

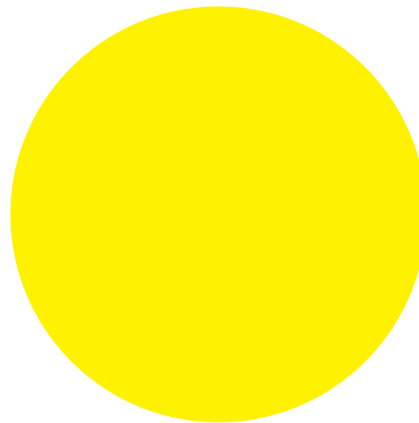


EXCLUSIVE

Former Iranian ambassador to Türkiye: Erdogan is a better option for Iran, region **3** >



Largest Sassanid palace gloriously restored **8** >



# Iran Daily

62607571900044 irandaily.ir newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7275 • Tuesday, April 25, 2023 • Ordibehesht 5, 1401 • Shawwal 4, 1444 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

## Iran sanctions UK, EU individuals, entities for supporting terrorism **2** >



People evacuated from Sudan arrive at a military airport in Amman on April 24, 2023. Foreign countries rushed to evacuate their nationals from Sudan as deadly fighting raged into a second week between forces loyal to two rival generals.

● KHALIL MAZRAAWI/AFP

### Iran's de-escalation triangle



Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh International affairs expert

EXCLUSIVE

The old rivalry between the United States and China has now spread to the Middle East. The Bloomberg news agency even wrote, "The Middle East's emergence as a key front in the new Cold War between the US and China has become even clearer." But using the concept of the Cold War expired about 30 years ago. What we are witnessing now in the Middle East between the US and China is a hegemonic competition of sorts. In other words, it is a competition to become the region's hegemon with new qualities.

During the Cold War, there was a definite division between two blocs, led by the United States and the Soviet Union. Most other countries of the world fell neatly into one of the two blocs and set hard boundaries concerning how close they can get to the other bloc. Now, although there is fierce competition between China and the US, other countries do not have such hard boundaries for getting close to either one of the two global powers. For instance, Saudi Arabia, which is defined within the strategic territory of the United States, has concurrently established good relations with China. The Saudis have even recently concluded large contracts with the Chinese.

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### Many countries keen on buying Iranian products: Defense Ministry

National Desk

The head of the Iran Aviation Industries Organization said the country has reached a level of capability in manufacturing military equipment such that many countries are interested in purchasing Iranian products, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Brigadier General Afshin Khajeh Fard said on Monday that many countries meet their military needs by purchasing the most advanced military equipment, but Iran has been facing restrictions in buying equipment due to illegal sanctions imposed by Western countries on Iran over its nuclear activities. Khajeh Fard stressed that the restrictions have forced Iran's Armed Forces to overhaul and reconstruct its military equipment damaged during the Iran-Iraq war, and produce



● IRNA

indigenous equipment including helicopters and fighter jets. Khajeh Fard also hailed achievements made in the field of producing UAVs and manned drones, with fixed and movable wings. He highlighted the importance of supplying the country's Armed Forces with homegrown military equipment. Recently, Iran's Army received more than 200 long-range strategic sea-based and vertical launch drones, which have been designed and manufactured by the country's Defense Ministry, in cooperation with the Army.

## European states importing Iranian oil despite US sanctions

Three European Union (EU) countries imported oil from Iran in 2022 despite US sanctions that impose penalties on governments and entities involved in energy trade with Iran. Figures by EU's statistics agency Eurostat covered in a Sunday report by the IRNA news agency showed that the bloc's imports of

crude oil from Iran had reached 4,181 metric tons (mt) last year. EU importers of Iranian oil shipments were Romania, Poland and Bulgaria, according to the Eurostat figures which indicated that over 4,000 mt of the shipments ended up in Romania. The figures showed that

Bulgaria was the latest EU country to start oil imports from Iran since 2018 when the United States imposed its sanctions on Tehran. Bulgaria took delivery of a 168 mt of oil from Iran in December and continued imports in January this year by receiving an 83-mt shipment. The IRNA said in its report

that EU's imports of Iranian oil, although very small in amount, is a sign that European countries tend to ignore the US sanctions on Iran amid a crunch in global energy markets that has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. The report said the fact that an EU agency has mentioned Iranian oil im-

ports in its official figures shows that the bloc wants to signal its dissatisfaction with US policy of keeping sanctions on Iran. Washington imposed sanctions on Iran in early 2018 after a former US administration decided to unilaterally withdraw from an international deal on Iran's nuclear program.



Reds boss Golmohammadi hails 'proper attitude' in derby triumph **5** >



Iran's petrochemical sector gets \$2.5b foreign investment offer **6** >



Recent coins of Iran: Not so special, yet collectible **7** >

EXCLUSIVE

## World military spending reaches all-time high of \$2.24 trillion

Global military spending rose to a record last year, spurred by a policy U-turn in Europe where governments boosted capabilities by the most since the end of the Cold War in the wake of Russia's military operation in Ukraine. Defense expenditure increased by 3.7% in real terms to reach a record high of \$2.24 trillion in 2022, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI, said

on Monday. About half the annual increase was due to Ukraine's ballooning military budget, according to data for the eastern European country that excludes foreign aid. Arms budgets are expanding across Europe in response to Russia's operation at the same time as tensions in East Asia are prompting larger outlays in that part of the world. In another sign of how the world is sliding back into a situation

last seen during the Cold War, military expenditure in central and western European countries exceeded the 1989 level for the first time. Finland and Sweden were among the countries that increased such spending the most. Finland's purchase of F-35 fighter jets contributed to a 36% jump in Russia's neighbor that joined the NATO defense bloc this month as its 31st member. Sweden is still

awaiting entry into the alliance. Defense budgets of existing NATO members, meanwhile, increased by 0.9% from 2021, as outlays declined in countries including Italy, Turkey and Greece. In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia increased its expenditure by an estimated 16% to become the fifth largest spender globally. Qatar, which has expanded its armed forces and is upgrading its arms inventories, boosted outlays



by 27%. The U.S. remains the largest spender in the world by a large margin, as its military budget is bigger than

those of all other countries that make the top-10 list of the biggest weapons' buyers combined, according to SIPRI's estimate.