggering Neglect' After Just 271 Afghans Resettled

Why is West Worried by Iran-Russia Ties?

Iran's burgeoning relationship with Russia is the target of intense scrutiny and incendiary criticism by the West, but observers say the real aim is to keep the Islamic Republic from the big Russian market. Historically tinged by an undercurrent of distrust and wariness, ties between Iran and Russia have metamorphosed into an alliance where the two countries are increasingly finding in each other lifelines for their sanctions-hit economies. The war in Ukraine and ensuing global sanctions on Moscow have prompted Russia to put aside its ambivalence about deepening relations and forging economic and trade partnership with Iran. This change of heart has unleashed an unprecedented drive to build up new trade networks through river and railway links. This month, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi oversaw, via video-link, the signing of a deal to finance and build an Iranian railway line as part of the international North-South Transport Corridor. The Rasht-Astara railway is seen as an important link in the corridor, intended to connect India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan and other countries via railways and sea - a route that Russia says can rival the Suez Canal as a major global trade route. Putin said the 162 km railway along the Caspian Sea coast would help to connect Russian ports on the Baltic Sea with Iranian ports in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. For the purpose, Iran and Russia are spending billions of dollars on a 3,000-kilometer passage that stretches from the eastern edge of Europe to the Indian Ocean, along rivers and railways linked by the Caspian Sea. At its northern end is the Sea of Azov which in Putin's words "has become an inland sea" for Russia. It is bracketed by the Crimean Peninsula and the mouth of the River Don. From there, river, sea and rail networks extend to Iranian hubs on the Caspian Sea and ultimately the Indian Ocean. Russia has reportedly finalized rules that would give ships from Iran the right of passage along inland waterways on the Volga and Don rivers. Last year, trade between Russia and Iran surged to more than \$5 billion. According to head of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sergey Katyrin, there's a "clear path" to reaching \$40 billion once a free-trade agreement is in place. Iran's Shana news agency said last July that the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and Russia's Gazprom had signed a "historic" deal worth \$40 billion for joint investment in oil and gas projects. Moscow and Tehran have also signed an MoU worth \$300 million for Iranian car exports to Russia and discussed sale of Iran-made tractors to the country. Russia's largest air carrier Aeroflot has sent one of its Airbus planes to Iran for repair. Iran has also signed a contract with Russia to supply it with 40 turbines to help its gas industry. The countries have never had a dearth of contracts in recent years, but the numerous agreements barely got off the drawing board in the past. In 2019, Iran and Russia signed a dozen cooperation agreements covering energy, railway, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and tourism. At the time, President Putin said Russia was ready to continue its oil investment in Iran to the tune of \$50 billion, but nothing concrete emerged from those pledges. Things seem to have changed, where the two countries have already reached a qualitatively different level in their relationship. The changing dynamics come against the backdrop of the West's failure to bring the U.S. back to compliance with a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and remove sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Russia's flourishing ties with Iran have hit a nerve with the West which has started to closely monitor and revile them, without explaining if the relationship with Russia is bad, why it had extensive business with the country before the war. Russia is the world's ninth largest economy, with annual imports of \$300 billion. Iran's economy has also very large capacities which can stake out a sizable share in the Russian market through exports. Russians import eight billion dollars in clothing and accessories a year. A share of this market can transform Iran's clothing industry. The same goes for Iran's construction, fisheries, sanitary, cement, steel and automotive industries. Meanwhile, Russia's capacities in grain and edible oil production are enormous. The country is the largest exporter of wheat. Iran, on the other hand, imports sunflower oil, wheat, corn, barley, and soybeans as well soybean meal for animal feed from abroad. Given the geographical proximity and maritime trade possibilities, the cost of sourcing such items from Russia is much lower than from as far-flung countries as Brazil. Hence, apart from the strategic discussion and changing dynamics and speaking only in commercial terms, Iran's benefit is in consolidating relations with Moscow, no matter how acerbic and vociferous the propaganda campaign is against it. We must understand that we can have mutual benefit that contributes to Iran's economy which is creeping under the most inhuman sanctions, and not fall for the negative propaganda of the West which is depriving Iranians of their right to international trade.

Courtesy: Press TV

Berdimuhamedov: I've Used Your Recommendations a Lot Leader: Iran, Turkmenistan are Relatives



Turkmenistan's chairman of the People's Council of the National Assembly Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, center, listens to Ayatollah Khamenei, with head of Iran's Expediency Council Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani also in attendance.

