

**Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 82,965 With 111 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on Sunday Issued a Message Congratulating Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Being Elected as Iran's New President And Wished Success for Him**

VOL. XXVII, No. 7251 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

MONDAY JUNE 21, 2021 - KHORDAD 31, 1400

**2 DOMESTIC**

**Decisive Steps Taken to Preserve People's Rights**



> SEE PAGE 2

**3 DOMESTIC**

**Malaysia Plans To Boost Tourism Sector In Post-Covid-19 Era**



> SEE PAGE 3

**4 INTERNATIONAL**

**UN Calls for Halt of Weapons to Myanmar**



> SEE PAGE 4

**8 SPORTS**

**Germany Bounce Back With 4-2 Win Over Portugal**



> SEE PAGE 8

**Emergency Use of Two Domestically-Produced COVID-19 Vaccines Approved**

*IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK*

TEHRAN - Iran has approved the emergency use of two domestically-produced COVID-19 vaccines as part of efforts to contain a recent surge in the disease.

President Hassan Rouhani has confirmed the news. The names of the vaccines have not been announced. Rouhani has said the vaccination program using these two vaccines is due to be launched this week. The President has also spoken of other domestically-made vaccines and said they are five in total.

Coronavirus cases and deaths have surged in Iran in the past several weeks, despite an ongoing vaccination drive. The surge has been mainly blamed on the public as many people do not observe social distancing rules and other health protocols. Iran Daily on Sunday published a report about the COVID-19 situation in the capital Tehran. The report mentions a number of instances that show how people fail to wear masks or they are in crowded places while failing to observe social distancing. The report also speaks with a citizen who is preparing to hold a party and has once survived the respiratory disease.

**See Page 7**

## Almost All JCPOA Agreement Documents Ready



*IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK*

TEHRAN - Stating that almost all JCPOA agreement documents are ready, Iran Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs said that the parties will return to the capitals not only for further consultation but also for decision-making.

"Today is the last day of the sixth round of negotiations, and we have gone through very intense days," said Seyed Abbas Araqchi on the eve of the meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA on Sunday.

"We are now in a situation that we think almost all the agreement documents are ready," he added. "Of the main issues that remained disputed, some have been resolved and some remain, but it has taken on a very precise form and it is quite clear what the dimensions of these disputes are."

"I think it is time for the other side to decide because the stage for negotiations and a possible agreement is quite clear. They have to make their own decisions," Araqchi highlighted, stressing, "It is time for all parties to make their final decision."

The Iranian top negotiator in Vienna talks went on to say, "We will stop the talks and return to the capitals for a few days not just for further consultation but for decision-making. But now, I cannot say exactly how many days."

"My colleagues had very difficult days and worked on the documents until late at night. You know that indirect negotiation is not easy and you have to work to prevent misunderstandings," he added.

Referring to today's meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA, Araqchi said, "Today we will have a summary of what has been done so far and we will return to Tehran tonight."

"Every time we negotiated, we made progress. Some rounds have been more progressive and some rounds have been less. We have made good progress this round and now we are closer to an agreement than ever. I hope we can reach a final conclusion in the next round," Deputy FM noted.

He also expressed hope that the final conclusion will reach the next round, saying, "I hope it will reach in the next round, but it is certainly not possible to predict whether we will be able to do so in the next round, but I am very hopeful."

**Zarif, Atmar, Cavusoglu Stress Joint Cooperation In Afghanistan**

TEHRAN (MNA) - In a trilateral meeting, the foreign ministers of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan emphasized the active participation of the three countries in the Afghan peace process and the fight against terrorism in the region.

The tripartite meeting of Mohammad Javad Zarif, Mevlut Cavusoglu, and Mohammad Hanif Atmar, the foreign ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan was held in Antalya, Turkey a few hours ago.

During the meeting, the foreign ministers emphasized the active participation of the three countries in the Afghan peace process and the fight against terrorism in the region.

Transit cooperation with Afghanistan through Iran's communication routes, as well as the development of economic cooperation with this country were among agreements reached in this meeting.

At the end of the meeting, a trilateral statement was issued by Mohammad Javad Zarif, Mevlut Cavusoglu, and Mohammad Hanif Atmar.

**See Page 7**

**ViewPoint**  
By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

## Raisi Is Here to Unite the Nation

After weeks of campaigns and anticipations, Iran's 13th presidential election ended by choosing the 8th president of the country and Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi was elected by the people as the new president of the Islamic Revolution.

The current Judiciary Chief who will take office as Iran's new president in almost two months is the hope of the middle class and revolutionary people to remove economic pressure from their shoulders. Hojjatoleslam Raisi in almost two years serving as Judiciary Chief has had good performance and it has revived hopes among the public for having a better president who pays attention to the public demands.

Of course his election faced a backlash by the Zionist and Western officials and media and it proved that Iranian nation has hit the nail on the head by electing Raisi as their president. Raisi enjoyed a landslide victory election with winning almost 18 million votes, nearly 65 percent of the votes cast in the ballot boxes.

After official announcement of the victory, Hojjatoleslam Raisi in a statement lauded the "historic" and "passionate" turnout in the June 18 election, which he won overwhelmingly, vowing to make good on his campaign pledges and work to form a "hard-working, revolutionary, and anti-corruption" administration.

"Yesterday, the world once again witnessed a great epic created by an upstanding nation, which opened a new page in modern history before itself with faith, insight and solidarity," Raisi said in the statement on Saturday evening, hours after he was declared winner of Iran's 13th presidential election.

