

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 81,183 With 120 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan Special Representative and Head of The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Jean Arnault In Tehran Called for Efforts to Reduce Violence in Afghanistan

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Iran, Russia Cement Ties With Expanding Tourism

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ali Asghar Mounesan and head of The Federal Agency for Tourism of the Russian Federation (Rostourism) Zarina Doguzov welcomed expanding cooperation between the two countries in the area of tourism.

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ali Asghar Mounesan had an official visit to Moscow on Sunday - yesterday - to sign a visa waiver for groups between Iran and Russia. Mounesan, and Doguzov in their meeting called for the implementation of the tourism agreements between the two countries and removing possible obstacles for expanding bilateral tourism ties in both countries.

Mounesan in this meeting said that there should be broad cooperation between all sectors, including political, cultural, and economic areas, of both countries to make the expansion of tourism ties happen. Head of The Federal Agency for Tourism of the Russian Federation (Rostourism), for her part in the meeting, said that because of good relations between the two countries and the excellent tourism potentials, expanding tourism ties between the two countries is vital.

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IAEA Claims No Progress in Resolving Safeguards Issue With Iran



GENEVA (Dispatches) - The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi claimed on Monday that no progress had been made in resolving safeguards issues with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the first day of the IAEA Board of Governors session on Monday, the world nuclear body Rafael Grossi claimed that no progress had been made in resolving safeguards issues with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The head of the world nuclear watchdog added that the lack of progress in clarifications on the part of Iran on the IAEA's questions about the accuracy and comprehensiveness of Iran's safeguard statements seriously affects the body's ability to ensure that the nature of Iran's nuclear program is peaceful.

Grossi claimed Iran has failed to answer questions about the discovery of uranium particles at former undeclared sites in the country, calling on Tehran to provide information "without further delay."

He has made claims about what he called undeclared nuclear activities in places in Iran. "For objectivity's sake, I should say that the Iranian government has reiterated its will to engage and to cooperate and to provide answers, but they haven't done that so far," he told reporters later. "So I hope this may change, but as we speak, we haven't had any concrete progress."

In accordance with a piece of legislation approved by the Iranian parliament in early December last year dubbed "Strategic Action to Lift Sanctions" Iran temporarily suspended the implementation of the Additional Protocol, but later Iran nuclear agency(AEOI) and the world agency reached a three-month agreement to continue the IAEA inspections of Iranian nuclear sites. And the inspections agreement has been recently extended for a month amid nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran and the nuclear participants in the JCPOA. Iran agreed in good faith with IAEA that surveillance cameras in some nuclear facilities should be kept out of the access of IAEA inspectors for up to three months.

According to the IAEA agreement with Iran if U.S. sanctions were lifted within three months, Iran would provide the CCTV data to the IAEA, otherwise the recorded data would be deleted forever. The three-month agreement ended last week, and as a result of consultations, the Islamic Republic once again showed goodwill to extend the recording of camera data for one month until June 24.

Tehran Decries Revocation Of Its General Assembly Voting Rights

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has condemned a UN decision to temporarily revoke Tehran's voting rights in the General Assembly over its outstanding contributions to the world body.

Tehran maintains it has paid its dues to the world body regularly and that the economic sanctions have made payments increasingly difficult for the country.

Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, has strongly condemned a United Nations decision to strip Tehran of its voting rights at the UN General Assembly.

This decision is fundamentally flawed, entirely unacceptable, and completely unjustified, as Iran's inability to fulfill its financial obligation toward the United Nations is indirectly caused by unlawful unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States to punish those who comply with the Security Council Resolution.

In a letter to the UN chief Zarif said taking away Iran's voting privileges violates the UN Charter and the spirit of sovereign equality of member states. He said Iran failed to pay its dues because of extreme conditions imposed by the US on its banking relations. Zarif stressed that Washington's "economic terrorism has faced Iran with difficulty buying food and medicine, let alone paying its UN fees".

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Iran Preps to Reclaim Key Asian Oil Markets

SINGAPORE (Bloomberg) --The likely return of Iranian oil is setting up what promises to be an aggressive battle to supply a corner of the coveted Asian market.

Iran is a major producer of condensates -- ultra-light oil that's a by-product from natural gas fields -- and South Korea is Asia's biggest operator of splitters designed to turn it into petrochemicals used to make plastics.

SK Innovation Co., Hanwha Total Petrochemical Co. and Hyundai Oilbank Co. used to favor Iran's South Pars condensate due to plentiful supply and relatively low prices, but U.S. sanctions saw those flows dry up from 2019. The South Korean refiners then turned to condensates from Qatar and Australia, as well as West Texas Light crude and full-range naphtha from Europe and Africa. With the Iranian nuclear accord possibly being revived by August, the Persian Gulf nation will be keen to win back its former customers. And while the battle for market share will be centered on Korean condensate buyers, it will also ripple through Asian markets for light crudes and naphtha.

"The fight in the condensate market will be fierce," said Armaan Ashraf, an analyst at industry consultant FGE in Singapore. "Iran will need to offer South Pars at discounts to incentivize buyers" and that will displace a substantial amount of arbitrage condensate and naphtha across Asia and cause prices to dip relative to benchmarks, he said.

The potential lifting of sanctions on Iranian oil will hit condensate markets much harder than crude due to the relative importance of supplies from the Persian Gulf nation. More than 100 million barrels of South Pars are being held onshore in Iran, or overseas in floating and bonded storage, FGE estimates. Exports of South Pars during the inventory de-stocking phase, which could last more than a year, could account for more than a third of the East-of-Suez market for traded condensates, the industry consultant said. Once this phase is over, Iran will likely ship around 300,000 barrels a day of South Pars, it said. Negotiations on the nuclear accord are still facing hurdles, with talks in Vienna adjourned until next week. Both Washington and Tehran will need to make "hard decisions" that could ruffle domestic political constituencies, Enrique Mora, the European Union's deputy foreign policy chief, said.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak sees some Iranian oil in the market this summer should a deal be agreed, although it depends on factors such as Iran's "technical capabilities" and its readiness to increase output.

Apart from South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, China, Japan and were among the top buyers of South Pars prior to the sanctions. The grade used to be sold at about \$2 a barrel or more below Qatari Deodorized Field Condensate, according to traders, making it one of the cheapest feedstocks. The world's biggest condensate splitter capacity is in South Korea, the Middle East and the U.S., meaning these buyers held off making purchases from Iran while the penalties were in place. China -- which kept buying limited amounts of Iranian crude despite the sanctions -- is not a major market for condensate.

Iraq Hopes to Resume Full Imports of Iranian Gas

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iraq's electricity ministry hopes to resume full imports of Iranian gas after reaching an agreement with Tehran over how to pay its outstanding debts, Argus Media reported.

The news comes just as the temperatures in Iraq have begun to soar.

Iraq's ministers of electricity and finance and the director general of the Trade Bank of Iraq have agreed to schedule the debts so as to resume Iranian gas exports over the coming days, electricity ministry spokesman Ahmed Moussa said.

Gas supplies from Iran were temporarily cut in December over Baghdad's debts of more than \$6 billion, and although supplies resumed several weeks after, volumes have been severely restricted since.

Moussa said imports were currently 20mn m³/d, less than a third of the contracted 70mn m³/d Iraq needs to meet its peak summer demand as temperatures rise to more than 50°C.

If full gas imports were to resume, Iraq's electricity generation would reach 22,000 MW, Moussa said. But this is still likely to be well short of peak demand.

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Tehran, Baku Discuss Boosting Trade Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Expansion of economic ties between Iran and Azerbaijan was discussed in a meeting between the Iranian Ambassador to Baku Abbas Mousavi and Azerbaijan's Deputy Economy Minister Elnur Aliyev.

In the meeting, the two sides stressed close cultural, historical, and religious ties between the two countries and emphasized the willingness of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran for the development of bilateral relations.

Speaking in the meeting, Aliyev pointed to the expansion of cooperation between his country and the Islamic Republic of Iran in various economic fields over the past few years and mentioned the increase in the number of Iranian companies operating in Azerbaijan, as well as the boost in mutual investment and implementation of joint economic projects as signs of further growth.

"There are good opportunities for Iranian companies to participate in the reconstruction of Azerbaijan's liberated territories and to cooperate in the fields of transport, energy, and the establishment of public infrastructure in these areas," Aliyev said.

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Iran Port Capacity Up Nearly 40% in 7 Years

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) says cargo handling capacity at ports south and north of the country rose by nearly 40% in seven years to reach a total of 250 million metric tons in the year to late March.

PMO figures covered in a report by the official IRNA news agency showed that Iran's ports capacity would reach 280 million tons per year with the completion of a handful projects this year.

