

**Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus in Iran Increased to 81,063 With 122 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ali Asghar Mounesan Arrived in Moscow on Sunday to Sign a Group Visa Waiver Agreement Between Iran and Russia Aiming at Developing Tourism**

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## Tehran Slams Unprofessional Behaviors Regarding Ukrainian Plane

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A senior Iranian diplomat has blasted the unprofessional behavior of certain countries in dealing with the 2020 Ukrainian plane crash near Tehran, expressing the Islamic Republic's readiness for negotiation and cooperation on the matter.

Manoucher Moradi, the Iranian Ambassador to Kiev, made the remarks in a series of tweets on Friday, saying that the third round of talks between Ukrainian and Iranian deputy foreign ministers came to an end in a constructive and professional manner after two days of intense negotiations on the crash of the Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752.

"A wide range of issues were covered, including criminal proceedings and technical issues, including aviation, flight safety, and Iran's final report," Moradi wrote.

The senior Iranian diplomat said the Ukrainian side underlined the jurisdiction of the Iranian courts to hear the case after Tehran had reported on the criminal proceedings and the measures taken to try individuals involved in the incident.

Moradi said in a tweet that the Iranian delegation had presented a report on technical issues and its measures to ensure the country's flights, and announced that after the accident, Tehran had made the necessary arrangements to ensure that similar accidents would not occur.

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## Lukoil Says Ready To Return to Iran

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian private-sector oil firm Lukoil said it is ready to return to Iran if and when sanctions restricting foreign investment in the country are lifted.

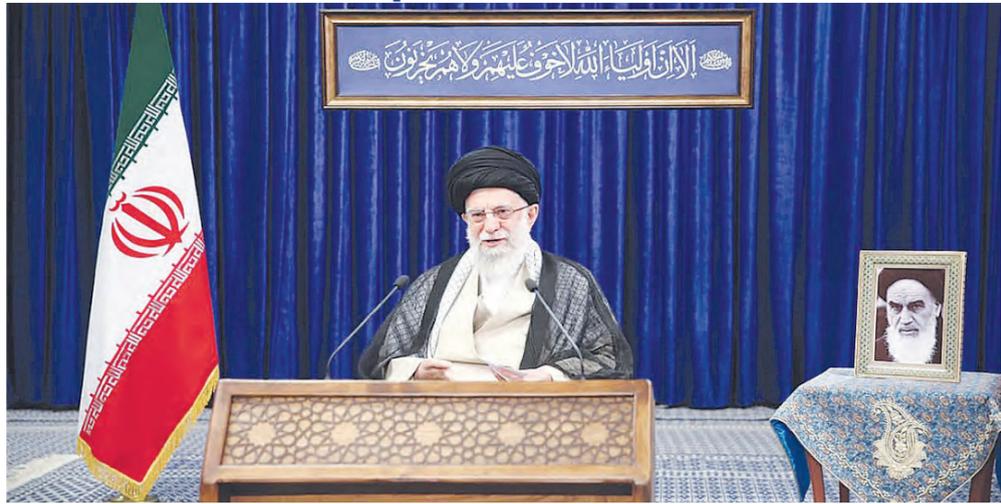
Before the U.S. reimposed sanctions on Tehran in 2018, nearly all of Russia's leading oil companies were actively looking to invest in Iran and had signed deals to study field developments. Lukoil had been working on a development plan for the 15.1bn bl Mansouri field in western Iran and had also hoped to secure a license for the 12.2b bl Ab Teymour field.

"We have advanced considerably," Lukoil chief executive Vagit Alekperov said today on the sidelines of the St Petersburg Economic Forum. "We have all the documents ready ... if restrictions are lifted, we will be glad to resume talks and implementation of the project."

Alekperov did not say which project, although Lukoil has since clarified that he was referring to the Mansouri field. The terms that Tehran is offering to foreign investors suit Lukoil, Alekperov said, adding that the firm is not looking at any other projects in Iran.

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# Leader Calls on Nation To Participate in Election



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has called on all Iranians to not only participate in the upcoming presidential election but also encourage others to do so, saying the key to solving the country's problems is "making the right choice" at the ballot box.

Ayatollah Khamenei delivered a live televised speech to the nation on Friday (June 4) marking the anniversary of the passing away of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic.

The Leader said Imam Khomeini viewed elections as a "manifestation of people's will" and participation in elections as "a religious duty."

Ayatollah Khamenei warned against attempts by enemies, as well as certain sides at home, to frustrate people and lower the turnout in the presidential election, which is slotted for June 18.

It is said that some are doubtful about going to the ballot box out of dissatisfaction with the country's economic hardships and livelihood problems, while others say they voted with enthusiasm in earlier elections, but they later grew frustrated after being failed by those whom they voted for, Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"That reasoning is not right" and should not dissuade people from voting, said the Leader, adding that any managerial shortcomings and inefficiencies could be made up for "through making the right and good choice."

"What would be the solution if there is any weakness in [the country's] management? Standing aside? Or choosing [instead] a popular and Islamic management in the true sense of the word?" the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei further advised voters not to trust mere words and pledges on the part of the presidential candidates, saying, "It is action that counts."

"The individual's previous record should be examined to see [if that person] had taken any action that would support his pledge [today]," the Leader said.

The Leader called on all Iranians, from all walks of life, to not just go to the ballot box but also encourage others to do the same.

Ayatollah Khamenei also had a few words with the seven candidates gearing up to contest the forthcoming presidential race.

First, said the Leader, the candidates should avoid making pledges that they are not sure they can fulfill if they win the election, warning that such pledges "would be to the detriment of the country."

Second, the Leader said, the candidates should be honest in their slogans and refrain from the ones that they don't believe in.

Third, the candidates should be determined to commit themselves to establishing social justice, fighting corruption, and boosting domestic production, if they win, Ayatollah Khamenei added.

On the Vienna talks, Ayatollah Khamenei also said that Tehran wanted action and not promises from six world powers for the revival of their 2015 nuclear deal.

"I have told our negotiators that actions, not promises (by the six powers), are needed for the restoration of the nuclear deal," Khamenei said in a televised speech most notable for his comments about the upcoming controversial presidential poll.

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## 40% Increase in Iran Exports Due to Cooperation With Eurasia

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Emery Minister Reza Ardakanian said Iran's exports has increased by 40% during the 18 months of temporary activity of the Eurasian economic agreement.

Outlining results of his visit to Saint Petersburg, Ardakanian said that during this trip, a meeting was held with the secretary general of the Eurasian Economic Union in which the union's minister of trade was also present. He continued that there were detailed negotiations on the permanence of agreement between Iran and the union.

Ardakanian said it is hoped that most of the talks would take place in the final weeks of the 12th government, because the finalization time is legally limited.

Expressing that during about 18 months of the temporary performance of this agreement, there was about 40% increase in exportation, the minister added: There was a decrease of about 13% in imports from EU member states.

Ardakanian pointed out that generally general, trade exchanges have grown significantly compared to the same period. He expressed hope that we will experience the development of our country's economic relations with the member countries of the union. The minister of energy said: Considering the negotiations with Russian officials to use the resources that are underway in this field, the officials of this company expressed their interest in using Iran's facilities, including the free zone in the north of Iran.

Ardakanian who is the chairman of the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation between Iran and Russia headed a delegation to Russia on Tuesday evening to attend the 24th Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum.

## ViewPoint First Debate, Only Preemptive Attacks

On Saturday and in the first live TV debate, the candidates in Iran's 2021 presidential election appeared to face off, clashing over policy — and credentials — and offering roughly two divergent visions on how the country should be run.

The debate, the first of three and intended to focus on the economy, was an opportunity where authorities had ensured that everything — from questions to seating arrangements — was neutral toward all candidates.

But the preparations and the staging aside, it was a debate mainly between two political schools of thought, Reformism and Principlism, even though seven candidates are running. But in fact it was the best time for low-profile candidates to criticize the current President Hassan Rouhani's government or put pressure on Hojatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raesi who is the favorite to win the elections. And almost all of the candidates were already charged-up, staging preemptive attacks on the perceived rival in anticipation of potentially powerful offensives.

That was exemplified most clearly in the inclination of most, though not all, of the candidates to speak as they saw fit rather than to respond directly to the questions put forth to them by the moderator.

Principlist candidate Mohsen Rezaei, became the first to attack the President Rouhani administration — the subject of frequent criticism as the debate progressed — by calling his 2013 campaign symbol of a key "worthless." And the former Central Bank Governor Nasser Hemmati delivered fiery opening remarks by saying that "a majority" of the Iranian society, including women, had no representation among the candidates, an explicit appraisal of the disqualification of some Reformist figures by Iran's Constitutional Council from running in the election.

Alireza Zakani, a relatively lower-profile Principlist, took Hemmati's critiques the hardest. "Mr. Hemmati, you are not running against five people, you are running against 85 million people," he said, in an attempted rebuttal of Hemmati's complaint that the five Principlist candidates are ganging up against him. And the duo continued to clash until the end of the debate.

Iranian presidential candidates have been focusing on the economy so far in their campaigns. Let's see what they have said.

None of the candidates spared the Rouhani administration, even Hemmati, who was the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) under Rouhani until days ago and who took much heat for that perceived affiliation with the president. Rezaei made sure that he identified Hemmati as "Mr. Rouhani's representative," and Zakani, replying to an accusation that he was running merely to "back up" Ebrahim Raesi, the highest-profile Principlist candidate and the chief of Iran's Judiciary, said it was actually Hemmati who was "covering the past eight years."