He added that the one who was elected in the June 18 presidential election belongs to the whole nation and is a "servant of the Republic in its entirety, whether those who voted for him or the ones who chose the other honorable candidates, or even those who did not turn up at the ballot boxes for whatever reason.

"Dear Iranian nation! You made good on your pledge yesterday with all honesty, and today, it is the turn of...this servant of yours to honor the pledge I made to you and not be negligent, even for a single second, in serving you," Raisi said.

As the "central mission of the Islamic Revolution," he added, his administration would move toward establishing justice and launching a great campaign of providing service to the Iranians.

Raisi also expressed gratitude for all those in charge of holding the election, journalists, media workers, and social media activists, who pave the way for a "vigorous turnout" in the election, despite all the acts of mischief on the part of enemies.

**See Page 7**

## U.S. Hampering Removal of Sanctions on Iran

TEHRAN (PressTV)- A detailed report by the Iranian parliament's Research Center (IPRC) says the US is placing obstacles in the way of removing sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Washington, the report said, has devised a net of "legal" obstacles in order to perpetuate Iran's problems by making nuclear and non-nuclear sanctions inseparable.

The United States will use various tools to stop Iran's economy profiting from the removal of sanctions even if it intends to remove them on paper, it added.

The U.S. has so far failed to make any effort with regard to improving the risk index of interaction and cooperation with Iran, and maintained the current level of cooperation risk for the countries that wish to engage in trade with Tehran, the report said.

The United States, it said, has disrupted Iran's economic cooperation, overstated drawbacks, and heightened the political and economic risks of cooperation with Iran through formal rhetoric, media attacks, and informal pressures.

The report conducted by the IPRC has significant impact on the decisions of the Iranian lawmakers.

Back in April, the Research Center stated in an in-depth report that the verification of a possible US removal of sanctions on Tehran would require at least three months, emphasizing that the process would not be possible within hours or days.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has said verification means Iran should be able to sell its oil under normal conditions and receive its money.

The Biden administration has conceded that its predecessor's so-called maximum pressure campaign has failed, but it has so far failed to take any practical steps to undo the wrongs.

The United States, under former president Donald Trump, left the multilateral 2015 nuclear deal -- officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- signed between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries in May 2018 and restored the economic sanctions that the accord had lifted in addition to imposing new non-nuclear ones.

Tehran responded to the breach by taking a raft of remedial nuclear measures under the JCPOA's Paragraph 36.

The Islamic Republic has insisted that it would go back on its steps once the U.S. removed all the sanctions in one step and Iran verified them.

## Iran-Pakistan Rail Service Restored After 30 Hours

CHAGHI (Dispatches) - After suspension of 30 hours, the rail services between Pakistan and Iran has been restored, ARY News reported on Sunday.

The Iran-Pakistan rail service was suspended, when six wagons of a Quetta-bound freight train overturned near Dalbandin tehsil of Chaghi district on Saturday.

The freight train was travelling from Iran's Zahedan city to Quetta when six of its wagons overturned, suspending the Pak-Iran rail service.

As per, the railway authorities, the track has been restored on emergency basis and the Quetta-bound freight train has left for its stop.

Officials of the Pakistan Railways had said the wagons overturned due to sand dunes covering the tracks.

Balochistan's Chaghi district, particularly Dalbandin, is sandy and dusty. Trains passing through the area often get stuck when the tracks are covered with sand due to winds.

Last week, six tankers of a water supply train got derailed due to sand covering the tracks.

Sokhan Gostar Institute

# IRAN NEWS

PRIVATE ENGLISH NEWSPAPER IN IRAN



Advertisement Department  
**021-44253335-39**  
www.irannewsdaily.com  
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily

# President-Elect Raisi to Hold First Presser

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's President-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi is scheduled to hold his first presser today (Monday) in the presence of Iranian and foreign correspondents.

The first press conference of Raisi will be held on Monday at 2:00 PM local time in the presence of Iranian and foreign correspondents.

In a statement on Saturday afternoon, interior minister Rahmani Fazli announced the final result of the presidential election. The results showed that Raisi won Friday's votes by a landslide, gaining 61.95% of the total votes.

## Decisive Steps Taken to Preserve People's Rights

**TEHRAN (IP) - The first deputy Judiciary chief stated that to preserve the people's dignity and convenience to solve their problems by the judiciary from beginning to end, the judiciary system has taken promising measures.**

In response to the question on taken measures in the past year by the Judiciary as an independent institution in Iran while speaking on the occasion of 'National Judiciary Week,' Gholam-Hussein Mohseni-Ejei highlighted on Sunday: "We must all serve people, criticize and comment on each other during our service, it is necessary to preserve both the society and public civil rights.

Mohseni-Ejei underlined: "Iran's judicial system has issued instructions to respect individuals' rights; whether they are defendants or plaintiffs, for instance, if couples face problems with each other, their rights should be restored in such a way that neither them nor the society are harmed."

Emphasizing the Judicial Transformation Document, which is the first strategic document and has been written after the Leader's statement on the second phase of the Islamic Revolution, the judiciary official noted that this document should be people-oriented, applicable, up-to-date, with belief in the dignity of the people, paying special attention to youth.

Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, people from all walks of life welcomed the high-ranking officials of the judiciary in the provincial trips holding face-to-face meetings with people to solve their problems.