The report said total port handling capacity in Iran was around 180 million tons in the summer of 2013 when the current administrative government took office for a first four-year term.

It said container capacity at ports, which is measured in twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU), will have doubled by mid-summer this year compared to eight years ago to reach a total of 8.5 million TEU.

It said passenger handling at ports will have reached a target of 25 million people per year this year, up from 14 million in August 2013.

The expansion of capacity in Iranian ports comes despite massive restrictions facing the country in the past three years because of U.S. sanctions.

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Energy Minister in Tajikistan to Attend Joint Commission Meeting

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian arrived in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Monday to participate in the 14th Iran-Tajikistan joint economic commission meeting.

During his stay, Ardakanian is to confer with Minister of the Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan Daler Juma and Tajik chairman of Iran-Tajikistan joint economic cooperation commission.

He is scheduled to meet with other Tajik officials on promoting economic relations.

Politicizing of Issues In Flight 752 Case Harms Everyone

TEHRAN (MNA) – Referring to the third round of talks on the case of Flight 752, the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs said that the politicizing of specialized issues in this incident harms everyone.

Head of Iranian delegation Mohsen Baharvand who travelled to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv last Tuesday to hold the third round of talks on the case of the Ukrainian plane said in an interview, "In the third round of talks, we exchanged information on several aspects of the case that needed to be examined between the two countries, such as the civil aviation and security dimension, the military dimension, as well as the criminal dimension."

Baharvand also said that they discussed the jurisdiction of this case and other issues. Stating that the Iranian court has jurisdiction, he added, "So far, an indictment has been issued in the Iranian court by the prosecutor and sent to the court, and I think three judges will review this case and are studying it."

"If anyone has failed to do so, they will be dealt with according to the law," the Iranian diplomat noted.

He also added that the two sides talked about international law in the third round of talks in Kyiv, saying, "Military, judicial, and civil aviation investigations in collaboration with an advisory group from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and experts from the United States, France, and the United Kingdom have concluded that this tragic event was the result of a human error."

"The compensation we have set is much higher than what we are committed to paying in international law. The government has agreed to pay \$ 150,000 per victim to the family, survivors, and legal heirs of the individual, both domestic and foreign, and some have already received compensation," he noted.

Stating that politicizing specialized issues harms everyone, Baharvand highlighted, "Because these are aviation standards, the whole international community suffers if



one tries to abuse them politically. The political use of this issue leads to resistance to investigation and the achievement of truth and justice because it becomes a political issue."

The Iranian diplomat went on to say that Iran is ready to cooperate in any way with countries that respect these three things; Recognize the competence of the Islamic Republic of Iran like Ukraine and the rest, must respect Iran's sovereignty and state immunity and must respect its political independence.

"By respecting each other and diplomatic protocols, if one wants to form a group and then turn it into a controversy, it destroys the essence of the issue. Like a court in a Canadian province said, given the possibility, it guesses the incident was intentional," Baharvand said.

"A country that violates the political immunity of the Iranian government must give us the right that we do not talk to it or talk to it bilaterally unless it corrects its own behavior," he added.

The third round of talks between Iran and Ukraine at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers of the two countries on the crash of PS 752 was held in recent days in Kyiv.

Iran, Qatar to Expand ICT Cooperation



TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) will travel to Doha to follow the development of cooperation between Iran and Qatar in the field of communications and information technology.

Heading an official delegation and representatives of the private sector, ICT Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi will travel to Doha today (Tuesday) at the invitation of Qatar's Minister of Transport and Communications Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti.

He is scheduled to follow up on the development of Iran-Qatar cooperation in the field of communications and information technology.

Qatar will host the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup and is a significant market for Iranian IT companies.

At present, Iran is the largest communication route connecting Qatar to Europe.

Early Heat, Overexploitation Blamed For Drop in Water Pressure in Isfahan

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

ISFAHAN - Head of Utilization Department of Isfahan Province Water and Wastewater Company (ABFA of Isfahan) explained the reasons behind the sudden drop of water pressures in the province in recent days.



Naser Akbari said that early heat and sudden rise of the temperature is the first factor behind the water consumption because some evaporative coolers were turned sooner than the schedule and it led to the excessive rise in the water consumption.

He also blamed the decrease in the input of water into the Isfahan Water Treatment Plant as the other factor for the drop in the water pressure, adding that the district water company is in charge of providing the required water to ABFA of Isfahan at the Cham Aseman Dam entrance but in recent days unfortunately due to the excessive exploitation of water in the areas between Zayandehrud Dam and Cham Aseman Dam, the amount of delivered water has sharply declined.

He reiterated that integrated management companies of Zayandehrud River and the district water company should take necessary measures to fight excessive water exploitation. He added that Isfahan Water Treatment Plant at the Baba Sheikhali village has the capacity for treating 11.5 cubic meters per second of water but in recent days, the input water into this plant, and as the result the amount of treating water has declined considerably.

Akbari also said the first system or the water supply project of great Isfahan are supplying drinking water for the population of 57 towns, cities and 380 villages of the province, adding that currently the province is facing with shortage of 3 cubic meters per second of water and it is expected that as the temperature is rising, the water consumption rises too.

Leader Condolences Demise of Hojatoleslam Mohtashamipour



TEHRAN (MNA) – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has expressed condolences over the demise of prominent Iranian cleric Hojatoleslam Seyyed Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour.

In a message on Monday, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei condoled the demise of Hojatoleslam Seyyed Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour to his honorable family.

Ayatollah Khamenei also pointed to Mohtashamipour's revolutionary services and important responsibilities during the Islamic Republic era and prayed to God to bestow divine forgiveness and blessings on him.

Hojatoleslam Seyyed Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour passed away in Tehran on Monday morning at the age of 75 after a short illness due to the infection of coronavirus.

Economy Should Not Be Suspended for JCPOA

TEHRAN (IP) - The candidate for Iran's 13th presidential election says interaction with the world will be taken for granted in his government, but the country's economy should not be suspended for the JCPOA.

In a Sunday IRIB program in the framework of his election campaign, Hojatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi said the economy could not be suspended because of a deal that one day was to be approved and implemented, and the other day to be revived.

Raeisi stressed that Iran could establish extensive relations with the countries of the world and that the neighboring countries are definitely a priority for political, economic,



and cultural interaction.

"Economic diplomacy is part of my government's agenda and this could be the basis for Iran's success in an economic interaction with countries in the region and the world," he said.

Ebrahim Raeisi also said he was not opposed to negotiations and did not deny the impact of sanctions on the country.

"Through resistive economy and activation of domestic capacities, economic problems could be solved and in other words, if the sanctions were neutralized, the country's economy would not be shaken. The candidate of the 13th presidential election in Iran also stressed that "the solution of problems would be in the hands of young people and capable managers."

Jalili Stresses on Expanding Petrochemical Products

TEHRAN (IP) - The candidate for Iran's 13th presidential election stresses the development of the petrochemical market as the next government's plan to gain revenue from the regional and neighboring countries.

Saeed Jalili, on Sunday after his TV election campaign at IRIB, told reporters that the market for downstream petrochemical products in the region is about \$135 billion.

Jalili stated that if Iran achieves only 10% of the market for downstream petrochemical products in the West Asian region, it will earn about \$15 billion of revenue.

He put emphasis on avoiding the selling of just crude oil and said when crude oil turned into petroleum products, its added value would increase and play an important role in creating employment.

The candidate for Iran's 13th presidential election said that a plan was needed to leap the currency and employment areas, and one of the most important factors to reach the goal was to prevent selling raw materials.

World Will Never Forget Israeli Regime's Record

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh says the world will never forget the Israeli regime's record of atrocities against the Palestinians, especially its infanticide mania, the latest example of which killed over 260 Palestinians, including 66 children, in the blockaded Gaza Strip.

"Even on his way out, Netanyahu pathologically insisted on filling his quota of innocent #Palestinian blood," Khatibzadeh said in a Sunday tweet in clear allusion to the decision by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to dethrone him after 12 years in power following the recent war between the regime and Palestinian resistance groups in the blockaded Gaza Strip. "Time will come for criminals to be held accountable. World will never forget Israeli regime's record," the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman added in his tweet. Khatibzadeh also took to task the countries that supported Israel in its recent criminal onslaught against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip by turning a blind eye to the plight of the Palestinian women and children under Israeli airstrikes, especially the United States and a number of European countries.

"Shame on those who effectively aided and abetted Israel's crimes," he said.

The Israeli regime engaged in an asymmetrical military confrontation with Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza, beginning on May 10 until a ceasefire came into effect on May 21, killing at least 260 Palestinians. Israel's airstrikes also brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished territory. The war began after the regime in Tel Aviv escalated its violent measures against Palestinians in the West Bank, including at al-Aqsa mosque compound and also the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, where Israeli forces stepped up moves to force Palestinian families out of their homes to replace them with Israeli settlers.