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## Pakistan to Fence Iran Border

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid before heading to his two-day visit to Waziristan stated in a video message on Friday that the government would fence its border along Iran.

He said the fencing on the western border would be completed by the end of the year to stem the incidents of terrorism and infiltration, reported The Frontier Post.

Rashid said incidents of terrorism were rising in Islamabad. Last night, two police officials were killed, he said adding that in his government tenure, as many as nine policemen were killed. After relaying his video message, the Interior Minister went on his Waziristan visit. He would participate in the passing out parade of Scout Training Academy, Mir Ali.

The minister would also inaugurate a passport office in Miran Shah. He will hold meetings with the officials of Frontier Corps and civil administration, reported The Frontier Post. The long and insecure border between the two countries has long been notorious for the alleged cross-border movement of terrorists. Human traffickers have also been using these unfrequented routes for human trafficking to European countries via Iran and Turkey.

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## Rouhani Highlights Ample Opportunities For Iran-Italy Cooperation

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – President Hassan Rouhani hailed the age-old political relations and friendship with Italy as a good basis for developing cooperation between the two states in various fields.

In a Thursday message to his Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella, the Iranian president congratulated Italy on its National Day and Republic Day, which is celebrated on June 2.

Commemorating the 160th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between Iran and Italy, Rouhani said the age-old political relations, rich cultures, and historic friendship between the two countries have formed a good basis for the expansion of cooperation to serve their mutual interests.

## U.S., P4+1 Urged to Take Tough Decisions On Remaining Issues

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top nuclear negotiator says certain important issues still remain to be hammered out by Tehran and its partners in the 2015 nuclear deal before they can reach an agreement on a potential revival of the accord, stressing that the onus is now on the US and the other co-signatories to make "difficult decisions" for that to happen.

"All in all, we made good progress, but there are issues left [unresolved], without which an agreement couldn't be reached, and which have yet to be decided," Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told reporters at the end of the fifth round of talks between Iran and P4+1 group of countries on revitalizing the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"It is not us but...the signatories to the JCPOA and the United States that must... take their own difficult decisions and adapt themselves to the positions of the Islamic Republic," Araqchi said. "If this happens, we can naturally reach an agreement. Otherwise, we will either have no agreement or hold more consultations."

Following 10 days of intensive talks, the negotiating delegations concluded that they needed to return to their capitals once again for almost week-long consultations, the Iranian diplomat said, adding that this round of negotiations was not halted but was just adjourned in order to reach better conclusions about the remaining unsolved issues.

"Nothing can be predicted in diplomatic negotiations by 100 percent. Rationally, the



next round of talks could be the final one," he said.

He added that the five parties to the JCPOA – Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China – and the United States had to make their "difficult decisions" and adapt their positions to those of Iran.

"It is important that we have held several discussions about the main points of difference. There are solutions to each of them, which should be discussed and the best one should be selected," Araqchi said.

He once again insisted on the country's "definitive positions" which had not been changed and stressed the importance of adopting strategies for the US return to the JCPOA and the fulfillment of its obligations as per the deal as well as Iran's assumption of commitments after verifying Washington's moves "in a way agreed upon by the two sides and in a way that it would serve our interests."

He said the negotiating teams have completed drafting texts pertaining to different parts of the talks and are making their stances closer "almost in most of the texts... but there are some key issues, which the [two] sides have yet to decide."

## Raeisi Sets Mighty Big Goal of Ending Corruption in Iran



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's presidential candidate and current Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeisi says he will put an end to corruption and rent in the country, distinguishing his economic and political agenda in by far more unforgettable terms than his rivals.

Speaking live on state TV, Raeisi, who has earned a reputation as a crusader against corruption in his capacity as chief justice, said prosecution at the Judiciary is the last resort.

"The Judiciary entering the fray is a last resort; and if the country's laws are reformed, the judicial apparatus would not need to enter [at all]. Merely proceeding with legal cases and confronting wrongdoers will not eradicate corruption; the mechanisms need to be set right," Raeisi said.

"Rent and corruption aggravate people, and we will end rent and corruption in the country," he said.

Iran ranks 149th on the Berlin-based Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which ranks countries "by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys." New Zealand ranks 1st, and Somalia appears at the bottom, ranking 179th.

Raeisi said state contracts need to be made transparent to everyone. "Everywhere in the world, only security matters are confidential. All other matters need to be made known to the people."

Iran is holding its 13th presidential election on June 18. Raeisi is running against six other candidates, including four fellow-Principlists. All of the candidates have so far been focusing on the economy, battered by sanctions and mismanagement in recent years. And nearly all of them have been attacking the economic policies of the President Hassan Rouhani administration. A recent governor of Iran's Central Bank, Nasser Hemmati, is also running.

## U.S. Urged to Stop Trying to Use Illegal Economic War

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign minister says he reminded his British counterpart during a phone conversation that the United States must stop trying to use its illegal economic war against Iran as "leverage" in the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital with the objective of reanimating the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement.

"Agreed in phone call with FM @DominicRaab on need to resume full compliance with the JCPOA," Zarif tweeted on Friday evening. Zarif said that he "underlined that US must return fully to its obligations & cease trying to use unlawful economic war against Iran as negotiating 'leverage'."

Underlined that U.S. must return fully to its obligations & cease trying to use unlawful economic war against Iran as negotiating "leverage". Days earlier, Iran and the remaining parties to the deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), agreed to pause the Vienna talks for the fifth time and return to their capitals for further consultations over unresolved points of contention.

The negotiations, which began early in April, have been described as constructive and positive, but have not led to a final conclusion on how to restore the JCPOA and which sanctions will be removed in order for Iran to reverse the expansion of its nuclear activities.

## Iran, Russia to Sign Visa Waiver for Group Tours Soon

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali said that during an upcoming visit of Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ali Asghar Mounesan to Moscow, will sign visa waiver for group tours.

Jalali said on Saturday that Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ali Asghar Mounesan will visit Moscow on Sunday - tomorrow - to sign visa waiver for groups between Iran and Russia.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Oct 16, 2020, that visa waiver for Iranian tourist groups will take effect in the near future.

Speaking at a weekly press conference, Maria Zakharova in response to IRNA reporter said that Iran and Russia have signed agreement on visa waiver for tourist groups on March 27, 2017.



"Visa waiver for tourist groups will take effect after Russian tourist agency determine an Iranian partner to regulate carrying out the agreement," she said, noting that the agreement was signed by the Iranian and Russian foreign ministers during the visit of Mohammad Javad Zarif to Moscow on March 27, 2017.

She said that as per the agreement, tourist groups, including five to 50 people are allowed to visit Russia for 15 days.

Last February, Iran's tourism ministry announced that it would follow up the agreement at the [27th edition] Moscow International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (MITT), which was held from March 17 to 19.

Based on the 2017 agreement four groups of 5 to 50 people heading to [easternmost parts of] Russia from Iran or vice versa are granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days.

## Iran Most Powerful Player in Region

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps named Iran as the most powerful player in the West Asian region.

Thirty-two years after the demise of the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini, the Revolution and the Islamic system has become the strongest country and player in the region by defeating numerous conspiracies waged by the Global Arrogance and regional reactionary regimes and going through many difficulties, the IRGC said in a statement published on Friday on the occasion of the 32nd demise anniversary of Imam Khomeini.

Referring to the fundamental role of the people in the evolutionary process of the Islamic Revolution, IRGC notes that undoubtedly, today's security and deterrent authority of the country is owed to the resistance and self-sacrifice of the Iranian nation Naming Vilayat-e Faqih as the most important basis for victories of the Iranian people and Resistance Front in different areas, especially in the fight against terrorism and oppressive sanctions, the statement added that the Islamic nation and state has managed to turn every threat into an opportunity and grow stronger.

The epic participation of people in the upcoming presidential election will send the message of unity and signal public determination to strengthen the country and revive the Islamic civilization, concludes the statement.

## Iran's Regional Role Important for Afghan Peace

TEHRAN (MNA) – Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar said that key role of Islamic Republic of Iran in strengthening regional consensus is important for peace in Afghanistan.

Speaking in his meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Kabul Bahador Aminian on Sat., Afghan foreign minister reiterated the important role of Iran in strengthening regional consensus for spread of peace in Afghanistan.

During the talks, Atmar pointed to the key and important status of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Afghanistan's foreign policy and termed the key role of Iran in fortification of regional consensus for peace in Afghanistan.

Iranian envoy to Kabul, for his turn, pointed to the longstanding historical and cultural relations between Afghanistan and Iran, and stressed the need for continued support and cooperation of Iran with Afghanistan in various fields especially peace talks that will lead to lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Iranian envoy to Kabul and Afghan foreign minister also discussed strengthening of bilateral and multilateral relations in the fields of trade, investment, and infrastructure within the framework of existing mechanisms, holding a joint economic commission and finalizing a comprehensive document of bilateral cooperation.

## Iran to Get Back Its UN Voting Right By Paying Dues Via S. Korean Banks

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the Office of Foreign Assets Control had granted a license for Iran to transfer the owed money to the United Nations from a bank in South Korea.



Iran and four other countries were disqualified from voting in the General Assembly because they haven't paid dues for two years, Trend reports citing IRNA.