Regarding the smartening of the judiciary and e-services, he said: "We have taken



many steps in this regard, and this document itself speaks of smartening, and the use of information technology is mentioned in this document."

As for the 'production surge,' he expressed hope that production, budget structure, and banking problems would be solved soon.

"The enemies have done their best not to allow the Islamic Revolution to be established via their influence, but under Imam Khomeini's leadership, the Islamic Revolution has been established in a short time," he said.

"People voted in favor of the Islamic Republic of Iran with a significant turnout, though enemies waged extensive civil and foreign wars and launching propaganda against it, many elites of the country were assassinated," the top Judiciary official noted.

Congratulating President-elect Ejei said: "Last year despite coronavirus outbreak, the high ranking judiciary officials have traveled to Iran's provinces and managed face to face meetings to hear and solve people's problems."

Mentioning that the elected president has worked in the judicial system for nearly forty years, the first deputy Judiciary chief pointed out that it is highly expected that the elected president will solve people's problems, mainly their economic problems, fight with corruption, and remove production obstacles, of course in close cooperation with Parliament and Judiciary.

## IRGC Chief Tells Raisi Ready To Cooperate With His Gov't

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a message to President-elect Raisi, the IRGC Commander-in-Chief Salami said Sun. IRGC is fully prepared to continue its cooperation with different governments to serve the noble Iranian nation.



Major General Hossein Salami, the IRGC Commander-in-Chief sent a message to President-elect Ebrahim Raisi, expressing the full readiness of its servicemen to cooperate with the next Iranian administration as it has done so far.

In his message, Gen. Salami first congratulated the people of Iran for creating another "epic" by their turnout to elect "Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi" in the 13th presidential election, adding that the IRGC is fully prepared to continue the strategy of cooperation and synergy with the sitting administrations in line with its goal of serving the noble people of Iran.

Salami thanked the people's participation in the elections with firm resolve despite the psychological warfare and the wishes of those who called for boycotting the elections.

The IRGC chief commander said that contrary to the calls for boycotting the elections which were aimed at disappointing the people with the establishment, the nation disappointed the plotters of the election boycotts project by their turnout at ballot boxes in line with the Leader of the Revolution's guidance.

He also described the recent elections as opening a new chapter in Iran's modern history, predicting a prospect of a stronger Iran with stepped-up participation of the young generation.

At the end of the message, Gen. Salami offered his congratulations to President-elect Ebrahim Raisi for being elected with decisive votes, expressing the readiness of the IRGC to cooperate with Raisi's new administration to strengthen his government and serve the noble nation of Iran.

## Iran, Turkey Int'l Police Chiefs Agree To Deepen Ties



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's International Police Chief Brigadier General Hadi Shirzad held an online meeting with his Turkish counterpart Lütfi Çiçek and they both emphasized the necessity of deepening the ties in-between.

Shirzad said in the meeting on Sunday that consolidating and deepening of ties between Iran and Turkey police forces would pave the way to crash international criminals.

He said Iran's police force was ready to cooperation with Turkish police in education, research, and knowledge exchange, underlining that the video conferences held between Tehran and Ankara would serve as a good example for the state members of Interpol.

Elsewhere in the meeting, Çiçek invited Iranian police officials to visit Turkey and said the Turkish International Police wanted also to stop international criminals and that they were ready to cooperate with Iran.

## Tehran, Islamabad Discuss Closer Cooperation on Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

In the meeting, Zarif touched upon the results of the Iranian presidential election, expressing hope that the trend of Tehran-Islamabad cooperation in bilateral and regional domains will keep growing in the new Iranian administration.

Also on the agenda of the talks was the latest status of the Vienna talks as well as regional issues, especially the situation in Afghanistan.

Qureshi, in turn, referred to the fragile situation in Afghanistan, and emphasized the need to further cement Iran-Pakistan cooperation in establishing stability and fighting chaos in Afghanistan.

## Iran Inaugurates Innovation, Technology House

TEHRAN (MNA) – To introduce its capabilities for exports of technological products, Iran inaugurates an Innovation and Technology House.

Located at the place of Tehran International Exhibition Center, the Innovation and Technology House will showcase "high-tech products", "manufacturing capabilities to foreign visitors" and "knowledge-based and creative products".

The inaugurated house is established in an area of 3,500 square meters and to introduce more than 800 products of

above 300 Iranian knowledge-based companies.

The house will also host specialized face-to-face meetings with foreign delegations and centers for conducting export brokerage affairs.

It includes 12 specialized technological sections including machinery, transportation, electricity and electronics, agriculture, advanced materials, metal industries, medical equipment, medicine, health, creative industries, software and applications, games, animation, and handicrafts.

## IRCS Hospital to Be Launched in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Head of Iranian Red Crescent Society for health, treatment and rehabilitation affairs Farid Moradian said RCS hospital will be launched in Zaranj, capital of Nimruz Province.

Moradian said that Zaranj hospital with 32 beds is ready to be launched in southwestern Afghanistan.

He added that the hospital includes operating room, women and children departments, dentistry, dermatology clinics, gynecology ward, midwifery services, sonography, laboratory, nursing services, vaccination, pharmacy, general practitioner, and specialist clinics.

Iranian Red Crescent Society, Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan, and Afghan Red Crescent Society had earlier signed a contract for launching the hospital.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society has 13 active health centers in South America, Africa, and Asia.