Rise of Productivity in Environment With Digital Development Plan

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

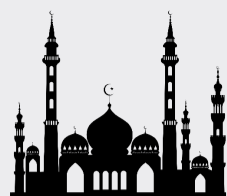
ISFAHAN – Head of Occupational Health and Environment of Mobarakeh Steel Company says the digital development plan at the company will lead to 90 percent increase of productivity in the fields of energy and environment.

Mr. Hossein Modarresi Far pointed to the importance of planning for the future in the steel sector on the occasion of the world environment day and said the digital development plan of Mobarakeh Steel Company has been shaped in this line as the plan is the key point in the issues of energy consumption, resources and protecting the environment. He added that expansion of this plan in the steel industries will almost lead to 90 percent increase in the productivity of the mentioned fields.

Touching upon the environment, he said environment issue has been very crucial since the past, and people have only one Earth and they should protect it in a way that it could be suitable for living for the next generations. So the significance of this issue has made the world choose one day as the world environment day.

Modarresi Far went on to say that Mobarakeh Steel Company since its first day and by realizing the importance of this issue has been seeking technologies which love environment or in other words it has been after the green technologies and has been very careful in choosing its required technologies.

He then pointed to some technologies used by the company regarding the environment protection like using the water treatment for treating the wastewater and return of the treated water to the industry.



PRAYER TIME

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

114. They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; and they hasten (in emulation) in (all) good works: They are in the ranks of the righteous.
115. Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them; for Allah knoweth well those that do right.
Surah 3. The Family of 'Imran, The House of 'Imran (114-115)

Int'l Webinar on Role of Women in Economic Development Held

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

Tehran – President of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) in an international webinar pointed to the role of women in the economic development and said women's presence in the economy and the market has different consequences like increase in the earnings of the household, boost of productivity and ultimately improvement of the level of welfare among the all walks of the society.

The webinar was held with cooperation of Embassy of South Africa in Tehran last week with participation of the President of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) Mr. Bahman Abdollahi, the Ambassador of South Africa in Tehran, the President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the Deputy Minister of South Africa in Small Business Development, the representative of SEWA cooperative, the head of ICC's Women Committee and the Director of Cooperative Training, Promotion and Research Office of Iranian government, as well as prominent women cooperators from Iran and South Africa.

Addressing the webinar, the president of ICC Mr. Abdollahi said, "Today, one of the biggest goals of countries is to achieve sustainable economic development." Economic development, as one of the contexts for the growth and development of human societies, can be successful when it is done with the help and participation of all social groups and for all of them."

He added, "Human resource is one of the most important and effective factors in the development of societies and women, as half of the world's population, have a major role in development and role in society."

He continued: "According to international statistics, a significant share of work in the world is done by women formally and informally. Therefore, if the potential talents of this section of society are considered, it can be considered as one of the largest sources of investment for developing countries. Therefore, women with their wide participation in various economic sectors can move the wheel of a country's economy and play an active and major role in developing the economy and advancing the goals of society."

Abdollahi acknowledged that the presence of women in the economy and labor market will have various consequences, including increasing the level of family income, reducing the burden of dependence, increasing productivity and ultimately improving the level of welfare in economy.



He also mentioned the expansion of international cooperation between countries and the transfer of experiences as one of the ways to strengthen the women's cooperatives, and stressed the need to strengthen the relations of the Iranian cooperative movement with South Africa.

Meanwhile South African Ambassador to Tehran Vika Mazwi Khumalo, for his part, pointed to the history of the women's movement as well as the occasion of Women's Day in South Africa. He noted, "South Africa celebrates Women's Day on 9 August, since it was on this day in 1956 that these struggle heroes led some 20,000 women from various regions in South Africa to march to the then apartheid capital of Pretoria in protest against the so-called "pass laws," which limited and controlled the movement of Africans inside their own country."

He also mentioned the occasion of Women's Day in Iran and continued: "I am aware, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, we have recently celebrated the birth of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā, on 20 Jumada al-Thani. This significant event is commemorated, as the Iranian Mother's Day. She was the leader of all women, an exemplar of women, and above all, a sincere Muslim, who played a significant and key role within her community as well as the Moslem faith."

He further referred to the position of women in South Africa and stated: "South Africa has managed to register significant advances for Women, since 1994. Women and their rights are not only enshrined in our Constitution, but South African women have been increasingly more active in government and policy-making, with 50% of the national cabinet and 46% of our Parliament constituting women."

Then Ariel Guarco, the President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), welcomed the cooperation between the Cooperative Movement of Iran and South Africa and praised the initiative. In part of his message, he emphasized the important role of women in strengthening cooperative identity and creating more equitable communities in the world. In this line, cooperatives, due to their nature, can make a great contribution.

IME Enjoys Remarkable Growth of 60% Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 905,197 tons of commodities with a total value of nearly \$567m, showing 51% and 60% of growth in volume and value of trades respectively, as compared to figures in the previous week.



According to a report by the IME's international affairs and PR, the exchange traded 468,140 tons of commodities on its mineral and industrial trading floor valued at more than \$367m.

On this floor, the IME sold 325,270 tons of steel, 11,300 tons of copper, 9,700 tons of aluminum, 160 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 30 tons of precious metals concentrate, 25,000 tons of iron ore pellets and concentrate, 1,080 tons of zinc ingots, 36,600 tons of cement, 19 kg of gold bars, 50,000 tons of fine iron ore and 9,000 tons of sponge iron (DRI).

Furthermore, the IME's oil and petrochemical trading floor hosted trade of 435,224 tons of commodities worth more than \$200m.

Products sold here included 94,300 tons of vacuum bottom, 134,233 tons of bitumen, 79,449 tons of polymeric products, 35,937 tons of chemicals, 49,000 tons of lube cut, 4,745 tons of base oil, 100 tons of argon, 35,000 tons of sulfur and 2,470 tons of PDA TAR.

It's worth noting that there was also 1,833 tons of commodities traded on the IME's side market.

Exports of Persian Gulf Star Refinery Increase By 200%



The CEO of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company announced a 200% increase in the refinery's exports in 2020 compared to 2019. He said that a working group for determining the prices of manufactured products was formed. This working group played an effective role in achieving teamwork with confidence in the Iranian expert youth in the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company.

Public Relations of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company, Mohammad Ali Dadvar "announced: Persian Gulf Star Oil Company is one of the largest activists in the field of production and sale of petroleum products. He added: Despite the imposition of oppressive political and economic sanctions, we made the most of our available capacity. We were able to play an effective role in providing the country's fuel basket and feed to the petrochemical industry, as well as exporting special products to the world market. He called the oil markets one of the most complex, volatile and non-transparent international financial markets in the current context. He added: However, estimating the final selling price of the product has an effective role in planning sales and optimizing production in the long run. For this reason, we formed a working group to determine the price of manufactured products with the aim of reviewing and evaluating the most important factors influencing the price of the product. We set up this working group to get a fair price for special products. The CEO of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company added: By setting the price, in addition to increasing the possibility of competition in the global market, the interests and materials of the refinery will be preserved by achieving a wider scope of the energy market. The selling price of the product in the target market, the cost of shipping to the final destination, the demolition cost, the fixed ancillary costs and finally the buyer's profit, are influential in determining the price. He explained that in predicting the parameters, factors such as storage status of tanks and prioritization of sales of refinery products, demand and market competitors, stock market status, product demand analysis and future product price trends are taken into account. Determining these will create a clear view of the market. Dadvar said: In this situation, by examining the profit margin and monitoring the crack in the selling price of MOPAG and MOPS products, MOPJ will be decided for negotiations and marketing for the customers of the East Asian target market. Then the supply and sale of these products is planned. Using global price forecasting algorithms, including the Neural Network algorithm, is a trick to reduce errors and increase forecast accuracy. In these assessments, using guided learning, a neural network model has been developed to predict the monthly price of petroleum products, he said. In the process of developing this model, the effect of various technical and fundamental variables, the number of input layer neurons, the number of layers and the layer conversion functions for selecting training and experimental sets is improved. Suitable conditions are provided for predicting the price trend of the product. The CEO of the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company said: The working group for determining the prices of manufactured products monitors the situation of the oil and energy market inside and outside the country accurately and continuously. Reputable world publications and news and current events in this market are quickly reviewed. One of the practical steps in market studies is to identify and collect basic market information. Preparing a research and feasibility study to enter a new market, negotiating, strengthening marketing channels in East Asian markets are other issues. Iran Energy Exchange trading statistics are analyzed daily. The supply and demand of various petroleum products are controlled. Information on risks and opportunities in previous years is also collected. Reputable global journals such as PLATTS and EIA are also reviewed to determine the appropriate market time for product launches. Predicting the trend of price changes at the domestic and export levels, identifying competitors, formulating strategies and planning sales for the coming months are other programs that can be mentioned. Such an approach boosted the refinery's exports by 200 percent last year. Persian Gulf star managed to achieve such growth in exports compared to 2019. More than 1.6 million metric tons of four special products of the refinery were sold to 43 companies active in the field of oil and energy in the domestic and export markets with the highest crack spread. This success is due to the belief in teamwork and trust in Iranian professional youth in the Persian Gulf Star Oil Company. In the end, Dadvar said: Persian Gulf Star Refinery is one of the main determinants of product prices due to production volume, codified planning, analysis and monitoring of target markets. He said: We hope that next year, as in the past, by identifying new consumer markets and focusing on new export destinations, we will see an increase in foreign exchange inflows for Islamic Iran."