"This payment will be made soon," Mr. Khatibzadeh said. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif expressed outrage in a Twitter posting about the loss of voting rights.

"This decision is fundamentally flawed, entirely unacceptable and completely unjustified," Zarif added.

"It is astonishingly absurd that Iranian people, who have been forcibly blocked from transferring their own money and resources to buy food and medicine — let alone pay U.N. contributions arrears — by a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, are now being punished for not being allowed to pay budget arrears by the secretariat of the same Organization," he noted.

## Envoy Raps U.S. Interference In Iran, China's Affairs

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Iranian ambassador to Beijing denounced the US government's bullying policies and its interference in the internal affairs of independent states such as Iran and China.



Addressing a conference at the Iranian Embassy in Beijing, held on Saturday in commemoration of late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini, Mohammad Keshavarzadeh lashed out at the U.S. government for its bullying policies towards the countries that seek to make progress independently.

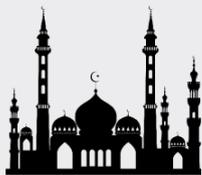
Pointing to the U.S.' obstructive activities against Iran's peaceful nuclear program or its opposition to China's access to the 5G network technology, the ambassador said the US is under the illusion that it is the superior country, while its wealth and development have been achieved by plundering the other countries.

Paying tribute to Imam Khomeini for leading the Islamic Revolution to victory with the slogan of "independence, freedom and Islamic Republic", the envoy said Iran respects the independence and sovereignty of the other states and would never interfere in the domestic affairs of others.

"Independence is among the basic values for Iran and China. China has never accepted interference from outsiders in its internal affairs and dismisses such hegemony," Keshavarzadeh noted.

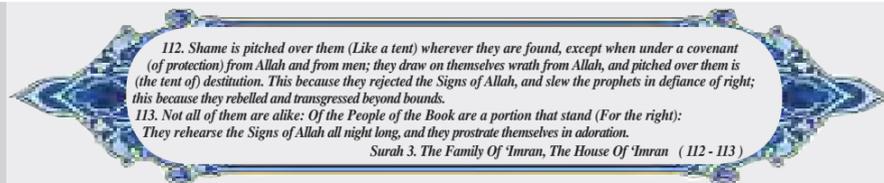
The envoy finally noted that the U.S.' policy of interference in the domestic affairs of the independent states has not ended after more than three decades since the passing away of Imam Khomeini, stressing that Washington's interference in the issues relating to Hong Kong and Xinjiang has nothing to do with sympathy.

"The only thing that matters to the US is its own interests," the envoy underlined.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:03
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:39
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:48



## Gov't Rolls Out Drainage Systems in 20,000 Hectares of Farms

**TEHRAN (PressTV) – President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated new drainage systems in 20,000 hectares of more lands in northern Iran as his administration moves ahead with restoration and revival schemes for farms across the country.**

The rollout of drainage systems on Thursday came during a virtual conference call by Rouhani from his office in Tehran where he ordered the launch of over 75 trillion rials (over \$312 million) in agricultural projects in four Iranian provinces.

Rouhani hailed his administration's records in the agriculture sector, saying drainage systems built across Iran over the past eight years had helped revive some 600,000 hectares of lands.

"We hope we could finish drainage works in 30,000 hectares of more lands until the end of the Administration's time," said the president as he plans to leave office in mid-August at the end of his two four-year terms.

A report on the website of the Iranian Presidency said farming and food projects



opened on Thursday would create nearly 16,000 permanent jobs in the country.

The projects included those rolled out by Iran's fishery authority to increase sea food output in southern Iran, as well as the launch of 1,217 hectares of greenhouses in northern and western provinces.

Rouhani said the area dedicated to greenhouse farming in Iran had nearly tripled to 23,000 hectares during his time in office.

He also defended his government's records in fishery activity, saying output in the sector had increased by 38% compared to 2013 to 1.222 million metric tons for the year to March this year.

Iran's agriculture sector has seen annual growth rates of above 5% since the government introduced measures in 2018 to support more exports from the sector.

The measures have been meant to create more jobs and to diversify the Iranian economy away from crude revenues.

## Iran Trade With Vietnam Can Hit \$2b

**TEHRAN (MNA) –** Chairman of Iran-Vietnam Joint Chamber of Commerce said that if Iran's nuclear deal, JCPOA, is revived, Iran's volume of trade with Vietnam will reach \$2 billion.



Mostafa Mousavi said that Iran's exports volume to Vietnam was at its pinnacle in 2016 and 2017 but the bilateral trade experienced downward trajectory in 2018 following the U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA.

He went on to say that outbreak of coronavirus, COVID-19, also dropped Iran's volume of trade with Vietnam greatly, he added.

Currently, Iran's trade with Vietnam still continues but it (Vietnam) has reduced its trade exchange with Iran due to having Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with other countries in the world, Mousavi highlighted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and stated that if JCPOA is revived, trade and business ties between Iran and other countries would be facilitated in a way that revival of JCPOA can increase bilateral trade volume exchange between Iran and Vietnam form \$700 million to \$2 billion at large.

According to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), totally, 145,700,000 tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$73 billion were imported and exported from origins of the country last year (from March 21, 2020 to March 20, 2021).

## Iraq to Open Large Trade Center With Iran

**BASRA (IP) -** The Iraqi minister of transport says he will soon go to the Shalamcheh border crossing to open a "large trade center" between Iran and Iraq.

Hussein Bandar al-Shibli left for Basra Province in southern Iraq on Saturday with a technical and expert delegation of transport managers. He will take the Shalamcheh route to open a major trade center with Iran.

He will also visit the ground transportation terminal, including a number of trucks, fuel depots for drivers, repair shops, and more.

"Trade between Iran and Iraq is extensive, and we expect it to reach more than 21 billion a year," Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kazemi said in a recent interview on Iran-Iraq economic relations.

Shalamcheh border crossing, 15 km from Khorramshahr and 20 km from Iraq's Basra, is the most important border crossing in Khuzestan Province for commercial exchanges and Arbaeen pilgrimage.

## Tehran, Muscat Confer on Boosting Transportation Ties

**MUSCAT (IP) -** The Iranian ambassador to Muscat spoke with the Omani Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology about transit corridors.

Ali Najafi, Iran's ambassador to Oman, met with Saeed bin Hamoud bin Saeed al Maawali, the Omani Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to develop cooperation between the two countries in the field of transport, including maritime transport and ports, as well as transit corridors.

Prior to the meeting, Najafi had met with other Omani officials to discuss the development of political, judicial, defensive, security, economic and cultural cooperation.

## Gov't Lifts Cap on Carrying Foreign Cash

**TEHRAN (PressTV) -** The top economic decision and policy making authority in Iran has dismantled restrictions imposed in June last year on carrying foreign cash while it exempts raw gold, silver and platinum from any form of import duties.

A Wednesday report by the IRIB News cited a decision adopted by Iran's Supreme Council of Economic Coordination (SCEC) earlier in the day which said that carrying foreign currencies into Iran would be free of any caps and limits.

"Carrying of foreign currencies in the form of banknotes into the country would be authorized for legal and real entities without maximum limits," the report quoted as saying a section of the decision announced by the Council.

It said, however, that the transfers should comply with laws and regulations adopted by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and consistent with Iran's laws on fighting money laundering.

## Moscow Ready to Participate in Completing Iran's Part of North-South Corridor

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** The CEO of the Russian Export Center announced Russian companies' readiness to participate in the construction of the railway of Iran's part of the North-South Transport Corridor.

Veronika Nikishina stated in a working meeting on Friday that the Russian Export Center and the Eurasian Economic Union were ready to provide services to Russian companies to implement a part of the North-South Corridor project in Iran.

She said the Russian Export Center was ready to provide services to Russian companies to supply equipment, including switches, railways, and other domestic equipment needed to implement the Iranian railway project.

"The infrastructure of the Eurasian Economic Union is currently not fully implemented to take advantage of trade benefits, facilities, and privileges between the member countries of the union," she noted.

Meanwhile Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian was in Moscow hailed cooperation with RusHydro with regard to renewable energies on the condition of Russian financing.

Speaking in a meeting with Managing Director of 'RusHydro' Victor Khmarin, Ardakanian welcomed investment and implementation of joint projects in Geo Thermal field and renewable energies on the condition of Russian financing.

Both sides also discussed grounds for cooperation in this regard.

He also invited Khmarin to visit Iran aiming to create a joint working group in the presence of Iran Water and Power Resources Development Company.

Ardakanian was heading a delegation in Moscow to participate at the 24th Saint Petersburg International Economic Conference.

Ardakanian's visit comes in response to an invitation made by an advisor of the Russian president.

## Iran Has 20-40% Annual Growth Capacity in Foreign Trade

**TEHRAN (IRNA) -** Chairman of Exports Commission of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture Jamshid Nafar said that Iran has the capacity for a 20 to 40 percent growth per year to trade with world countries.

Nafar said that more accurate and logical policies will correct some of the current wrong trade figures with regards to Iran's high export capacity.

He added that Iran's trade and business activities can be improved gradually.

The official added that COVID-19 pandemic in Iran made serious problems for trade and business activities, and businessmen could not export their products to other countries due to the pandemic and also because most border crossings were closed after the coronavirus global pandemic.