## Issuance of Industrial Unit Establishment Permits Up 27%

TEHRAN (MNA) - According to the latest data released by Iran's Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry, during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21) 6,489 permits have been issued for establishing new industrial units in the country, which marked a 27-percent increase year on year.

The estimated investment making for these units was more than 1.316 quadrillion rials (about \$31.333 billion).

The units are predicted to create jobs for 176,002 persons.

As announced by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki, the issuance of establishment licenses for industrial units in the country increased 40 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

"The number of establishment licenses increased to more than 36,000 last year, which shows that people are encouraged to invest in the productive sectors", the official has stated.

He also said that over 6,500 new industrial units were established across the country during the past year, which created jobs for over 121,000 people.

The official further said that 1,500 idle industrial units have been revived in the country during the previous year. Touching upon the Industry Ministry's plans for the realization of the motto of the current year which is named the year of "Production: support and the elimination of obstacles" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the deputy minister said: "In the year that has been dedicated to the production sector by the Leader of the revolution, the orientation of all government organizations and executive bodies should be towards supporting the country's industrial and mining units."

He also mentioned an 85-percent rise in the allocation of land for establishing industrial units across the country and noted that over 4,500 hectares of land were handed over to applicants in the previous calendar year. According to the official, there are over 46,000 small and medium-sized industrial units in Iran's industrial parks and zones, of them about 9,200 units are inactive.

## IRCS Hospital to Be Launched in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Deputy Head of Iranian Red Crescent Society for health, treatment and rehabilitation affairs Farid Moradian said RCS hospital will be launched in Zaranj, capital of Nimruz Province.

Moradian said that Zaranj hospital with 32 beds is ready to be launched in southwestern Afghanistan.

He added that the hospital includes operating room, women and children departments, dentistry, dermatology clinics, gynecology ward, midwifery services, sonography, laboratory, nursing services, vaccination, pharmacy, general practitioner, and specialist clinics.

Iranian Red Crescent Society, Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan, and Afghan Red Crescent Society had earlier signed a contract for launching the hospital.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society has 13 active health centers in South America, Africa, and Asia.

## U.S. Broke JCPOA, Onus on It to Fix Deal

TEHRAN (MNA) – Referring to the U.S. lack of commitment in the implementation process of the JCPOA, the Iranian Foreign Minister said that the U.S. broke the JCPOA and onus on the U.S. to fix it.

Mohammad Javad Zarif who is in Turkey for participating in Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) in a tweet on late Saturday wrote, "At @AntalyaDF, emphasized the imperative of cognitive adjustments: Diplomacy not about trust; rather, respecting interest of counterparts."

"U.S. broke JCPOA. Onus on US to fix it," he stressed, adding, "Outsiders will leave our region sooner or later. We must seize its ownership."

## Iranian Scientist Elected to World Ocean Assessment III

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Torbiat Modarres University faculty member Mehdi Qodrat Shojaei was elected as the Asia-Pacific representative in the third World Ocean Assessment working group.

The working group consists of 14 members from different countries who are elected to serve for a five-year term from 2021 to 2025.

The working group is the major output of the third cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the States of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

The group is also aimed at strengthening the relationship between international marine organizations like UNEP, IOC, CBD, IPCC and FAO and encouraging the countries to leverage the outcome of the working group in their national, regional and international policies.

A final report is delivered by the group to the UN General Assembly where it becomes effective after being passed by member states.

## Iran, Tajikistan Discuss Closer Cooperation on Afghanistan

TEHRAN (IFP) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held talks with his Tajik counterpart Sirojiddin Muhriddin on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey.

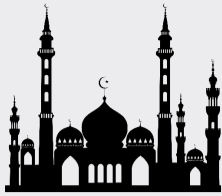
In the meeting, Foreign Minister Zarif underlined Tehran's resolve to develop its friendly ties with Tajikistan.

Referring to the situation of Afghanistan, he stressed that Tehran-Dushanbe relations are imperative for the fight against regional destabilization, and the two sides need to maintain close cooperation to prevent Afghanistan from getting insecure.

Foreign Minister Zarif referred to the successful elections held in Iran, and expressed confidence that the trend of Iran-Tajikistan collaborations will continue in a fast pace.

The Iranian Foreign Minister also extended his gratitude to Tajik President Emomali Rahmon for his assistance regarding the release of two Iranian prisoners in Tajikistan.

The Tajik foreign minister, in turn, described as valuable the Islamic Republic's approach of paying attention to regional developments, especially those of Afghanistan, and underlined the necessity of Tehran-Dushanbe interactions in bilateral and regional areas.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:02
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:49

136. For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath, an eternal dwelling: How excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)!

137. Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.

Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran (136 - 137)

## Malaysia Plans to Boost Tourism Sector In Post-Covid-19 Era

BY: F. TAHERPOUR ASL

**TEHRAN – Malaysia has plans to revive its tourism industry which has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and the country has measures to attract more tourists from the Middle East and especially from Iran when the coronavirus is contained in the country.**

The first secretary and head of chancery of Malaysia Embassy in Tehran H.E. Mohd Nizam bin Halim and Marketing Manager of Tourism Malaysia in Iran Mr. Farhad Jafari at a press conference elaborated Malaysia's plans for boosting their tourism industry in the post-Covid era.

In response to a question on Malaysia's plans regarding attracting tourism in the post-Covid era in the Middle East and especially in Iran, Mr. Nizam bin Halim said Tourism Malaysia has conducted consistent studies and research to better formulate an equipped tourism plan for the Middle East market. He added that the country is currently focused on the domestic tourism until the country gets rid of the virus and lifting the lockdown.