Israeli Police Arrest Palestinian Activist

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) - Israeli police Sunday arrested a prominent activist at the center of the movement to publicize the threatened eviction of Palestinians from their homes in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, her family told AFP.

The father of Mona el-Kurd, 23, said police apprehended his daughter and took her to a police station for questioning, leaving a summons for her twin brother, Muhammad.

In footage widely shared on social media, Mona el-Kurd was shown handcuffed and taken by officers out of her family's home in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, whose struggle has crystallized Palestinian anger over Israel's settlement movement.



Death Toll Surpasses 80 In Attack in Nigeria

MANDO (Dispatches) - Police in northwest Nigeria's Kebbi state told AFP Sunday that the death toll from an attack by a gang of cattle thieves on seven villages Thursday had risen to 88.

The region has struggled with decades-long communal clashes over resources but more recently some groups have become more violent, looting, killing and kidnapping for ransom.

"Initially 66 bodies were recovered but 22 more have been found," Kebbi state police spokesman Nafiu Abubakar said, adding that the search for more bodies was ongoing.

Dozens of assailants on motorcycles attacked seven neighbouring villages in Danko-Wasagu district on Thursday, Abubakar said.



Peruvians Go to Polls



LIMA (Dispatches) - Peruvians face a polarising choice between right-wing populist Keiko Fujimori and radical leftist Pedro Castillo when they elected a new president on Sunday, in a country desperate for an end to years of political turbulence.

The new leader will need to tackle a country in crisis, suffering from recession and with the worst coronavirus fatality rate in the world after recording over 184,000 deaths among its 33 million population.

And after four presidents in the last three years and with seven of the last 10 of the country's leaders either having been convicted of or investigated for corruption, Peruvians will look to their next leader to bring an end to the recent turbulence.

The nation's more than 11,000 voting centers opened at 1200 GMT, with the first results expected after today.

At the height of the political storm in November last year, Peru had three different presidents in just five days.

Two million Peruvians have lost their jobs during the pandemic and nearly a third of the country now live in poverty, according to official figures.

Fujimori, 46, and Castillo, 51, caused a surprise when taking the top two spots in April's first round of voting.

Now voters must decide between their polar opposite economic and political programs.

In the most recent poll, Castillo had a two-percentage-point edge, but 18 percent of people remained undecided in a country where voting is obligatory.

Fujimori, the daughter of disgraced and jailed former president Alberto Fujimori, represents the neoliberal economic model of tax cuts and boosting private activity to generate jobs.

Trade unionist schoolteacher Castillo has pledged to nationalize vital industries, raise taxes, eliminate tax exemptions and increase state regulation.

Fujimori's bastion is the capital Lima, while Castillo's bulwark is the rural deep interior.

"We're fed up with always being governed by the same people, we want Peru to change," Martha Huaman, 27, a fruit seller in Tacabamba, in the Cajamarca region where Castillo lives, told AFP.

"For us it's a dream, it's an awakening, we're really happy to be with" Castillo, said evangelical priest Victor Cieza Rivera, whose church is attended by the presidential candidate's wife Lilia Paredes.

Hungarians Protest Against Planned Chinese University Campus

BUDAPEST (Dispatches) - Thousands of Hungarians, some of them holding banners declaring "Treason", protested on Saturday against a Chinese university's plans to open a campus in Budapest.

Liberal opponents of nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban accuse him of cosyng up to China, and fear the campus could undercut the quality of higher education and help Beijing increase its influence in Hungary and the European Union.

"I do not agree with our country's strengthening feudal relationship with China," Patrik, a 22-year-old student who declined to give his full name, said at the protest in the Hungarian capital.

Jordan Security Forces Injured During Riots in Amman

AMMAN (Dispatches) - Jordan's security forces have faced "armed attacks" in the capital Amman, according to the authorities, after tribal supporters of a lawmaker who was banned from the kingdom's parliament clashed with the police.

The lawmaker, Osama al-Ajarna, was banned from the legislature for a year late last month for insulting the body in a speech, inciting calls for protests by members of his tribe.

The official Jordanian news agency Petra cited the interior ministry saying that some members of the security forces were injured after Saturday's violence in the Malha area near the road leading to Queen Alia International Airport.

In a separate statement published by the agency, the security services said that four members of a security force who were "dealing with riots in the

Naour area were injured while they were trying to stop the rioters".

The media spokesman for the public security directorate said: "A security force dealt with rioting, burning vehicles and shooting in the air by a group of people on Saturday evening, in the Naour area. As a result of these actions, four public security men were injured and taken to hospital."

Earlier, the interior ministry said in a statement that it was investigating calls that had gone out to hold gatherings that would violate the law, similar to previous gatherings that "prejudice societal peace and the rule of law".

The ministry also called on Jordanians "to distance themselves from illegal and unauthorised activities", stressing that it will not allow such activities to take place.



Mexicans Vote in Midterm Elections Seen

MEXICO CITY (Dispatches) - Mexicans headed to the polls on Sunday to vote for a new lower house of Congress, state governors and local lawmakers, in a race seen as a referendum on President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's policies and efforts to shake up Mexico's institutions.

All 500 seats in the lower house, 15 state governorships and thousands of local leadership positions are up for grabs, with some 93.5 million Mexicans eligible to vote.

The elections has been tinged by the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine rollout, as well as record criminal violence, with security consultancy Etellekt saying 91 politicians have been killed in this election cycle.

Since taking office in 2018 after a landslide victory, Lopez Obrador has expanded the role of the state in the energy industry and radically cut back on the cost of government to channel resources to the poor and his priority infrastructure projects.

In the process, he has eroded institutional checks and balances and frequently criticized autonomous bodies, including the Bank of Mexico, prompting critics to sound the alarm about a dangerous centralization of power.

Though voters tend to criticize his government's record on job creation and fighting crime, they are more skeptical of Mexico's former rulers, now in opposition. Lopez Obrador has also benefited from the vaccine rollout.

Recent polls suggest his National Regeneration Movement (MORENA) may lose some of its current 253 seats in the lower house, but is still likely to retain a majority with the help of the allied Green and Labor parties. The Senate is not up for election.

That support partly reflects discontent with older parties. To stay on top in the long term, MORENA must improve its record on the economy, officials, lawmakers and voters say.

At least one survey pointed to a tight race with the three opposition parties, the center-right National Action Party (PAN), centrist Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), that have forged an electoral alliance nipping at the heels of the MORENA-led coalition.

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At Least 11 Killed at Afghanistan Roadside Bomb Blast

KABUL (Dispatches) - At least 11 civilians including four women and three children were killed when a roadside bomb struck a bus in Afghanistan, officials said Sunday, in the latest attack targeting passenger vehicles in the violence-wracked country.

The attack occurred in the western province of Badghis, raising fears of fresh violence in the months ahead as the U.S. military continues to pull out its last remaining troops from the country.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blast but Badghis governor Heshammuddin Shams accused the Taliban of planting the bomb.

Another official from the province, Khodadad Tayeb, confirmed the toll and said that the bus fell into a valley after it was hit by the bomb.

Saturday's attack came after a series of blasts targeted passenger buses in Kabul this week.

The jihadist Islamic State claimed two back-to-back attacks on buses in Kabul.

Violence has soared in recent weeks as government forces and the Taliban clash in near-daily battles across the rugged countryside, with the militants appearing to focus on capturing new territory and battering checkpoints and bases near Kabul.

The Taliban said on Saturday that they have "captured the district of Deh Yak" in the province of Ghazni, about 150 kilometres south of Kabul.

The authorities said they had only "relocated" their forces from the area.

Ghazni is strategically located on the main road from Kabul to Kandahar, the former bastion of the Taliban in the south. The province sees regular fighting between the two warring sides.