Chairman of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization Hamid Zadbom on Apr 19, 2021 said that the country plans for a 21-percent increase in foreign trade in the current

Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2021, to March 20, 2022).

Zadbom in his remarks added that there are two scenarios for the current year, including an optimistic outlook with a successful negotiation on the 2015 nuclear deal and the lifting of sanctions, which will pave the ground for new avenues for foreign trade, as well as a pessimistic foresight that will be the continuation of last year's economic situation with the persistence of coronavirus pandemic and the extension of the pressure of sanctions, which will affect foreign trade negatively.

He noted that based on various studies, COVID-19 and vaccination will have draconian effects on economic growth.

Pointing to the impact of the US sanctions on Iran's trade exchanges, he underlined that the production line in the Islamic country needs the import of certain raw materials to help flourish export of produced materials; thus, the sanctions are the main bump in the way of trade activities.

## Iran Presidential Office Discusses FATF Related Bills

**IRANNNEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN -** The head of Iran's presidential office said that the government made every effort to pass FATF-related bills.

Referring to presidential candidates' claims that the government did not take the necessary efforts to ratify FATF-related bills, Mahmoud Vaezi said that the government made every effort to pass these bills.

"Seven cabinet members attended the Expediency Council meetings to answer the Council's questions," he said.

"The Vice-President for Legal Affairs, the minister of economic affairs, the central bank governor, and the foreign minister were presented at these meetings," he said. "If the issue was not important to the government, the cabinet members would not attend the Expediency Council's meetings and would not answer their questions in person or writing."

"Cabinet members attended meetings to facilitate the passage of FATF-related bills," Vaezi added.

He went on to note that the Iranian government was willing to join FATF conventions, but someone tied the bills to sanctions and now they are tying the sanctions to the FATF.

In May, as a result of its mutual evaluation reports, the FATF keeps a blacklist of "high-risk jurisdictions" — which currently includes only North Korea and Iran — and a grey list of "jurisdictions under increased monitoring," which includes 19 countries and territories.

The majority of the members of the Expediency Council opposed joining the UN's anti-money laundering conventions.

## Italian Embassy Hosts 3rd Episode of Video Series on Fine Arts



**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

**TEHRAN -** The residence of the Italian Ambassador in Tehran, Giuseppe Perrone, hosted on June 3 the screening of the third episode of the video-series "From Tehran to Rome. A Journey through Art", featuring the life and work of Iranian contemporary master Khosrow Khorshidi.

"From Tehran to Rome. A Journey through Art" is a series of seven monographic episodes, produced by the Italian Embassy in Tehran in cooperation with local artists, with the aim of introducing modern and contemporary Italian and Iranian artists, whose training and work have been influenced by artistic trends in both countries.

The episode "King of the Scene" featuring Khosrow Khorshidi, as well as the previous episodes "Tapes" featuring Bizhan Bassiri and "Hands in Earth" featuring Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam, are available on the Italian Embassy's social media channels (YouTube, Instagram and Twitter).

Together with the screening, the Italian Embassy in Tehran inaugurated an exhibit of drawings by Khosrow Khorshidi by the title "Life in Tehran. Cafes and Foreign Embassies", featuring an exclusive selection of 27 black and white drawings of embassies and historical places in the Iranian capital made over the years by Khosrow Khorshidi based on his memory recollection.

Among the historic places reproduced by Master Khorshidi is the Italian residence in Farmanieh, with its beautifully preserved Persian garden, where the exhibition was hosted, as well as a 1951 sketch of the palace in the compound of the Italian Embassy on Neuphle-le-Chateau Avenue, a neoclassical building designed by Russian architect Victor Markov, who designed many historic buildings in central Teheran around 100 years ago. Other drawings feature buildings housing other foreign embassies in Tehran, as well as life scenes in historic squares, schools, shops, cafes, restaurants, cinemas and theaters of Tehran.

"The exhibit of the beautiful drawings by Khosrow Khorshidi showing historic buildings and gardens in Tehran is a tribute to the artistic genius and career of one of the most prolific and inspired contemporary Iranian artists", said Ambassador Perrone during the inauguration ceremony.

Khorshidi, born in Iran in 1932, studied in Italy at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and trained in the studio of Italian famed director Franco Zeffirelli. He lives in Teheran and still paints.

## Dozens of Civilians Killed In Attack in Burkina Faso

PARIS (AFP) - Armed assailants killed around 100 civilians in an overnight attack on a village in northern Burkina Faso, the government said on Saturday.

The attackers struck during the night on Friday, killing residents of the village of Solhan in Yagha province bordering Niger. They also burned homes and the market, the government said in a statement.

The government described the attackers as terrorists but no group claimed responsibility.

Attacks by jihadists linked to al Qaeda and the Islamic State group in West Africa's Sahel region have risen sharply since the start of the year, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, with civilians bearing the brunt.



## El Salvador Ends Anti-Corruption Accord With OAS

SAN SALVADOR (Dispatches) - El Salvador on Friday pulled out of an anti-corruption accord with the Organization of American States (OAS) in protest at an OAS decision to take on as an adviser an opposition politician under investigation, and also ordered his arrest.

The announcement was the latest in a series of moves on anti-corruption efforts in Central America that have caused dismay inside the U.S. government, which is attempting to get leaders in the region to redouble efforts to root out graft.

U.S. officials see corruption as one of the root causes of undocumented immigration, along with poverty and gang violence, and want to make sure some \$4 billion in aid pledged for the region does not fall prey to graft.



## G7 Nations Strike Deal to Tax Big Companies, Squeeze Havens



LONDON (Dispatches) - The United States, Britain and other leading nations reached a landmark deal on Saturday to pursue higher global taxation on multinational businesses such as Google, Apple and Amazon.

In a move that could raise hundreds of billions of dollars to help them cope with the aftermath of COVID-19, the Group of Seven large advanced economies agreed to back a minimum global corporate rate of at least 15% and for companies to pay more tax in the markets where they sell goods and services.

"G7 finance ministers have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age," British finance minister Rishi Sunak said after chairing a two-day meeting in London.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the "significant, unprecedented commitment" would end what she called a race to the bottom on global taxation.

The deal, which was years in the making, also promises to end national digital services taxes levied by Britain and other European countries which the United States said unfairly targeted U.S. technology giants. However, the measures will first need to find broader agreement at a meeting of the G20 - which includes a number of emerging economies - due to take place next month in Venice.

"It's complicated and this is a first step," Sunak said.

The ministers also agreed to move towards making companies declare their environmental impact in a more standard way so investors can decide more easily whether to fund them, a key goal for Britain.

Rich nations have struggled for years to agree a way to raise more revenue from large multinationals such as Google, Amazon and Facebook, which often book profits in jurisdictions where they pay little or no tax.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration gave the stalled talks fresh impetus by proposing a minimum global corporation tax rate of 15%, above the level in countries such as Ireland but below the lowest level in the G7.

Germany and France also welcomed the agreement, although French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said he would fight for a higher global minimum corporate tax rate than 15%, which he described as a "starting point".

German finance minister Olaf Scholz said the deal was "bad news for tax havens around the world".

"Companies will no longer be in a position to dodge their tax obligations by booking their profits in the lowest-tax countries," he added.

Irish finance minister Paschal Donohoe, whose country is potentially a big loser with its 12.5% tax rate, said any global deal also needed to take account of smaller nations.

Sunak said the deal was a "huge prize" for taxpayers, but it was too soon to know how much money it would raise for Britain.

## Trudeau Blasts Catholic Church for Ignoring Role in Indigenous Schools

OTTAWA (Dispatches) - The Catholic Church must take responsibility for its role in running many of Canada's residential schools for indigenous children, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Friday, after the discovery of the remains of 215 children at one former school last month.

"As a Catholic, I am deeply disappointed by the position the Catholic Church has taken now and over the past many years," Trudeau told reporters. "We expect the Church to step up and take responsibility for its role in this."

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops did not respond to a request for comment. Between 1831 and 1996, Canada's residential school system forcibly separated about 150,000 children from their homes. Many were subjected to abuse, rape and malnutrition in what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 called "cultural genocide".

Run by the government and church groups - the majority of them Catholic - the schools' stated aim was to assimilate indigenous children.

The discovery this week of the remains of the children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, which closed in 1978, has reopened old wounds and is fueling outrage about a persistent lack of information and accountability.



## Kazakhstan Rebuffs Talk of Joint Sanctions Response With Russia

NUR-SULTAN (Dispatches) - Kazakhstan on Saturday dismissed a senior Russian official's idea of a joint response to Western sanctions against Moscow and its allies such as Belarus by a Russia-led post-Soviet trade bloc.

Russian deputy foreign minister Alexander Pankin said this week the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which also includes Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, was working on a "consolidated response" to Western sanctions against some of its members.

However, in an unusual weekend statement, Kazakhstan's foreign ministry said the Central Asian nation was against "politicizing" the trade bloc.

"In the context of discussing initiatives which are beyond the scope of the EEU Treaty, including those related to responding to sanctions imposed by third parties, we assume that Western sanctions are politically motivated and target individual nations rather than the EEU as a whole," it said.

"We would like to point out that the Republic of Kazakhstan is not involved in any talks on 'consolidated measures' by EEU nations in response to sanctions imposed by other countries."

Kazakhstan has very close political and economic ties with its former Soviet overlord, but sticks to what it calls a multivector foreign policy, seeking equally strong links with the West and with China, its other giant neighbour.