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei here Wednesday described Iran and Turkmenistan as "relatives" which share many cultural commonalities. "These cultural commonalities are an important basis for further expanding of relations in different sectors, especially in the fields of energy and roads," the Leader told Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Turkmenistan's chairman of the People's Council of the Na-

tional Assembly. The Leader touched on hundreds of famous scientists and personalities who lived between Atrak and Amu Darya rivers on the borders of the two countries, as well as the tomb of famous Turkmen poet Makhtoumgholi Faraghi in Iran, saying these cultural commonalities should not be underestimated. Ayatollah Khamenei appreciated the special attention of the head of the People's Council of the National Assembly of Turkmenistan to cultural and religious issues and his efforts to expand cultural centers and mosques. He said there are big capacities to expand cooperation, especially in the road sector and areas related to water, electricity and gas, and the Islamic Republic is ready to cooperate in these sectors. The Leader touched on Berdimuhamedov's request for the participation of Iranian experts in the construction of a highway along the Iran-Turkmenistan border to the Caspian Sea. "The Ministry of Roads of Iran has the ability to build this highway. Moreover, given the important position of land and rail communications in the global economy, we are determined to complete the International North-South Transport Corridor that can connect Turkmenistan and its surrounding countries to the Sea of Oman."

Leading Rating Agency Moody's: U.S., UK, Germany to Fall Into Recession

LONDON (Dispatches) -- Stubbornly high inflation and higher borrowing costs are poised to drive the economies of the UK, Germany and U.S. into recession, the leading rating agency Moody's has warned. In a downbeat forecast for growth across advanced G20 economies, it said a ramping up of interest rates by central banks on both sides of the Atlantic was expected to weigh on economic growth this year. "We expect very weak growth in key advanced economies in particular, including mild recessions in the U.S., UK and Germany, and stagnant economic activity in France and Italy," Moody's said in a report. It comes as the world's most influential central banks attempt to squeeze high inflation out of the system through the toughest round of rate increases in decades, amid concern over the potential for persistent pressure on living standards. Official estimates on Wednesday revealed a mixed picture across the eurozone, underscoring the challenge facing the European Central Bank, after French inflation eased to its lowest level in a year but Italy overshoot analyst expectations. France's annual inflation rate fell by more than expected to 6% in May, down from 6.9% in April. However, inflation fell by significantly less than anticipated in Italy to stand at 8.1% in May, down from 8.7% a month earlier. German inflation fell by more

than expected to 6.3%, down from 7.6% a month earlier. The figures followed a bigger-than-expected decline in Spain, with a fall in inflation to 2.9%, raising hopes that price pressures across the eurozone could cool rapidly this year. Official estimates for the 20-country bloc as a whole are due on Thursday. Christine Lagarde, president of the ECB, warned this month that the eurozone's central bank still had "more ground to cover" on

UAE Pulls Out of U.S.-Led Maritime Coalition

ABU DHABI (Dispatches) -- The United Arab Emirates has withdrawn from a United States-led maritime coalition after an extensive evaluation of its security needs, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs says. "As a result of our ongoing evaluation of effective security cooperation with all partners, two months ago, the UAE withdrew its participation in the Combined Maritime Forces," the ministry said on Wednesday in a statement quoted by state news agency WAM. The UAE also said it was committed to dialogue and diplomatic engagement to advance regional security and stability as well as ensuring navigation safety near its shores in accordance with international law. The decision marks a pivotal moment in the region's geopolitical landscape, altering the dynamics of international cooperation in maritime security. The 34-nation task force headquartered at the U.S. naval base in Bahrain was formed to purportedly counter terrorism and piracy in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf areas. The UAE with its strategic position along vital maritime trade routes had been an active participant in the U.S.-led coalition.

Mossad Agent Killed in Mysterious Accident in Italy

ROME (Dispatches) -- A recently retired Mossad agent has died along with two Italian spies in a mysterious incident on Lake Maggiore in which a boat carrying dozens of intelligence officers capsized. A total of four people died after the tourist boat overturned and sank on Sunday evening on Italy's Lake Maggiore. Italian officials were quick to state that it was a weather-related accident, with no foul play suspected. They, however, cited also another factor: overcrowding as the vessel, named the Gooduria, was said to be carrying eight more people than its 15-person limit at the time of the incident. Israeli media reports said that 18 of the 20 survivors were serving or former members of the intelligence services. Some in the group of serving and former spies supposedly became friends after encountering each other in their line of work and had rented the boat to celebrate a birthday. The boat hire

Holiday Notice
 We would like to offer our condolences on the anniversary of the passing of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini. Our next issue will be published on Tuesday, June 6.