In 2018, the Taliban briefly seized the provincial capital Ghazni, which has the same name as the province, in an all-out attack that left several government buildings torched and destroyed.

The surge in violence across Afghanistan comes as the US military continues to withdraw its remaining 2,500 troops from Afghanistan.

President Joe Biden has ordered the military to complete the pullout by the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. But as the Americans pack up, experts fear Afghanistan will remain home to a number of jihadist groups.



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Shanon (adviser)

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5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
green yard
Fully Furn

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Farmanieh (\$2200) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, & gym
Gheitarieh (\$1800) 180sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, & gym
Kamranieh (\$2600) 240sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, & gym
Pasdaran (\$1800) 180sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, balcony, & gym

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Uzbekistan Outlook Revised to Stable From Negative

TASHKENT (Dispatches) - S&P Global Ratings revised the outlook on its long-term ratings on Uzbekistan to stable from negative. At the same time, we affirmed the "BB-/B" long- and short-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings. The transfer and convertibility assessment remains "BB-". The stable outlook reflects our expectation that fiscal and external debt will continue to increase rapidly but remain at moderate levels over the next 12-24 months. We expect GDP growth to exceed 5% annually as of 2022.



Asia-Pacific Ministers Agree on Accelerating Vaccine Distribution

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - Trade ministers from the Asia-Pacific region agreed on achieving a strong economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, starting with accelerating vaccine distribution.

The ministers from 21 economies that form the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation met virtually amid the pandemic, with New Zealand, the current APEC host, serving as chair.

"Recognizing the role of extensive COVID-19 immunization as a global public good, we urgently need to accelerate the production and distribution of safe, effective, quality-assured, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines," they said in a joint statement, stressing trade and investment's role in ensuring widespread and equitable access to vaccines. The trade ministers also said APEC economies will work proactively to support discussions for a temporary waiver of certain intellectual property protections on COVID-19 vaccines.

The mention of the waiver was included in the statement as New Zealand has announced its support of a proposal by India and South Africa for the World Trade Organization to temporarily suspend intellectual property protections on the vaccines.

In addition to the joint statement, the ministers issued a separate one on COVID-19 vaccine supply chains that said APEC economies will expedite the flow and transit of all vaccines and related goods through air, sea and land ports.

"We will consider voluntary actions to reduce the cost of these products for our people, particularly by encouraging each economy to review its own charges levied at the border on COVID-19 vaccines and related goods," the ministers said in the statement.

At a pre-meeting news conference, New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth Damien O'Connor, who serves as meeting chair, said the successful distribution of vaccines across the Asia-Pacific region will be critical to the region's recovery.

"COVID-19 has highlighted once again, how much we depend on each other, and how important it is to keep trade and supply chains open," he said.

As the APEC economies collectively need to vaccinate roughly 3 billion people, O'Connor said he urges the member states and regions to undertake the same level of cooperation they had done for economic development toward vaccines and medical supply equipment.

Meanwhile, Japanese senior vice foreign minister Eiichiro Washio said in the pre-meeting news conference that APEC economies should focus on building greater governance around data exchange to ensure digital information can be exchanged freely and with trust, speaking on the need for the region to "build back better" from the pandemic. "As the pandemic is accelerating digitalization, a global rule for a digital society is needed," he said.

Trade Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama also stressed the importance of digitalization during the ministerial meeting. Founded in 1989, APEC is a platform for discussions on free trade and economic cooperation by Pacific Rim countries covering 60% of global gross domestic product, some 40% of the global population and around 50% of the world's trade volume.

APEC groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

Russia-China Relations at Highest-Ever Level

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia-China relations have reached an unprecedentedly high level and the two sides have extensive shared interests.

Russia is willing to deepen cooperation with China in more areas, Putin said via video link when he took a question from He Ping, president and editor-in-chief of Xinhua News Agency, on China-Russia relations, in a meeting with heads of major international news agencies, held in St. Petersburg on Friday local time.

The media event was organized by Russia's TASS news agency on the sidelines of the 2021 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. Putin recalled his close interactions with Chinese President Xi Jinping over the past few years, and said they recently witnessed the launch of four nuclear power units of a bilateral nuclear energy cooperation project, a very important part of high-tech cooperation between the two countries.

Russia and China have extensive shared interests, which is an important foundation of deepened bilateral cooperation, Putin said. Stressing the importance of economic cooperation, Putin said Russia and China managed to keep bilateral trade at levels above 100 billion U.S. dollars for several years in a row, particularly in 2020 despite the impacts brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Putin said the two sides are expected to boost bilateral trade to 200 billion U.S. dollars by 2024.

Russia and China are also closely cooperating in a variety of fields such as aircraft manufacturing, lunar research, energy, environmental protection, and people-to-people exchanges, Putin said, adding that Russia stands ready to work with China to further synergize the Eurasian Economic Union with the Belt and Road Initiative.

Putin said Russia and China will undoubtedly strengthen their coordination and collaboration in the international community and safeguard common interests, noting that this Russia-China strategic coordination is certainly conducive to international strategic stability.

Thailand Has the Monetary Scope to Help Economy

BANGKOK (Reuters): Thailand has room for further monetary easing to support its economic recovery, which is expected to be

slow, uneven and clouded by the unknown path of the coronavirus pandemic, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said.

The tourism-reliant economy contracted 6.1% last year, its deepest slump in over two decades, with tourism devastated by the impact of the pandemic.

The Thai economy is expected to expand by 2.6% in 2021, led by a gradual recovery in domestic demand and goods exports, the IMF said in a statement on Thursday after its executive board completed its review of Southeast Asia's second-largest economy.

The drag on tourism is expected to continue for most of 2021 due to uncertainty around vaccine rollouts and full resumption of global travel, it said.

Thailand has planned a calibrated reopening this year to international tourists, dependent largely on vaccinations of both visitors and the local population in tourist areas.

"Given the large output gap and fragile inflation expectations, many directors saw scope for further monetary easing, including unconventional monetary measures if downside risks materialize to enhance the impact of the financial measures and fiscal stimulus," the IMF said.

Directors called for further fiscal expansion to support the recovery, the IMF said. "Premature tapering should be avoided".

Thailand's central bank has left its benchmark rate at a record low of 0.50% since around mid-2020 and it recently said the rate could stay there for one or two years.

It will next review monetary policy and economic forecasts on June 23.

Turkey Aims to Have 16,700 km Railway Network by 2023

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey aims to have 16,775 kilometers (10,423 miles) of railway tracks by the Turkish Republic's 100th anniversary in 2023, the Turkish Transport and Infrastructure Minister Adil Karaismailoğlu said.

The current length of railways in the country is 12,803 kilometers, Karaismailoğlu told journalists in the central province of Yozgat.

Underlining that Turkey has made significant railway investments over the last 19 years, he said the country dominates the Iron Silk Road from China to Europe.

The Belt and Road Initiative – sometimes referred to as the New Silk Road – is an ambitious development program to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks along six corridors with the aim of improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth.

He said Turkey was also making an effort to develop national and indigenous technologies to modernize its railways.

The first transit train from China to Europe, using the Middle Corridor and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway (BTK), was a Chinese export train that reached Turkey in 12 days and arrived in Prague via the Marmaray with a total travel time of 18 days in 2019.

As part of the critical phase of the China-led Belt and Road Initiative project, a trillion-dollar infrastructure development project encompassing a potential of 3 billion people across 65 countries, the first China Railway Express train service along the Middle Corridor from China to Europe passed through the Marmaray tunnel Nov. 6, 2019.

The Chinese transit train passing through the Marmaray was a milestone in international rail freight transportation. The train departed from China and entered Turkey thanks to the "Trans-Caspian International Transport Route" (TITR) train line.

Currently, 5,000 trains travel along the line known as the Northern Railway Corridor, which passes through Russia connecting the world's production centers in China with Europe. It is expected that some of those trains will use the Middle Corridor, thus establishing Turkey's importance in international logistics.

Turkey, which has been significantly investing in railway transportation in recent years, sent off two export trains, one headed to Russia and the other to China, using the BTK railway from the capital Ankara January this year. The train to Russia was the first block train to use the route while the second one, which was carrying the mineral boron in its containers, was the third China-bound freight train.

U.S. Inflation Could Reach 3% This Year

WASHINGTON (Dispatches)

- Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said inflation could climb as high as 3 percent this year as the economy recovers from the depths of the coronavirus recession.



For months, the White House and Federal Reserve have expected prices to rise as consumer demand rebounds, supply chains struggle to catch up and Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus package infuses through the economy.

Yellen, Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell and other top policymakers insist the price pops are temporary and that the current uptick doesn't reflect a dangerously persistent new trend.