He went on to say that Tourism Malaysia has also launched the campaign #WeMissYou, especially for the Middle East region, to emphasize the memories it has for the travelers wandering around the magnificent attractions that Malaysia offers.

He noted that in December 2020, the Malaysian Prime Minister launched the National Tourism Policy 2020-2030 that would be focused on strengthening competitiveness, encouraging sustainable and inclusive tourism, as well as planning for future disasters.

Bin Halim reiterated that Malaysia will also exhibit daily cultural shows and craft demonstrations at the Malaysian Pavilion's amphitheater during EXPO 2020 Dubai. He added that currently Malaysia is already open for investors and business travelers and the short term business travel is exempted from the mandatory quarantine otherwise the visitors have to stay for two weeks at a certain hotel as mandatory quarantine.

He noted that Iran and Malaysia have good cooperation and it is expected after the virus is contained, the tourist exchange between the two states would pick up. Regarding to Iranian market, he said Malaysia plans to hold recovery seminars in all over Iran as business-to-business seminars between Malaysia whole sellers and affiliated agencies and also business-to-customer seminars for the most potential customers of Malaysia destinations as soon as the country receives the indication of borders opening. He also stated Tourism Malaysia will do joint promotion with airlines such as joint familiarization



trip to Malaysia for the media and travel agencies to visit Malaysia.

Mr. Bin Halim admitted that Malaysia is looking at the year 2025 for travel return to normal and have earmarked the Middle East as one of its important market.

On how much damage Malaysia's tourism industry has suffered due to the pandemic, he said international tourist arrivals to Malaysia plunged 83.4% in 2020 to record a total of 4.332m arrivals as compared to 26.1m recorded in 2019. He reiterated that the decline in the international travel to Malaysia shows an estimated 73.5b ringgits or 85.3% decline in tourism revenue from 81.14b in 2019 to 12.69b in 2020.

On Iran-Malaysia trade volume, he said the trade volume between the two countries has been affected by the U.S. unilateral sanctions and stood at \$0.37b in 2020. Bin Halim said that palm oil as well as agro products and machinery and parts are Malaysia's major exports to Iran in return it imports agro and oil products from Iran.

He emphasized that Malaysia did not recognize the U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran but the companies are afraid of doing business with Iran due to the sanctions. He expressed hope that after the U.S. sanctions is lifted, the trade between the two states would pick up, reiterating that Iran is Malaysia's important trade partner in the West Asia.

Bin Halim said Malaysia is exploring ways forward in fostering more strategic partnership in various fields such as tourism, health, education and halal industries with Iran. He reiterated that Malaysia is also keen to increase the export of palm oil and palm products to all countries, including Iran. He emphasized that Malaysia produces its palm oil based on the international standards without using chemicals and it is not a dangerous to the health because former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad consumes palm oil and he has no problem with Iran. He added that Malaysia is after finding a mechanism for exporting its palm oil to Iran.

Meanwhile Mr. Jafari, for his part, briefed the reporters participating in the press conference of the plans of Tourism Malaysia in the post-Covid era.

## Health Minister Urges Cancellation of Moscow Flights

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education called for making immediate decisions by the national task force for fighting the coronavirus to suspend flights to/from Moscow to prevent further outbreak of the coronavirus.

Saeed Namaki's letter to the Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi was quoted by Iran press as saying on Sunday: "According to reports from Russia regarding the outbreak of COVID-19, it is necessary to raise the topic on suspension of flights to Moscow and vice versa immediately at a meeting of the social and security committee of Iran's national task force for fighting the coronavirus and immediate decisions should be made."

According to the report, 90% of people infected with the coronavirus in the Russian capital, Moscow, is infected with the Indian mutant virus.

The sharp increase in the number of COVID-19 patients in Russia, especially in Moscow, has once again has raised the concerns of Russian officials.

## IDRO's Presence at Iran's Exhibition in Yerevan

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) as the most important and oldest developmental organization in Iran put on display some part of its performance and activities at Iran's specialized exhibition in Yerevan, Armenia.



Arak Machine Sazi in this exhibition presented its capabilities in the field of manufacturing required industrial equipment in Armenia's market like boiler, metal bridge and structure, reservoirs for transshipping LPG, and hydraulic hammers.

In this exhibition, 108 Iranian companies put on display their products in the fields of agriculture and food industries, construction industry, oil and energy, auto parts, engineering services, medicines and medical equipment. The four-day was held on an area around 1500 square meters which was a showcase for the participants to display their latest achievements.

Armenia's deputy economic minister and Iran's ambassador to Yerevan visited the pavilion of IDRO.

With Iran's membership at the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has provided great trade opportunities for expanding the market for Iranian products' presence in the Eurasia market and Armenia due to its joint border with Iran is considered as the gateway to Eurasia.

According to the visitors, this edition of the exhibition in the past 15 years has been the most colorful one in Armenia. The exhibition was held in Yerevan on June 10-13.

## Over \$2.3b of Facilities Paid to SMEs

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade's data show that 99.161 trillion rials (about \$2.36 billion) has been paid to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and semi-finished industrial projects with an over 60 percent physical progress during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21).

The mentioned facilities, which are provided for renewing machinery, equipping production units, or completing semi-finished projects, have been paid in the form of bank loans to 1,512 projects and production units, IRNA reported.