The United States in April imposed a broad array of sanctions on Russia, including curbs to its sovereign debt market, to punish it for interfering in last year's U.S. election, cyber hacking, bullying Ukraine and other alleged malign actions.

And this week, the European Union banned Belarusian airlines from flying over EU territory or having access to its airports, after Minsk forced a Ryanair jet to land in the country and arrested a government critic who was on board.

## China Blasts U.S., EU Consulates in Hong Kong for Tiananmen Candles

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China on Saturday berated the US and EU consulates in Hong Kong for displaying candles to commemorate the June 4 Tiananmen crackdown, slamming it as a "clumsy political show" to destabilize the city.

Candles were seen lit in the windows of the US consulate building, which is next to the residence of Hong Kong's Beijing-appointed leader Carrie Lam, and the European Union's office on Friday night.

The missions also posted photographs of their candlelit Tiananmen memorials on social media.

"Any attempt to exploit Hong Kong to carry out infiltration or sabotage activities against the mainland crosses the red line ... is absolutely intolerable," a spokesperson for the Hong Kong office of China's foreign ministry said.

"We again urge the organs of relevant countries in Hong Kong to immediately ... stop meddling with Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs at large, and avoid playing with fire."

For three decades in Hong Kong, huge crowds, often tens of thousands strong, have held candlelit vigils on June 4 for those killed in 1989 when tanks and troops crushed pro-democracy protests in Beijing.

Crowds have swelled in recent years as Hong Kongers chafe under Beijing's increasingly assertive rule.

However this year's vigil was banned at a time when Hong Kong authorities are carrying out a sweeping clampdown on dissent following huge and often violent democracy protests two years ago.

Flashes of defiance still flickered across the city Friday night as residents simultaneously turned their mobile phone lights or lit candles in multiple districts across the city to mark the date.

There were online calls for people to turn off the lights at home and place candles in their windows in commemoration. Public commemorations of June 4 are forbidden in mainland China and, until recently, semi-autonomous Hong Kong was the one place in China where large scale remembrance was still tolerated.



## Hundreds of Thousands In Famine Conditions in Northern Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA (Dispatches) - The U.N. humanitarian chief warned Friday that famine is imminent in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region and the country's north and there is a risk that hundreds of thousands of people or more will die.

Mark Lowcock said the economy has been destroyed along with businesses, crops and farms and there are no banking or telecommunications services.

"We are hearing of starvation-related deaths already," he said in a statement.

"People need to wake up," Lowcock said. "The international community needs to really step up, including through the provision of money."

No one knows how many thousands of civilians or combatants have been killed since months of political tensions between Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed's government and the Tigray leaders who once dominated Ethiopia's government exploded into war last November. Eritrea, a longtime Tigray enemy, teamed up with neighboring Ethiopia in the conflict.

In late May, Lowcock painted a grim picture of Tigray since the war began, with an estimated 2 million people displaced, civilians killed and injured, rapes and other forms of "abhorrent sexual violence" widespread and systematic, and public and private infrastructure essential for civilians destroyed, including hospitals and agricultural land.

"There are now hundreds of thousands of people in Northern Ethiopia in famine conditions," Lowcock said. "That's the worst famine problem the world has seen for a decade, since a quarter of a million Somalis lost their lives in the famine there in 2011. This now has horrible echoes of the colossal tragedy in Ethiopia in 1984." In the disastrous famine of 1984-85, about 2 million Africans died of starvation or famine-related ailments, about half of them in Ethiopia.

"There is now a risk of a loss of life running into the hundreds of thousands or worse," Lowcock said. He said getting food and other humanitarian aid to all those in need is proving very difficult for aid agencies.

The United Nations and the Ethiopian government have helped about 2 million people in recent months in northern Ethiopia, mainly in government-controlled areas, he said.



**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Velenjak Apt (\$2700)**  
250sq.m, 4bdrs  
S/pool, Sauna  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
Fully Furn

**Pasdaran Villa (\$4000)**  
1000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
S, J, balcony  
marble floor  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

**(\$2500)**  
**Farmanieh**  
220sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/pool, S, J  
Large balcony  
Nicely Furn

**Gheitarieh (\$1600) 2bdrs, & F.F**  
**Darrous (\$2000) 3bdrs, & F.F**

**(\$6000)**  
**Elahieh bldg**  
4storey, 12bdrs  
enough pkgs  
renovated  
Semi Furn

**Cell: +989121907875**  
**Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com**  
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**Jordan Apt (\$2000)**  
140sq.m, 2bdrs, & F.F

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## Nissan Delays Launch of Electric Car

TPKYO (Dispatches) - Japanese carmaker Nissan said Friday it will delay the planned summer launch of its flagship new electric Ariya model to this winter over the global chip shortage plaguing automakers.

Announced in July 2020, the new 100-percent electric model was initially supposed to go on sale in Japan from mid-2021, before arriving in Europe, North America and China by the end of the year. But in a press release Friday, Nissan said customers in Japan could now order the limited-edition B6 model for "this winter," with no set date for those in other markets.



## U.S. Uses Dollar to Wage Economic, Political War

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin says the United States is using the dollar as an instrument to wage economic and political war.

Speaking at an annual economic forum in St Petersburg, Putin said Moscow is pondering to settle its oil and gas transactions in other national currencies. He said if Russian oil companies stop using the American currency, it will pose a serious blow to the US dollar.

Washington, Putin said, is openly engaged in efforts to hold back Russia's development by wielding the dollar as a tool in economic and political competition.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said the oil and gas-rich country may soon move away from dollar-denominated crude contracts if President Joe Biden's administration continues to impose targeted economic sanctions.

His comments came shortly after Russia announced it would completely remove US dollar assets from its National Wealth Fund. Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said at the St Petersburg event Thursday that the changes could be expected within a month. The National Wealth Fund, he said, will shift its dollar holdings into euros, yuan and gold.

The transfer, which affects about \$119 billion in liquid assets of which about a third is held in dollars, will take place within the central bank's huge reserves.

The move comes ahead of a summit between President Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden later this month.

Putin also described U.S. suggestions linking Moscow to high profile cyberattacks in the United States as absurd and a bid to incite apprehension ahead of his summit with Biden.

"It's just nonsense, it's funny," Putin said during an interview with Russia's TV Channel One following reports of a hack of Brazilian meatpacker JBS's facilities in the United States.

"It's absurd to accuse Russia of this," Putin said, noting he was encouraged by efforts by other people in the U.S. questioning the substance of such allegations.

"Thank goodness there are people with common sense who are asking this question and are putting the question to those who are trying to provoke a new conflict before our meeting with Biden," he said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned on Friday against any exaggerated expectations from the upcoming meeting between Putin and Biden, stressing that there is a lot of dispute between the two sides over a range of issues.

"This is indeed a very important meeting. At the same time, it would be wrong to have inflated expectations", he said, adding that the two countries disagree on so many things that one cannot expect any progress in reaching an understanding.

"The potential for our disagreements and even some conflicting moments in our bilateral relations is so tremendous that one cannot expect any progress in reaching an understanding. However, sometimes agreeing that we do not agree is useful too," Peskov added.

## U.S. Job Growth Picks Up in May

NEW YORK (Dispatches)- U.S. employers boosted hiring in May as the easing pandemic, helped by vaccinations, pulled more people back into the labor force, offering assurance that the economy's recovery from the COVID-19 recession remained on track.

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 559,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said in its closely watched employment report on Friday. Data for April was revised slightly higher to show payrolls rising by 278,000 jobs instead of 266,000 as previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 650,000 jobs created in May. The unemployment rate fell to 5.8% from 6.1% in April. The jobless rate has been understated by people misclassifying themselves as being "employed but absent from work."

April's initial employment count, which delivered roughly a quarter of the new jobs economists had forecast, led to handwringing among some economists and investors that growth was stagnating at a time when inflation was rising.

The improving public health situation and massive fiscal stimulus are supporting the economy. At least half of the American population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That has allowed authorities across the country to lift virus-related restrictions on businesses, which nearly paralyzed the economy early in the pandemic.

But the reopening of the economy is straining the supply chain.

A worker shortage blamed on childcare complications, generous unemployment checks and lingering fears over COVID-19 sharply restrained hiring. There are a record 8.1 million job openings.

Millions of workers, mostly women, remain at home as most school districts have not moved to full-time in-person learning.

Despite vaccines being widely accessible, some segments of the population are reluctant to get inoculated, which labor market experts say is discouraging some people from returning to work.

Government-funded benefits, including a \$300 weekly unemployment subsidy, are also constraining hiring. Republican governors in 25 states are terminating this benefit and other unemployment programs funded by the federal government for residents starting next Saturday.

These states account for more than 40% of the workforce. The expanded benefits will end in early September across the country. That, together with more people vaccinated and schools fully reopening in the fall, is expected to ease the worker scarcity by September.



## China Rebukes Biden for Suppressing Chinese Firms With List

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China accused the United States of "suppressing" Chinese firms and issued veiled threats of a retaliation Friday, after President Joe Biden expanded a blacklist of companies Americans are barred from investing in.

Biden on Thursday widened a list to 59 Chinese companies that are off-limits to American investors over their links to Beijing's "military-industrial complex", as he maintains a campaign of pressure on the Asian superpower.