Still, Saturday appeared to be the first time the Biden administration projected what inflation could be through 2021.

"We have in recent months seen some inflation, and we — at least on a year-over-year basis — will continue, I believe through the rest of the year, to see higher inflation rates, maybe around 3 percent," Yellen said following a meeting of Group of Seven finance ministers in London. "But I personally believe that this represents transitory factors."

The Fed, which is charged with keeping prices stable and employment low, strives for a 2 percent annual inflation target. But the central bank has sent a clear message that it will not rush to combat inflation and raise interest rates until there has been substantial progress in the labor market. The economy is still down 7.5 million jobs since the pandemic took hold.

The Fed's commitment will be tested depending on how long prices continue to climb — and how high they go. Prices were up by 3.6 percent in April compared with a year ago.

Powell and others have given a few reasons for why inflation is on the upswing and why the Fed isn't worried about bringing it down too soon. Consumer demand for goods and services — from airline tickets to restaurant reservations — is rebounding as people unleash pent-up savings. Meanwhile, the supply side of the equation is taking longer to pick up. Those bottlenecks are expected to ease as factories ramp back up to full capacity and workers come back on the payrolls. But it won't happen right away.

Economists also expect inflation figures to taper off in the year to come, as the super-low readings from the pandemic's early days shift out of the calculation.

Biden privately called Lawrence Summers, a critic of White House agenda, to discuss economy

South Korea to Push for Use-by Dates to Cut Food Waste

SEOUL (Dispatches) - The Food and Drug Safety Ministry of South Korea recently said that it would take steps to replace sell-by dates with the use-by dates in the country in an effort to give food a longer shelf life and reduce food waste.

Sell-by dates on food products indicate the period of time said products can be distributed and sold. But use-by dates show how long products can be stored for and still used.

The latter often lasts longer than the former, though sell-by dates are what is currently used in the country.

Milk, for instance, often has a 10-day sell-by date. But a 2009 study by the Korea Consumer Agency found that it can last up to 50 days. The study also found that sliced cheese is safe to consume up to 70 days after its sell-by date.

The ministry said it would seek to revise related laws including the Act on Labelling and Advertising of Foods as part of steps to introduce a longer expiry date.

"Though food is still safe to consume after its sell-by date, consumers see it as a point after which food need to be thrown away, wasting consumable food products as a result," one official at the Food Ministry said.

"By introducing a use-by date, it will contribute to reducing food waste and greenhouse gas emissions, helping protect the environment."

According to a study published in academic journal Science, food accounted for nearly 26% of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. Some 18% of the greenhouse gas emissions were generated in the supply chain, the study showed.

The ministry also explained use-by dates have been adopted by other OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation) countries including the European Union and Japan.

In a study released in February, the Korea Food Service Industry Research, nearly 7 in 10 restaurant owners agreed that a sell-by date needs to be replaced with a use-by date, citing less confusion and a drop in food waste costs.

The Food Ministry also said it would expand the range of edible insects eligible as food raw materials as part of efforts to secure more meat substitute protein products.

To help recycle food product packaging, the ministry will also change rules to allow recycled plastics to be used to make containers following a review as early as January next year.



Environment Department to Protect Wildlife in Draught

TEHRAN (IP) - The head of Iran's Department of Environment says that the executive duty of the organization is to protect wildlife in draught times.

In response to a question about the body's plan to protect the environment during water shortage conditions, Isa Kalantari said on Monday that it was

not possible to irrigate forests in such conditions so the task of the Environment Department was to protect animals no matter of the fact.

Kalantari added that wildlife needed fodder the Environment Organization was trying to provide it for animals.



Trump Denounces Fauci, China; Dangles 2024 Prospects

GREENVILLE, N.C. (Reuters) - Former President Donald Trump sharply attacked U.S. infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, demanded reparations from China and denounced an investigation into his finances in a speech in North Carolina.

Speaking in Greenville, North Carolina, at the state's Republican Party convention, Trump joined a chorus of Republican politicians who are criticizing Fauci for asking Americans to wear masks to guard against the virus and who at times has been skeptical of a theory that the virus escaped from a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

Trump called Fauci "not a great doctor but a great promoter" for his frequent television appearances. "But he's been wrong on almost every issue and he was wrong on Wuhan and the lab also," Trump said.

The origin of the virus remains hotly contested and remains under study by U.S. intelligence agencies.

Trump's own handling of the pandemic, in which nearly 600,000 people in the United States have died and he himself was infected, was a factor in his loss to Democratic President Joe Biden in the November 2020 election.

Trump called on China to pay \$10 trillion in reparations to the United States and the world for its own handling of the virus, and he said nations should cancel their debt to Beijing.

Trump's appearance had all the hallmarks of his signature campaign rallies complete with a musical playlist heavy on Elton John standards.

North Carolina Republican Party Chairman Michael Whatley introduced Trump as "our president," a nod to the former president's baseless claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him through voter fraud, which Trump called "the crime of the century."

Trump said a criminal investigation launched by the New York attorney general's office is "the ultimate fishing expedition," and said it was the latest attempt by Democrats to bring him down after two impeachment sagas when he was president.

"It's been a five-year witch hunt, hoax after hoax," said Trump. "They'll never stop until November of 2024."

New York Attorney General Letitia James has been investigating whether the Trump Organization falsely reported property values to secure loans and obtain economic and tax benefits.



Trump vowed to help Republicans in 2022 congressional elections and endorsed U.S. Representative Ted Budd for a U.S. Senate seat in North Carolina after his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, said she would not run.

He appeared to dangle a possible run himself for president in 2024, saying he was looking forward to that year. Advisers say Trump, who faces a potential indictment in New York over his business dealings, has been discussing the possibility of another presidential campaign.

Trump emerged from seclusion for the Saturday event, the first in a planned series of speaking engagements this summer.

"The survival of America depends upon our ability to elect Republicans at every level, starting with the midterms next year," Trump said.

Lara Trump announced on stage she had considered running for the North Carolina Senate seat but opted not to do so in 2022 in order to care for her young children. But she did not rule out a run in the future.

Oil Traders Ramp Up Asian Jet Fuel Exports To U.S., Europe



LONDON (Dispatches) - Global oil trading companies are ramping up jet fuel exports from Asia to Europe and the United States, as widespread anti-coronavirus vaccinations and relatively lower infection rates allow commercial travel to resume faster in Western countries.

The strong demand from the West has fully drawn down surplus jet fuel stored on ships around Singapore, while refiners' margins for the aviation fuel - a big drag on overall profits during the COVID-19 pandemic - have nearly trebled since end-March.

Asia exported about 417,000 barrels per day (bpd) of jet fuel to Europe and North America combined in April-May, nearly 32% higher than 316,000 bpd for February-March period, according to Reuters calculations based on data from oil analytics firm Vortexa.

Jet fuel volumes in floating storage facilities have consistently stayed at zero for the past four weeks for the first time since March last year, according to data intelligence firm Kpler.

There were about 313,000 barrels of jet fuel stored in ships in early May, already 90% lower compared with the same time last year, Kpler data showed.

At least 10 vessels, chartered by companies including Saudi's Aramco Trading, Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron Corp and Valero are currently in transit from South Korea to the United States, ship tracking data showed, carrying about 3.3 million barrels of jet fuel for delivery this month.

"A pick-up in air travel in the U.S. and Europe amid falling (coronavirus) infection rates and possible relaxing of travel restrictions this summer, that contrasts against the weak fundamentals in Asia, is expected to support a widening of East-West jet fuel arbitrage in the near term," said Serena Huang, Asia lead analyst at Vortexa.

But the strength of the East-West arbitrage is also dependent on the inventory levels in the United States and Europe, which suggests the Asia-U.S. arbitrage would be stronger in the near term than the Asia-Europe arbitrage, analysts said. "U.S. jet stockpiles in May are on par with 2019 pre-pandemic average levels as per Energy Information Administration data, but Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Antwerp's (ARA) jet stockpiles are still above pre-pandemic levels," analyst Huang said.

However, volumes to Europe are expected to gradually increase as further re-opening of European markets for travel in coming days is expected to stimulate demand.

Small Sri Lanka Harbors Big Maritime Ambitions

COLOMBO (AFP) - The dramatic recent fire on a container ship off Sri Lanka highlighted the risks involved in the island nation's ambitions to become one of the world's busiest maritime transport hubs.

The MV X-Press Pearl burned for 13 days, releasing tonnes of chemicals and plastics. The sinking ship's nearly 300 tonnes of fuel oil may now leak into the Indian Ocean.

Thanks to its geographical location, around 200 container ships and oil tankers sail past every day on the busy routes between Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

But Sri Lanka is also the biggest so-called transshipment hub in South Asia, meaning that some of the world's biggest ships dock in Sri Lanka to load and unload containers.