The program for offering bank facilities to the SMEs and semi-finished projects was kicked off in February 2019 by the Industry Ministry in collaboration with the Central Bank of Iran, and since then over 7,660 production units and SMEs have registered for receiving the mentioned loans of which 2,766 cases have received the facilities.

Based on the mentioned program, 201.299 trillion rials of facilities (about \$4.79 billion) were paid to SMEs and semi-finished projects to support domestic production and maintain or create job opportunities in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20). CBI has defined supporting production as one of its major plans over the past two years.

Former CBI Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati has repeatedly stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system.

In early May 2019, Hemmati had outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

## CBI Announces Negative Non-Oil Trade Balance in 2019



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - According to the Central Bank of Iran, Iran's non-oil trade balance in 2020 was negative in the rest of the months, apart from October.

As percent central bank report, Iran's 12-month exports last year recorded \$34 billion and \$998 million, and the country's imports of \$38 billion and \$893 million.

The report also said that the highest amount of exports was recorded in October last year with \$4 billion and \$672 million, and the highest amount of imports in March with \$4 billion and \$572 million.

The International Monetary Fund had earlier negatively predicted Iran's trade balance in 2019, possibly bringing Iran's total oil, non-oil and services exports to \$46 billion this year, with the country's imports at \$18.6 billion higher.

Trade balance is a statistic of the import and export of products of a country.

This index is one of the most important measures of the country's capability in trade exchange and investment in the country's economy and its increase leads to the exchange rate and strengthening the national currency.

In the past years, especially after the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, Iran's trade interactions with other countries have declined significantly even with its economic partners.

According to the Central Bank of Iran, Iran's trade balance in 2019 was also negative and the country's exports were \$43 billion and \$735 million and imports were \$41 billion and \$370,000 million.

## Isfahan, the "Garden City", Under Spotlight of Italian Embassy's Video-Series

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Once known as the "Garden City", Isfahan is nowadays shaped by two emerging trends. On the one hand, there are new urban needs to consider, which over the last few decades have changed the urban landscape. On the other hand, increasing efforts are being produced to make sure that these incoming needs don't affect negatively the traditional architecture of the city as it has been shaped by its glorious past.

Contemporary architectural trends in Isfahan are illustrated in the new episode of the video series on architecture and design "Domus Eyes on Iran", by the title "Isfahan Persian Gardens and New Urban Trends". The video documentary was screened yesterday at an event hosted by the Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone at his residence in Farmaniyeh.

The episode follows the recent architectural evolution of the "Garden City", and the efforts going on in order to preserve its precious green spaces, through the words of architect Shervin Hosseini, born in Isfahan and grown up in Italy.

Mr. Hosseini, through his works "Villa 131" e "Bagh Jannat", aims at reconnecting contemporary architecture to Isfahan's roots through the rediscovery of green spaces and desert cities' wind towers following the traditional Persian "introvert architecture" style.

"Isfahan Persian Gardens and New Urban Trends" illustrates how the years spent in Italy helped Mr. Hosseini gain increasing awareness of the need to connect contemporary architecture to history and specific cultural identities.

"Domus Eyes on Iran" is produced by the Italian Embassy in Tehran in cooperation with the Milan-based famous international magazine Domus.

Now at its seventh episode, the series takes inspiration from select stories published by Domus from the 1940s until present.

The video-documentary "Isfahan Persian Gardens and New Urban Trends" and the previous episodes of the series ("The Tehran's Contemporary Museum. The Anti-Monument", "Qajar Tehran. The Glass & Ceramics Museum and the Italian Residence", "Orsi Khaneh. A Window on Iran's Unique Blend of History & Modernity", "Architecture Meets Nature by Sara Kalantary & Reza Sayadian", "Gaetano Pesce and the Tehran National Library", "Villa for an Older Brother") are available for viewing on the social media platforms of the Italian Embassy in Tehran (YouTube, Instagram, Twitter).



## Iran Agrifood Exports Up 2%

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's agriculture ministry says agrifood exports topped \$896 million in the two months to late May.

Iran has reported a slight increase in agrifood exports in the two months to May 21 despite continued restrictions imposed at borders because of the coronavirus pandemic, says the country's Ministry of Agriculture Jihad (MAJ).

MAJ's deputy for planning and economy Ahmad Ali Keykha said on Saturday that the value of agrifood exports from Iran in the first two months of the current calendar year had reached \$896 million, up 2% against the similar period last year.

Exports had increased by 20% year in year in April-May in volume terms, Keykha said, adding that the weight of shipments sent from Iran over the period had amounted to 1.974 million metric tons.

Watermelon topped the list of major agrifood items exported from Iran in the two months to late May with \$126 million worth of sales, followed by pistachio at \$122 million and tomato at \$102 million, said Keykha.

He added that apple and dates exports had also been profitable over the period as they were responsible for nearly \$100 million worth of revenues derived from agrifood exports.

## U.S. Sends 2.5m Covid Vaccine Doses to Taiwan

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States announced Saturday that 2.5 million Covid vaccine doses were on their way to Taiwan in a move likely to draw disapproval from Beijing, which claims the self-ruled island.

China expressed fury earlier this month when U.S. senators visited Taiwan and announced the vaccine donation amid simmering tensions between Washington and Beijing.

"Wheels up! Our donation of 2.5 million vaccine doses is on the way to Taiwan," State Department spokesman Ned Price wrote in a tweet. The number of shots is about three times as many as announced during the U.S. delegation visit to Taiwan. Taipei has accused Beijing of hampering its efforts to secure enough doses.