His predecessor Donald Trump in November issued a list of 31 Chinese companies that were deemed to be supplying or supporting China's military and security apparatus, adding more firms earlier this year. But after legal challenges put the sanctions in doubt, Biden's team reviewed the blacklist, removing some names and ultimately expanding it. Many are subsidiaries of companies already included.

The sanctions target companies involved in Chinese surveillance technology used to "facilitate repression or serious human rights abuses", which "undermine the security or democratic values of the United States and our allies", according to a White House statement.

China's foreign ministry decried the move as a "violation of market law" and an attempt to "suppress" Chinese companies.

"Remove these so-called lists that suppress Chinese companies," Wang Wenbin, spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told reporters, urging the U.S. to be "fair, just and non-discriminatory" towards Chinese companies. "China will take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies," he added.

The initial list published under Trump included major telecoms, construction and technology firms such as China Mobile, China Telecom, video surveillance firm Hikvision, and China Railway Construction Corp.

China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) was added in January -- causing S&P to remove it from its stock index -- and remains on Biden's list.

The investment ban takes effect on August 2 and current shareholders have a year to divest.

The move was among a series of measures by the White House aimed at Beijing that have left ties between the two sides severely strained.

Previously, the sanctions and choice of targets were tied to a congressionally mandated Defense Department report but will be managed by the Treasury Department.

While the Biden administration has pledged to take a more diplomatic approach with China following Trump's exit, he has said he will keep to a tough line on several issues including defence and technology.



## Saudis Increase Oil Prices for Asia Customers as Market Tightens

LONDON (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia increased oil prices for customers in its main market of Asia by more than expected after crude surged above \$70 a barrel and OPEC forecast that global demand would heavily outstrip supply over the rest of the year.

State energy firm Saudi Aramco hiked its key Arab Light grade for July shipments to Asia by 20 cents to \$1.90 a barrel above a benchmark. Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg were expecting a raise of just 10 cents.

The kingdom sends more than 60 percent of its exports to Asia, with China, India, South Korea and Japan being the biggest buyers. Last month, it shipped 6.1 million barrels-a-day, according to preliminary data compiled by Bloomberg.

Saudi oil continues to flow to China despite production cuts. Prices for four of Aramco's five Asian grades were increased, with the only drop coming for heavy crude.

All grades for Europe were raised, while those for the US were kept the same as for June.

The move is a reverse of Aramco's cut for Asian customers in June, a decision made in early May as new coronavirus cases hammered fuel demand in India.

The Asian country and others such as Japan and Malaysia are still struggling to slow the pandemic. Still, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries this week predicted that oil stockpiles will decline rapidly from August as lockdowns ease across major economies and travel picks up.

OPEC and its partners - a 23-nation grouping led by Saudi Arabia and Russia - stuck to a plan to increase production this month and in July. But they refused to say what their plans were beyond those dates.

## Turkey's Lira Hits New Low as Investors Lose Faith

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey's lira settled at its weakest level yet on Thursday, worth 8.7 to the dollar, after strong United States jobs data accelerated a three-month slide in which investors lost faith in authorities' ability to rein in double-digit inflation.

The lira, by far emerging markets' laggard this year, was at 8.705 at 17:19 GMT, a record low closing price. Its one-percent skid gathered speed when the dollar and U.S. yields jumped after stronger-than-expected U.S. payrolls data.

The currency has tumbled 17 percent since mid-March, when Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, long a critic of high interest rates, ousted a hawkish and well-respected central bank chief.

The bank's current governor, Sahap Kavcioglu, sought on a call on Wednesday to reassure big foreign investors that worries about premature rate cuts were unjustified.

But several of those on the call told Reuters news agency they were unconvinced, especially after Erdogan — seen by many to determine rates — said a day earlier that policy easing should begin in the next two months.

The president has abruptly fired three bank chiefs in two years, making the country more vulnerable to financial crisis, they said.

"I think Kavcioglu is on a tourist visa at the [central bank] so what he says or doesn't say may not matter very much," said Erik Meyerson, Stockholm-based senior economist at Handelsbanken, who was on the call.

"If Erdogan says rates are coming down in July or August, well that's probably what will happen."

Those who listened to Kavcioglu and other bank officials on the call said they still expected it to begin cutting the policy rate from 19 percent in the third quarter.

Inflation rose above 17 percent in recent months but unexpectedly dipped to 16.6 percent in May due largely to fallout from a coronavirus lockdown, official data showed on Thursday.

Still, most analysts expect consumer prices to flatline for most of the year because of the currency weakness and high commodity prices, which raise import costs. The lira hit an intraday record of 8.88 to the dollar on Wednesday.

Tourism revenues, usually an offset to chronically high current account deficits, have also been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

"All these factors are making us less constructive in Turkey than other ... emerging markets [EMs]," said Shamaila Khan, head of EM debt strategies at AllianceBernstein in New York.

## EU, ASEAN Conclude Landmark Air Transport Agreement



BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union have concluded the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement, ASEAN said, to allow their airlines to easier expand services to and within the respective regions.

The agreement, once formalised, will mean airlines of the combined 37 member states can fly any number of non-stop flights between countries in both regions, ASEAN said.

Additionally, airlines will be permitted to fly up to 14 weekly passenger services with one stop within the other region to pick up passengers on the return leg. There will be no limits on flights with one stop to pick up cargo.

The agreement "provides essential guarantees of fair competition for our European airlines and industry, while strengthening reciprocal prospects for trade and investment," said Adina Valean, the European Commissioner for Transport, according to ASEAN's statement. The EU is its third largest source of foreign investment and its third largest trading partner, according to ASEAN.

The ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (AE CATA), as it will be known, will be submitted for review by lawyers and signed at a later date, the statement said.

Brendan Sobie, a Singapore-based independent aviation analyst, said the deal was a positive step for the airlines but issues like securing slots could still be a challenge.

"The general idea here is to make ASEAN and EU airlines more competitive compared to airlines from other regions, which have been aggressively gaining market share in the ASEAN-EU market," he said.

"There may be issues that prevent these kind of routes from actually operating. Slots have always been an issue in this region which can make traffic rights irrelevant."

## Iran Defeat Bulgaria to Move up to 6th Place

TEHRAN (MNA) – The national Iranian volleyball team defeated Bulgaria Sat. to move up one place at the table of the 2021 FIVB Volleyball Nations League.

Alekno's men registered their fourth consecutive win on Saturday with a 3-0 victory (25-22, 33-31, 25-20) at the 2021 Volleyball Nations League Week 2.

Iran won all three games in the second week to move up at the table to sixth place with 4 wins and 12 points from their 6 games.

In addition to Iran, Argentina, Germany, France, Brazil, Poland, the United States and Italy also defeated their rivals on the sixth day of the tournament.



## Vaccinating Children Not a High Priority Amid Shortage

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The World Health Organization's top vaccines expert has said that immunizing children against COVID-19 is not a high priority from a WHO perspective, given the extremely limited global supply of doses.

During a social media session on Thursday, Dr Kate O'Brien said children should not be a focus of COVID-19 immunization programs, even as increasing numbers of rich countries authorize their coronavirus shots for teenagers and children.

"Children are at (a) very, very low risk of actually getting COVID disease," said O'Brien, a pediatrician and director of the WHO's vaccines department.

She said that the rationale for immunizing children was to stop transmission rather than to protect them from getting sick or dying.

"When we're in this really difficult place, as we are right now, where the supply of vaccine is insufficient for everybody around the world, immunizing kids is not a high priority right now."

O'Brien said it was critical to ensure health workers and the elderly, or those with underlying conditions, were inoculated ahead of teenagers and children.

Canada, the United States and the European Union have all recently given the green light to some COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 12 to 15 as they approach their vaccination targets for adults.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has urged rich countries to donate shots to poor countries rather than immunize their adolescents and children.

Fewer than one percent of COVID-19 vaccines administered globally have been used in poor countries.

O'Brien said it might be appropriate to immunize children against the coronavirus "in due course, when the supply increases much more substantially".

She added that it was not necessary to vaccinate children before sending them back



to school, as long as the adults in contact with them were immunized. "Immunization of children in order to send them back to school is not the predominant requirement for them to go back to school safely," she said. "They can go back to school safely if what we're doing is immunizing those who are around them who are at risk."

## Degradation of the Natural World Already Undermining the Well-Being of 3.2b People



TEHRAN, 5 June 2021 (UNIC) – United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in his message on World Environment Day, 5 June 2021, said the degradation of the natural world is already undermining the well-being of 3.2 billion people – or 40 per cent of humanity.

### The full text of his message reads:

We are rapidly reaching the point of no return for the planet.

We face a triple environmental emergency – biodiversity loss, climate disruption and escalating pollution.

For too long, humanity has cut down the Earth's forests, polluted its rivers and oceans, and ploughed its grasslands into oblivion.

We are ravaging the very ecosystems that underpin our societies.

And, in doing so, we risk depriving ourselves of the food, water and resources we need to survive.

The degradation of the natural world is already undermining the well-being of 3.2 billion people – or 40 per cent of humanity.

Luckily, the Earth is resilient.

But she needs our help.

We still have time to reverse the damage we have done.

That is why, on this World Environment Day, we are launching the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

This global movement will bring together governments, businesses, civil society and private citizens in an unprecedented effort to heal the Earth.

By restoring ecosystems, we can drive a transformation that will contribute to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals.