Colombo, four days by ship from Singapore and four and a half to Dubai, is the only port between those two places deep enough to handle ships with more than 18,000 containers.

Colombo Port now hopes to double its annual handling capacity of 7.2 million containers in four years.

"We are strategically located and we are strategically important," Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) chairman Daya Ratnayake told AFP.

"But, we have a serious problem here, the problem is (lack of) capacity."

India is developing a deep-water port at Vizhinjam on its southwest tip and is planning another in the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, both of which may steal some of Colombo's trade.

Two-thirds of the transshipment cargo going through Sri Lanka is goods going from or to India, and New Delhi has traditionally seen Colombo as an ally.

However, since a big chunk of what passes through the Indian Ocean is Chinese-made, Beijing has also shown a keen interest in developing Sri Lanka as a key link on its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Since 2014, Colombo Port has been home to a \$500-million Chinese-run deep sea terminal. To pacify New Delhi, Sri Lanka this year allowed India to build another new terminal right next door.

More Than 59m Iranians Eligible to Cast Vote in Election

TEHRAN (MNA) - A spokesperson for the Election Office of the Iranian Ministry of Interior announced that more than 59 million Iranians are eligible to cast vote in the 2021 presidential election.

Saying that the number of Iranians who are eligible to cast vote in the 2021 presidential election hit 59,310,307 million, the spokesperson for the Election Office of the Iranian Ministry of Interior expressed hope that all Iranians will be present at the ballot boxes.

It is predicted that more than 72,000 polling stations will be installed across the country, Seyed Ismail Mousavi stated.

Mousavi spoke about holding electronic elections for city councils in some cities, saying, "Elections will be held electronically in capitals of 24 provinces, not including Tehran."

Instead of usual ballot boxes, electronic platforms will be available for people to cast their votes by entering the code of their preferred candidate, he added.

FDI Registered 189% Growth Last Year

TEHRAN (MNA) - Study of situation of mining, mineral, trade and industrial projects approved at Investment Board of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) indicate that these projects registered a 189 percent growth last year (ended March 20, 2021).

Accordingly, mining, mineral and industrial projects within the framework of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) hit a 189 percent growth last year (ended March 20, 2021) both in terms of value and volume as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

The study of situation of mining, mineral and industrial projects approved at FDI's Investment Board showed that the number of mining, mineral and industrial projects approved at the Foreign Investment Board recorded a 92.7 percent hike last year as compared to a year earlier.

According to this report, total volume of projects within the framework of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) made in country's mining, mineral and industrial projects, approved at the Foreign Investment Board, last year registered a 189.1 percent hike as compared to the last year's corresponding period. The report put the total value of foreign investment made in Iran's industrial and mineral projects from March 21, 2019 to March 20, 2020 at \$854 million, the value of which increased \$2,469 million more in last year (ended March 20, 2021).

Iran Port...

FROM PAGE 1

Shipping and trade involving Iranian ports and maritime entities have frequently been targeted by the sanctions as Washington has sought to choke off the country's export revenues and make it harder for the government to access supplies of basic goods.

While introducing projects to renovate and modernize trade gateways on the Persian Gulf, Iran has invested heavily in its Chabahar port on the Sea of Oman and in the Caspian Sea ports to further boost trade with allies and partners.

The country aims to reach a target of 500 million metric tons in cargo handling capacity at its ports within the next five years.

Iran, Russia...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile the both sides in the meeting signed an agreement on visa waiver for group tours.

Accordingly, Iranian and Russian group tours, including 5-50 members, can travel without visas.

Mounesan referred to Russia as one of the Iranian government's destinations for facilitating tourism.

He hoped for increasing Iranian and Russian tourists after signing the agreements and completing the COVID-19 vaccination process.

Mounesan also pointed to Oman and China as two other destinations which implemented visa waiver with Iran.

Meanwhile, Doguzova said thanks to good relations between Iran and Russia and also great tourism capacities between two countries, it is necessary to increase the volume of tourists.

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.

Zakharova said that Iran and Russia have signed an 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 Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to Moscow on March 27, 2017.

Tehran Decries...

FROM PAGE 1

He accused the United States of attempting to mass starve the Iranian people, and condemned the United Nations' inaction on anti-Iran sanctions.

The UN should totally understand Iran's position, it's been sanctioned by the worst international sanctions ever imposed on a nation, arguably, in the modern era, and yet the United Nations has obviously, religiously, decided to ignore the realities and the circumstances of The Islamic Republic of Iran.

Of course it goes deeper than this, the United Nations relies on the US of A for its funds, the majority of the funds that keep the United Nations going come from America, and of course they're based primarily in the US as well.

The spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh, declared that the country has regularly paid its UN membership dues during the past years, despite unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran, which have made financial transactions difficult for the Islamic Republic.

Mr Khatibzadeh said Tehran has been in talks with the UN treasury to settle the debt. He also urged the world body to introduce a self-transaction channel after the U.S. blocked the previous channels used by the Islamic Republic to transfer money.

Iraq Hopes to...

FROM PAGE 1

Iraq has been importing Iranian gas under two supply agreement signed in 2013 and 2015. Under the first, Iran is committed to export a maximum of 35mn m³/d of pipeline gas to the 3GW Bismaya power plant, Iraq's largest gas-fired plant, which powers the capital. The second calls on Iran to supply southern Iraq with 20-35mn m³/d, with the volumes adjusted depending on the regions' needs.

The country's reliance on gas and electricity imports from Iran also presents political risk as it depends on U.S. sanctions waivers. The U.S. government gave Baghdad a 120-day waiver in March allowing it to continue importing gas and 1,200MW of electricity from Iran.

Last week, during the visit of Iraqi Finance Minister Ali Abdul-Amir Allawi to Iran on top of a high-ranking delegation to hold talks with senior Iranian officials for exploring ways of expanding economic ties between the two neighbors, the two sides discussed Iraq's energy debts to Iran.

Tehran, Baku...

FROM PAGE 1

Mousavi for his part reminded of the historical friendship of the people of Iran and Azerbaijan and, referring to the development of economic and trade relations between the two countries, said: "There is a lot of potential for expanding cooperation in various economic fields."

He also announced Iran's readiness for cooperation in the reconstruction of Azerbaijan's liberated regions.

The two sides also explored new ways for the expansion of bilateral economic and trade relations and some other issues of mutual interest. Back in late May, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev had visited Tehran on top of a high-ranking delegation to discuss the expansion of economic ties between the two countries, especially in energy fields.

Conceicao Agrees Porto Contract Extension

LISBON (Dispatches) - Coach Sergio Conceicao has extended his contract with Porto by three years to June 2024, the club announced on Saturday.

The new deal "means more responsibility", Sergio Conceicao told a news conference.

"I always have one essential thing in mind: the success of Porto professionally," he said, adding he was looking forward to "the return of the fans to the stadiums".

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Thompson Goes Low To Take Lead

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - A relaxed Lexi Thompson fired a flawless 66 at the Olympic Club on Saturday to vault to a one-stroke lead heading into the final round of the U.S. Women's Open in San Francisco.

All facets of Thompson's game were working as she carded her lowest round at the major in 15 appearances, sinking five birdies and gamely scrambling to avoid any bogeys to sit seven-under 206 for the tournament, one clear of Yuka Saso.

Perez Wins Azerbaijan GP After Verstappen Crashes

BAKU (Dispatches) - Sergio Pérez won the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in a two-lap shootout after championship leader Max Verstappen crashed while leading with a tire failure and Lewis Hamilton went off course trying to seize the win on the standing restart.

Verstappen was four laps away from a second consecutive victory Sunday when his Red Bull suddenly slammed hard into the wall with a puncture to his left rear tire. The Dutchman climbed from his car, inspected the tire and kicked it in anger before stomping off in disgust over the race-changing failure. "Is he OK?" radioed rival and seven-time champion Hamilton.

Verstappen was fine but Red Bull was furious over a second Pirelli failure asked for a race stoppage to allow tire changes for safety reasons. Lance Stroll had crashed earlier after his own unexpected tire failure.

Formula One red-flagged the race and brought the field to pit lane, then decided to resume with a standing start for a two-lap sprint to the finish. Pérez was the leader but Hamilton shot past him in his attempt to win the race and reclaim the points lead from Verstappen.

But he failed to brake in the first corner and his Mercedes slid off track. Hamilton dropped to 15th, snapping a streak of 54 consecutive races of earning a points position finish. "So sorry, guys," he told the team.

Mercedes principal Toto Wolff told German broadcaster Sky Sport that the front brakes were unresponsive and the team did not yet know why. Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel took second to give Aston Martin its first ever F1 podium in an impressive drive after qualifying 11th.