## Turkish Women Rally To Defend Rights

ISTANBUL (AFP) - Hundreds of women rally in Istanbul on Saturday, urging President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to reverse his decision to withdraw from an anti-violence treaty ahead of a formal exit on July 1.

Erdogan sparked outrage in March by pulling out of the world's first binding treaty to prevent and combat violence against women, known as the Istanbul Convention.

The anger has not subsided with women's groups organizing two big protests in Istanbul, one on Saturday and another on July 1 to pressure the government to roll back the decision before the official withdrawal. Smaller protests are planned until July 1.



## UN Calls for Halt of Weapons to Myanmar



NEW YORK (Reuters) - The United Nations General Assembly called for a stop to the flow of arms to Myanmar and urged the military to respect November election results and release political detainees, including leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution with the support of 119 countries several months after the military overthrew Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in a Feb. 1 coup. Belarus requested the text be put to a vote and was the only country to oppose it, while 36 abstained, including China and Russia.

"The risk of a large-scale civil war is real," U.N. special envoy on Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener told the General Assembly after the vote. "Time is of the essence. The opportunity to reverse the military takeover is narrowing."

Some countries which abstained said the crisis was an internal issue for Myanmar, others did not think the resolution would be helpful, while some states complained it did not adequately address the plight of Rohingya Muslims some four years after a military crackdown forced nearly a million to flee Myanmar.

European Union U.N. Ambassador Olof Skoog said the U.N. resolution sends a powerful message:

"It delegitimizes the military junta, condemns its abuse and violence against its own people and demonstrates its isolation in the eyes of the world."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had earlier on Friday pushed the General Assembly to act, telling reporters: "We cannot live in a world where military coups become a norm. It is totally unacceptable."

The military cited the government's refusal to address what it said was fraud in a November election as the reason for the coup. International observers have said the ballot was fair.

An initial draft U.N. resolution included stronger language calling for an arms embargo on Myanmar. According to a proposal seen by Reuters last month, nine Southeast Asian countries wanted that language removed.

The compromise text "calls on all member states to prevent the flow of arms into Myanmar."

General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding but carry political weight. Unlike the 15-member Security Council, no country has veto power in the General Assembly.

The junta's forces have killed more than 860 people since the coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. The junta says the number is much lower.

The U.N. resolution calls on the Myanmar military to "immediately stop all violence against peaceful protesters" and end restrictions on the internet and social media.

The General Assembly also called on Myanmar to swiftly implement a five-point consensus the junta forged with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in April to halt violence and start dialogue with its opponents.

## Maduro Expresses Desire For Foreign Aid, Biden Deal

CARACAS (Dispatches) - Venezuela's president hopes a deal with the United States will open the floodgates to foreign investment, create jobs and alleviate poverty for his country, which is in the throes of a crippling economic crisis.

Seated on a gilded Louis XVI chair in his office at Miraflores, a sprawling, neo-Baroque palace in northwest Caracas, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro projects unflappable confidence.

The country, he says in an 85-minute interview with Bloomberg Television, has broken free of "irrational, extremist, cruel" U.S. oppression. Russia, China, Iran and Cuba are allies, his domestic opposition is impotent. If Venezuela suffers from a bad image, it's because of a well-funded campaign to demonize him and his socialist government.

The bombast is predictable. But in between his denunciations of Yankee imperialism, Maduro, who's been allowing dollars to circulate and private enterprise to flourish, is making a public plea and aiming it directly at Joe Biden. The message: It's time for a deal. Venezuela, home to the world's largest oil reserves, is starved for capital



and desperate to regain access to global debt and commodity markets after two decades of anti-capitalist transformation and four years of crippling U.S. sanctions. The country is in default, its infrastructure crumbling and life for millions a struggle for survival.

"If Venezuela can't produce oil and sell it, can't produce and sell its gold, can't produce and sell its bauxite, can't produce iron, etcetera, and can't earn revenue in the international market, how is it supposed to pay the holders of Venezuelan bonds?" Maduro, 58, says, his palms upturned in appeal. "This situation has to change."

In fact, much has changed since Donald Trump put the sanctions on Caracas and recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as president. His explicit goal, to drive Maduro from office, failed. Today, Guaido is marginalized, Venezuelans are suffering more than ever and Maduro remains firmly in power. "I'm here in this presidential palace!" he notes.

## Putin Tries to Give Ruling Party a Pre-Election Boost

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin sought on Saturday to give Russia's ruling party a pre-election boost by promising to spend big on infrastructure, education and health.

Putin, 68, also announced his key allies, the defence and foreign ministers, would front the campaign for the ruling United Russia party for September's parliamentary elections.

The jailed Alexei Navalny, Putin's most prominent domestic critic, and his allies, are barred from the elections after they were declared "extremists".

Speaking at its party congress, Putin praised United Russia for its "ability to renew and constantly develop".

With real wages falling and inflation rising, its ratings are at a multi-year low, according to a poll by the Levada Center, an independent pollster. It showed just 27% of Russians supported the party in March, down from 31% in August.

Putin proposed Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and top diplomat Sergei Lavrov to head the list of party candidates at the elections.

"I'm sure that United Russia sets the highest bar for itself, which is to confirm its leadership position and to clinch a win at the elections," he said.