The task is monumental. We need to replant and protect our forests. We need to clean up our rivers and seas. And we need to green our cities.

Accomplishing these things will not only safeguard the planet's resources.

It will create millions of new jobs by 2030, generate returns of over \$7 trillion dollars every year and help eliminate poverty and hunger.

The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a global call to action.

It will draw together political support, scientific research and financial muscle to massively scale up restoration. Everyone can contribute.

Science tells us these next 10 years are our final chance to avert a climate catastrophe, turn back the deadly tide of pollution and end species loss.

So, let today be the start of a new decade – one in which we finally make peace with nature and secure a better future for all.

## Russia Ready to Fill Nord Stream 2 With Gas as First Line Complete

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia is ready to start filling its Nord Stream 2 pipeline with gas as that first line has been finished, President Vladimir Putin told an economic forum on Friday, after Moscow was left alone to build the project hit by U.S. sanctions.

"Today... the pipelaying work of the first Nord Stream 2 line was successfully finished. Work on the second line is ongoing," Putin told the St Petersburg International Economic Forum. "Gazprom is ready to start filling Nord Stream 2 with gas." Gazprom shares rallied after announcement, adding 0.6% and reaching 273.80 roubles (\$3.74) per share, their highest since mid-2008. Gazprom was left without its pipe-laying company in late 2019 following U.S. sanctions, and has since continued alone. The United States last month waived some sanctions on the Nord Stream 2.

The pipeline bypassed Ukraine, potentially depriving it of lucrative transit revenues when Kyiv is locked in a confrontation with Moscow, though the Kremlin says it will continue to use Ukraine as a gas transit country.

### Leader Calls on...

FROM PAGE 1

The Supreme of the Islamic Revolution went on to say Iran is stronger than ever as the country marks the 32nd anniversary of the passing away of its revolutionary founder Imam Khomeini.

"I start the discussion from here that among the revolutionary systems and establishments that have been formed in the last one or two centuries, I do not know of any system as much as the Islamic Republic that has been predicted to collapse," the Leader said.

"From the first day of the revolution, the ill-wishers and those who could not digest and tolerate this great phenomenon, both inside and outside the country, said that the Islamic Republic would not last for another two months, six months or a year," the Leader said.

"It was one or two years ago when the esteemed Americans said the same thing and a high-ranking American official stated that the Islamic Republic would not see its 40th anniversary. I do not remember so many predictions of decay and collapse to have been made about any other system," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei was apparently referring to former U.S. national security advisor John Bolton's infamous prediction while addressing a terrorist MKO convention in Paris in 2017.

At the conference Bolton said, "The outcome of the president's policy review should be to determine that the Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution will not last until its 40th birthday. And that's why, before 2019, we here will celebrate in Tehran."

"But, thank God, the revolution and the system of Imam Khomeini not only did not collapse and did not stop, but became stronger day by day," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"It did not surrender, did not give up and rather showed its independence day by day. It achieved great success and overcame obstacles." The Leader said despite many successive political, security, economic obstacles created for Iran, "the Islamic Republic today is more developed than 40 years ago and is ahead in all respects by the grace of God."

"The question arises, what is the secret of this permanence? Why did the Islamic Republic not face the fate of other revolutions in spite of all this hostility? Here I announce that the glorious and proud secret of this system is two words: the Republic and Islam. The existence created from these two words has every right to remain permanent, because it includes both people and Islam."

Ayatollah Khamenei said Imam Khomeini's outstanding initiative was that he created and introduced the idea of the Islamic Republic and then realized it.

"The great work of our esteemed Imam was to create this idea and theory of the Islamic Republic and to introduce it into the field of various political theories, in which there were various Eastern and Western political theories," the Leader said, adding Imam Khomeini then took action and put his theory into practice.

"The Imam had many initiatives but the Islamic Republic is the most important initiative of the Imam," the Leader said. "This is the same religious democracy that was recognized as the Islamic Republic."

Addressing the youth, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "You, the youth, who have not experienced the pre-Revolution era, it is hard for you to feel that era."

He recollected that people played no role at all in their destiny, especially during the dark tyranny of the Pahlavi dynasty.

"The Imam brought the people to the field with a leaping movement. The nation believed in itself and the Imam used the great capacity of the nation's ability and will, and with his leadership and guidance, he was able to take it to a stage where he could do great things," he added.

There was a time, the Leader continued, when the Islamic Republic was a sapling, and now it is a robust tree which cannot be uprooted by any storm.

### In the name of God

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT



**ESCO**  
Esfahan Steel Company

## Brief Notice of International Tender No. 36378

**Esfahan Steel Co. intends to purchase Head Stamping through international Enquiry.**

Prospective bidders specialized and experienced in the said area may visit Esfahan Steel Co.'s Website at [www.esfahansteel.ir](http://www.esfahansteel.ir) Tenders & Bids – Suppliers Comprehensive System to get the tender documents and participate in the tender no later than 17 June 2021.

Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.

### First Debate...

FROM PAGE 1

But the former Rouhani administration official attempted to distance himself from the Iranian president, who faces a lot of criticism for the state of the economy. "I have been actually relieved of my duties (as CBI chief) because I held different views (on policy) than Mr. Rouhani," Hemmati said. And he repeatedly dismissed Raeesi's fellow-Principlists as mere "back-ups" for the Judiciary chief.



The most composed of all was Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh, who mostly stuck to the questions and avoided launching personal attacks. At one point, he even expressed exasperation at the others for continuing to attack one another instead of focusing on their own plans. And Sa'eed Jalilialso kept composed for most of the debate.

An uneasy moment came when Rezaei threatened that he would "deliver Hemmati to court" if elected. And Hemmati threatened back by saying he would deliver Rezaei to Raeesi, the Judiciary chief, if he wins.

Mohsen Mehr-Alizadeh, 65, kept the lowest profile for much of the debate, and he repeated a self-deprecating sound bite that his administration would be "a third Khatami administration," referring to former President and leader of the Reformist faction Mohammad Khatami.

But it wasn't all personal attacks. In the relatively limited time that was spent on laying out policy, and largely after a 15-minute intermission, the candidates toned down their rhetoric and offered more direct responses to queries.

But again in their closing remarks, most were long on bombast and short on policy. "I'm not the winner of the election," Hemmati said, addressing the Iranian people, "because the majority of you have decided not to vote. But I ask you to please re-consider."

Hemmati is trying to distance himself from the government while he is blamed as one of the culprits of the devaluation of the national currency.

Unfortunately the first debate saw only the war of accusations and criticisms rather than offering programs for the future and it showed that the reformist and moderate principlist camps are trying to undermine Hojjatoleslam Raeesi who is the favorite candidate to win the election because of his better performance as the Judiciary Chief. It is interesting to see some candidates who were behind the current bad economic conditions are trying to acquit themselves by blaming others.

Candidates are better to present their programs rather than attacking at the former government or accusing the Judiciary chief or other bodies in the country. People will vote for the one with better programs and of course as the Supreme Leader has said, economy and better livelihood is the main issue that people will vote for it. It seems the era of electing the lesser of the evils has come to its end and people will not be deceived by the alluring promises of some candidates who are unable to fulfill them in practice.

### Tehran Slams...

FROM PAGE 1

"The Iranian side represented a report on measures taken by Iran's judicial system to hold accountable those, who were involved in the shooting down of the plane, and the Ukrainian party endorsed the qualification of the Iranian courts to investigate the case," the ambassador wrote.

"The Iranian delegation also announced its readiness to pay compensation to the Ukrainian families of the victims of the accident in the amount of \$ 150,000 per person and asked the Ukrainian delegation to inform the survivors of the Ukrainian victims," he added. Pointing to the formation of a group by three other countries involved in the case and the Ukrainian delegation's plea for negotiations between Iran and the group, Moradi said Tehran does not recognize the group and expressed the Islamic Republic's dissatisfaction with such unprofessional and hostile stance towards the country.

Moradi, however, stressed that the Iranian delegation is ready to hold bilateral talks with countries that respect Iran's jurisdiction, sovereignty and political independence.

The Iranian ambassador said the Ukrainian side expressed willingness for holding the next round of negotiations, with Tehran underlining that it would only reply to "unanswered questions" within the framework of the Iranian laws and regulations.

### Lukoil Says...

FROM PAGE 1

Lukoil's appetite to invest in Iran's upstream sector comes as it presses ahead with efforts to raise crude production capacity in neighbouring Iraq. The company recently started test output from the Yamama formation of Iraq's giant West Qurna 2 project as part of a plan to double the field's overall capacity to 800,000 b/d by 2025. But it wants to negotiate different terms for production from the Yamama formation that take into account its complex geology, Alekperov said.

Lukoil is also involved in discussions with Iraq about developing the Eridu oil field, which was discovered in 2017. The company hopes to complete the talks this year. It is eyeing a 30,000 b/d development and will need 18 months to prepare the field for the start of production, Alekperov said.

## Inter Name Inzaghi as Conte Successor

MILAN (Dispatches) - Serie A champions Inter Milan have named Simone Inzaghi as their new coach following the departure of Antonio Conte, the club announced on Thursday.

Former Lazio boss and Italy international Inzaghi, 45, has signed a two-year deal at the San Siro.

Eight of the clubs that finished in the top 10 of Serie A have changed coach since the end of the season.