It was Vettel's highest finish since 2019. Pierre Gasly was third for AlphaTauri as all three drivers made their first trip to the podium this season.



The red-flag Sunday was the second of the season following a crash between Valtteri Bottas and George Russell at Imola in April, and the longest suspension since Romain Grosjean's fiery crash in Bahrain last November caused a stoppage of more than an hour.

It was the second career win for Pérez, who is in his first season with Red Bull. It somewhat salvaged the race for the team that had been headed toward a 1-2 finish before Verstappen's tire failed. Verstappen retained a four-point lead over Hamilton in the standings; Pérez climbed to third.

The 2016 Spanish Grand Prix was the last time the top two drivers in the championship standings failed to score points. "I am so, so happy. First of all I have to say I am very sorry for Max because he had a tremendous race. We were going to have a 1-2 together, but in the end it was still a fantastic day for us and luckily we were still able to finish the race," Pérez said.

Charles Leclerc started on the pole for Ferrari but couldn't replicate his qualifying pace and was quickly passed by Hamilton and both Red Bull cars. A slow pit stop for Hamilton - held up by the team because Gasly was passing his pit box - allowed Verstappen and Pérez to both come out ahead of Hamilton.

Verstappen then retained control and was cruising toward the victory until he was blindsided by the tire failure. Leclerc eventually finished fourth after losing a fight with Gasly for the last podium place. Lando Norris took fifth for McLaren, hours after the team announced longtime investor Mansour Ojeh had died aged 68.

De Bruyne Undergoes Small Operation

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Kevin De Bruyne underwent "a small operation" on his face on Saturday morning and "will rejoin the team on Monday", Belgium coach Roberto Martinez said.

"We decided that Kevin De Bruyne finally needed a small intervention, which took place today. He will rejoin the team on Monday," the Spanish coach told a news conference ahead of a friendly against Croatia.

The Manchester City playmaker suffered fractures to his nose and left eye socket after a collision with Chelsea's Antonio Rudiger in the Champions League final a week ago. "It was necessary for the long term," said Martinez. "It lasted 20 minutes. Everything went well."

The surgery "does not delay Kevin's return. It could even speed up his return because he won't need a mask," said Martinez, adding that De Bruyne would be unavailable for their first Euro 2020 match against Russia on 12 June and refused to predict when the playmaker would return to the pitch.

Axel Witsel who has been included he squad even though he is still recovering from a ruptured Achilles tendon in January, will also miss the game against Croatia in Brussels on Sunday.



Durant Scores 29 as Nets Roll Over Bucks

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Kevin Durant had 29 points and 10 rebounds as the Brooklyn Nets withstood Giannis Antetokounmpo's 34-point performance to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 115-107 in the opening game of their second round series.

The Nets won the battle between two of the NBA's most potent offenses on Saturday night despite losing James Harden to a nagging hamstring injury in the first minute of the game.

Harden was forced out just 43 seconds in, pulling up and grabbing the back of his leg after a drive. He did not return.

Kyrie Irving had 25 points and eight assists, Blake Griffin tallied 18 points and a team-high 14 rebounds for the Nets, who beat the Bucks in six games in the 2003 finals, the last time they met in the playoffs.

Journeyman Mike James came off the bench to score 12 points in the win.

Antetokounmpo, the two time reigning NBA Most Valuable Player, played 35 minutes, shooting 16 of 24 from the floor and grabbing 11 rebounds for the underdog Bucks, who led the league by averaging 120.1 points per game. Both clubs came into the second round of the postseason after cruising through their opening series.

Milwaukee completed a four-game sweep of Miami last Saturday to reach the second round for the third straight season.

Brooklyn, who averaged 118.6 points during the regular season, needed five games to get past the Boston Celtics thanks in large part to the trio of Durant, Irving and Harden.

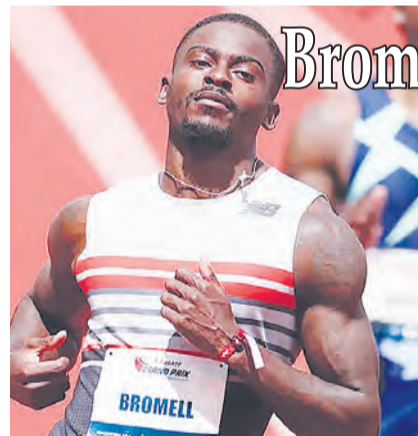
Due to injuries and rest, the trio had played just eight games together during the regular season.

Brooklyn had hoped to have the big three healthy for the playoffs but have hit another injury snag with Harden going down in front of a crowd of 15,700 at Barclays Center arena.

The Nets announced later in the first half that Harden would undergo an MRI to determine the extent of the injury.

The 31-year-old Harden has had hamstring problems before, missing 21 games in April and May. The Nets are 20-17 without Harden and 29-7 with him in the lineup.

Harden averaged 27.8 points and 10.6 assists in a first round against the Celtics.



heat, getting off to a strong start and powering away to become the ninth man to break 9.80sec over 100m.

Bromell Clocks World-Leading 9.77sec in 100m in Florida

MIAMI (Dispatches) - U.S. sprinter Trayvon Bromell threw down an Olympic challenge, clocking a world-leading 9.77sec to win the 100m at a meeting in Florida and become the seventh-fastest all time.

In a wind of 1.5 m/sec, Bromell stormed to victory at the NACAC New Life Invitational, a World Athletics Continental Tour Silver meeting in Miramar, Florida.

The world indoor 60m champion in 2016, Bromell faced just three competitors in his heat, getting off to a strong start and powering away to become the ninth man to break 9.80sec over 100m.

It continues an impressive build up toward the Tokyo Olympics for Bromell, the 25-year-old who has battled injuries the past few seasons.

In April he clocked a then world-leading 9.88sec at a meet in Jacksonville, Florida.

Bromell's form suggests he is firmly in the frame as a potential 100m gold medalist in Tokyo, where world champion Christian Coleman will be absent because of a doping ban.

Bromell exploded onto the athletics scene in 2015, when he ran a personal best time of 9.84sec for the 100m before his 20th birthday -- the fastest time ever run by a teenager over the distance -- before later claiming a bronze at that year's World Championships in Beijing.

After winning 60m indoor world gold in 2016 he suffered disappointment at the Rio Olympics, finishing in eighth place in the final won by Usain Bolt.

He later suffered a torn Achilles in the final of the 4x100m relay, the start of an injury nightmare that saw him miss two full years of competition.

Federer Withdraws From French Open

PARIS (Dispatches) - Roger Federer said Sunday he was withdrawing from the French Open despite having reached the fourth round, opting to focus on his primary objective of winning a ninth Wimbledon title.

"After discussions with my team, I've decided I will need to pull out of Roland Garros today," the 39-year-old said.

"After two knee surgeries and over a year of rehabilitation it's important that I listen to my body and make sure I don't push myself too quickly on my road to recovery.

"I am thrilled to have gotten three matches under my belt. There is no greater feeling than being back on court."

Federer, a 20-time Grand Slam title winner, who will be 40 in two months' time, battled over three and a half hours until 12:45 Sunday morning to reach the last 16 with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 win over 59th-ranked Dominik Koepfer.

He was due back on court on Monday to tackle Matteo Berrettini for a place in the quarter-finals.

However, having undergone two knee surgeries in 2020, the Swiss star had admitted there were doubts over whether he'd make it.

Federer is playing only his third tournament since last year's Australian Open and has always said Wimbledon is his main goal.

He is chasing a ninth title at Wimbledon which starts on June 28.



Man City Trio Sweep Premier League End of Season Awards

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester City's Ruben Dias and Phil Foden were named the Premier League's best player and best young player of the season on Saturday, while City boss Pep Guardiola was named Manager of the Season for a third time.

Defender Dias becomes the second Portuguese to receive the honour after former Manchester United forward Cristiano Ronaldo.

Centre back Dias was also named England's Footballer of the Year in the annual vote of the Football Writers' Association last month following a superb debut campaign after his move from Benfica last year.

Dias played a key role in delivering City's third Premier League title in four years as well as the League Cup, and helped his side the Champions League final.

The 24-year-old was also named in the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Team of the Year.

Dias is the fourth defender to be voted Player of the Season by the public, the captains of the 20 Premier League clubs and a panel of experts after Manchester United's Nemanja Vidic, former City captain Vincent Kompany and Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk.

Other nominees for the award this season included Kevin De Bruyne, Bruno Fernandes, Jack Grealish, Harry Kane, Mason Mount, Mohamed Salah and Tomas Soucek.

Foden made 28 appearances for City, finishing with nine goals and five assists to earn a spot in England's European Championship squad.