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## Lukaku Rules Out Inter Milan Exit

MILAN (Dispatches) - Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku brushed aside speculation about his future by confirming Wednesday he intends to stay with Serie A champions Inter Milan next season.

Lukaku's future was in doubt after coach Antonio Conte, who brought the Belgian to Italy two years ago, left the club by mutual consent after leading them to their first league title in 11 years.

# Nadal, Djokovic Cruise Into Next Round of French Open

PARIS (Dispatches) - It's no big surprise that 13-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal won his Round 3 match against Cameron Norrie. Clay is where his skill set shines the brightest, and the bumps along the road to his 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 win only showed why he's the King of Clay.

For example, he let Norrie get ahead in the second set, and then he turned on the gas and won five straight games. He capped the mid-game comeback with this utterly fantastic court-spanning volley.

Who does that!? Well, Nadal does. He wasn't at his best on Saturday, but he still got the job done well and with flair. In Round 4, he'll face Italian Jannik Sinner, who is seeded at No. 18.

It was just another day at the office for Djokovic, who crushed his Round 3 opponent Ricardas Berankis 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 in a match that lasted just one hour and 32 minutes.

Djokovic, who has yet to be tested at Roland-Garros, is through to his 12th straight Round 4 at the French Open, setting a new Open Era record for most consecutive Round 4 appearances at the French Open. He'll next face 19-year-old Italian Lorenzo Musetti on Monday.

Sloane Stephens is looking like her old self again, and it couldn't have happened at a better time.

Stephens, ranked No. 59 in the world coming into the French Open, upset her second straight Top 20 opponent with her straight sets win over No. 18 Karolina Muchova. Stephens sent Muchova home after a 6-3, 7-5 match that lasted nearly two hours. She had to battle in the second set when Muchova started to make a surge, but she kept her head down and pulled out her first trip



to Round 4 since she was at Roland-Garros two years ago.

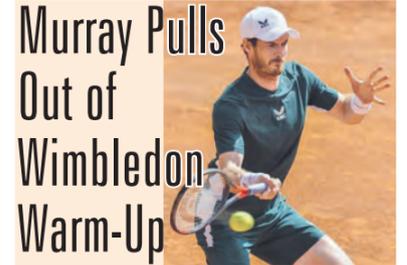
After the match, Stephens said that she felt like she was about to break out recently, and she's pleased that the results are finally showing on the court.

In Round 4, Stephens will face Barbora Krejčíková, who knocked out No. 5 Elina Svitolina earlier on Saturday.

It's been an outstanding tournament for American women, and that was on full display with the Round 3 match between No. 4 Sofia Kenin and No. 28 Jessica Pegula. It was a highly competitive match, but Kenin pulled out the 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 win after narrowly losing the first set. She smashed 24 backhand winners and showed no indication of the tough year she's been having, which has included an appendectomy and a high-profile split from her coach, who also happens to be her father.

It hasn't been a great tournament for top-ranked women, and that continued. No. 5 Elina Svitolina was knocked out by No. 33 Barbora Krejčíková, making her the seventh Top 10 female player to exit Roland-Garros.

Svitolina fell 6-3, 6-2 in one hour and 39 minutes. She was really never able to get her footing against Krejčíková, who played confident tennis from her very first shot.



LONDON (Dispatches) - Andy Murray has withdrawn from next week's Wimbledon warm-up in Nottingham, but the former world number one is still on course to play in the grass-court Grand Slam, according to reports on Thursday.

Murray had been due to compete at the Nottingham Open in his first singles tournament since March.

The two-time Wimbledon champion suffered a groin injury ahead of the Miami Open in March and pulled out of the French Open after experiencing further discomfort.

It is not believed there has been a further setback in his recovery, with the 34-year-old practising at Wimbledon over the past week.

But Murray has decided to focus on another week of training and is planning to be back on court at Queen's Club for the Wimbledon warm-up tournament in mid-June.

Injury-plagued Murray has only played three tour-level singles matches since October.

He practiced with leading players in Rome last month as well as featuring in two doubles contests. Wimbledon, the third grand slam of the year, gets underway at the All England Club in London on June 28. Murray last won Wimbledon in 2016 and, hampered by fitness issues, he hasn't reached the second week of a grand slam since 2017.

## Tuchel Extends Chelsea Contract to 2024

LONDON (Dispatches) - Chelsea rewarded Thomas Tuchel for winning the Champions League in his first five months in charge with a new contract to 2024 on Friday.

The German joined in January with the Blues languishing in ninth in the Premier League.

But Chelsea were revitalized by Tuchel's arrival, climbing the table to finish fourth before winning European club football's biggest prize against Manchester City in Porto last weekend.

"I cannot imagine a better occasion for a contract renewal. I am grateful for the experience and very happy to stay part of the Chelsea family," Tuchel said in a club statement.

Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia added: "When Thomas joined us in January there was still so much to play for domestically and in Europe. He slotted in seamlessly and immediately became an integral part of the Chelsea family."

"Returning us to the top four in the Premier League was crucial, and we could not be happier with our success in the Champions League which crowned a remarkable season at Chelsea."

"We are obviously extremely pleased therefore to retain Thomas for a further two years, and look forward to more achievements in the coming seasons."

## Luiz Among Four Players To Leave Arsenal

LONDON (Dispatches) - Arsenal have confirmed Brazil defender David Luiz will leave the club when his contract expires, while Martin Odegaard, Dani Ceballos and Mat Ryan are also set to depart the Emirates Stadium.

Luiz opted not to accept Arsenal's offer of a new contract as he called an end to his two-year stay in north London.

The former Chelsea centre-back endured some difficult times with the Gunners as he struggled with inconsistent form before missing the end of this season due to injury.

Luiz, 34, helped Mikel Arteta's side win the FA Cup in 2020 and gave an emotional speech to his team-mates before their last game of the Premier League season.



# Koeman to Continue as Barca Coach

Lionel Messi as well as lifting the Copa del Rey and overseeing a year of transition may not have been enough for him to keep his job.

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Ronald Koeman has escaped the Barcelona axe with club president Joan Laporta announcing the Dutchman is to continue as coach next season.

"We've decided to give continuity to a contract already in place," Laporta confirmed after a meeting of the club's directors.

Koeman's confirmation comes after the Catalan press had hinted that winning round

Laporta explained: "We think it's the best for Barca and we are very happy to be able to announce today that Ronald Koeman is staying."

He said "very frank and straight" conversations had taken place before committing to Koeman until the summer of 2022.

"This time for reflection was necessary... to see together what didn't work at the end of last season". Koeman remains in the Camp Nou dugout after a "unanimous" vote despite Barca's last 16 Champions League exit to Paris Saint-Germain and a disappointing end to the Liga title race.

Laporta praised Koeman's "impeccable behaviour".

"He showed what we already knew, that he is a true professional."

"I'm sure we are going to have a great season."

## Spain, Portugal Launch Official Bid For 2030 World Cup

MADRID (Dispatches) - Spain and Portugal made their bid to host the 2030 World Cup official on Friday in a small symbolic ceremony at the Metropolitan stadium in Madrid, ahead of a Euro 2020 warm-up between the two nations.

"The governments of Spain and Portugal wish to express their desire and commitment to host the 2030 World Cup," says an agreement of support for the bid initiated by Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

The two leaders signed their accord in the presence of Spain's King Felipe VI and Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa at the Atletico Madrid stadium shortly before the kick off.

Friday's game also marked the centenary of Portugal's first international, a 3-1 loss to Spain in Madrid in December 1921.

Both teams posed on the pitch wearing T-shirts that read "Vamos2030".

"Today we sign the commitment of both federations to work together for a World Cup," said the president of the Portuguese Football Federation, Fernando Gomes.

Gomes and his Spanish counterpart, Luis Rubiales, were ratifying an agreement signed last October to promote a joint bid for the 2030 World Cup.

"A message to the national federations: if you give us your trust, when you come to our countries you are going to find an unforgettable experience," Rubiales said on Friday.

FIFA plans to select the 2030 World Cup.

Spain and Portugal could face competition from other joint bids under discussion: one from the United Kingdom and Ireland and one from Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile, aimed to coincide with the centenary of the first World Cup, which was played in Uruguay.



## Tevez Quits Argentina Football

BUENOS AIRES (Dispatches) - Veteran Argentina great Carlos Tevez announced he was quitting Boca Juniors and would no longer play football in his homeland, but stopped short of officially retiring.

The 37-year-old said he was leaving Boca, his beloved home club -- he said "my blood isn't red, it's blue and yellow" -- to spend more time with his family.

"My career in Argentina is finished. I always said the only club I would ever play for (here) is Boca, without a doubt," said Tevez at a press conference at the club's head office.

The former Manchester United, Manchester City and Juventus forward lost his adoptive father Segundo Tevez in February after he contracted Covid-19 at age 58.

"Boca asks you to give the maximum and mentally I'm not in a condition to do so. I didn't even have time to mourn my father and already I was playing again -- that's what Boca demands," he said, breaking down in tears.

When asked if he could find a new club abroad, Tevez merely replied he didn't know what he would do next.

"I never thought this moment would arrive, but I'm here to tell you that I won't continue with the club. It's not a goodbye to this shirt but a see you soon because I will always be here, just not as a player," he said.

Boca president Jorge Ameal seemed unconvinced he would never see the "Apache" in a Boca shirt again.