Putin did not name Dmitry Medvedev, the party leader and former president and prime minister, among the top candidates. Opinion polls have shown Medvedev has a low popularity rating. Andrei Kolesnikov, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Moscow Center, said Lavrov and Shoigu were the most popular ministers.

"It's enough to show those two guys to the population, and it's obvious that this is Putin's party," he said.

Putin proposed extending an infrastructure loans programme until 2026 and a 100 billion roubles (\$1.4 billion) pandemic recovery program.

"People's well-being is of the highest value," he said. He also pledged more funds for road construction and reiterated his support for a ban on exports of some kinds of timber from Jan. 1, 2022.

Putin helped found the United Russia party 20 years ago, but has never been a member.

## Seoul Courts Risk After "No Shackles" Missile Development Deal

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea is now free to develop missiles of whatever payload and range it chooses after an agreement last month between US President Joe Biden and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

But the move, announced following the two leaders White House summit on May 21, introduced new security risks surrounding South Korea's missile development and some analysts were concerned about the potential effect on the wider region.

The South Korean military already has cutting edge missile technology, although previously restricted to 800 kilometers (497 miles) in range, research fellow Daniel Bong, of the Yonsei Institute for North Korea Studies, told Al Jazeera. The question is whether the South Korean government wants to enter the exclusive club of states possessing long-range missiles.

"It's one thing to have no shackles on missile development, but it's another to go all the way at the risk of going in the wrong direction with China," said Bong.

South Korea has gone in the wrong direction with China on missiles before, when it agreed to deploy Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), a US missile defense system in 2017.

In response, Beijing imposed biting sanctions.

South Korean analysts affiliated with the government, as well as Moon administration officials, have suggested that China has an understanding of South Korea's perspective on the missile guideline release, which Seoul has characterized as "regaining missile sovereignty".

But the U.S. missile plans could still spell trouble for South Korea.

In August 2019, the U.S. withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia. Later, former U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper suggested the US would be looking to deploy intermediate-range ballistic missiles, IRBMs, in the Asia Pacific region.

"South Korea could be the place, which would be a disaster when managing our relationship with neighbouring countries and, of course, China," Senior Research Fellow Sung Ki-young, of the Institute for National Security Strategy, told Al Jazeera.

A Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) interceptor is launched from the Pacific Spaceport Complex in Alaska. Beijing imposed biting sanctions on South Korea when it agreed to deploy the system [File: Leah Garton/Missile Defense Agency via Reuters]



## Palestinian Authority Calls Off Vaccine Exchange With Israel

GAZA (Dispatches) - The Palestinian Authority announced it has cancelled an agreement with Israeli regarding the exchange of Pfizer vaccines, saying the doses are set to expire soon.



Palestinian officials had come under heavy criticism on social media after the agreement was announced, with many accusing them of accepting subpar vaccines and suggesting they might not be effective.

"After the technical teams in the ministry of health examined the first batch of the Pfizer vaccines that were received this evening from Israel, it became clear that the 90,000 doses received do not conform to the specifications contained in the agreement," PA spokesman Ibrahim Melhem said during a joint press conference on Friday with PA Health Minister Mai al-Kaila.

"Accordingly Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh instructed the minister of health to cancel the agreement with the Israeli side on exchanging the vaccine and returning the quantity that was received today to Israel."

Earlier on Friday, Israel said it will transfer about 1 million doses of soon-to-expire coronavirus vaccines to the PA in exchange for a similar number of fresh doses the Palestinians expect to receive later this year.

"Israel has signed an agreement with the Palestinian Authority, and will supply approximately one million doses of Pfizer vaccine that are about to expire," Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office said in a joint statement with the defence and health ministries. Up to 1.4 million doses could be exchanged in September/October 2021, the statement added.

The statement did not give the exact expiration date of the vaccine, but COGAT, the Israeli military body that administers civilian affairs in the occupied Palestinian territories, said on Friday it had already "transferred 100,000 vaccine doses".

The Palestinian health ministry said in an earlier statement that Pfizer was behind an initiative to "accelerate the vaccination campaign". The exchange agreement had come after Israel was urged to do more to ensure Palestinian access to vaccinations as it inoculated its own citizens at world-leading speed.

Israel, which has fully reopened after vaccinating about 55 percent of its population, has faced criticism for not sharing its vaccines with the 4.5 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Parsian**

**Velenjak Apt (\$2500)**  
300sq.m, 4bdrs  
S/p, Sauna  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
Fully Furn

**Fereshteh Villa (\$5000)**  
1000sq.m  
5bdrs, S/p  
S, J, balcony  
yard, & pkg  
Fully Furn

**(\$3000)**  
**Kamranieh**  
270sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/pool, S, J  
balcony, & F.F

**Jordan (\$14000)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs, pkg, F.F

**Sa'adat abad (\$1700)**  
3bdrs, S/p, F.F

**(\$8000)**  
**Velenjak bldg**  
5storey, 20bdrs  
S/p, S, J, pkg lots  
brand new, & F.F

**Niavaran (\$1800)**  
3bdrs, 200sq.m, S/p, F.F

**Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com**  
Tel : 88510081  
Fax : 88506474

**Vanak Office (\$3000)**  
300sq.m, 4bdrs, pkg lots



**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**  
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate  
Member of **DELTA** Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865



## Fitch Raises UK Outlook on Economic Resilience to Pandemic Shock

LONDON (Reuters) - Rating agency Fitch raised Britain's outlook to 'stable' from 'negative', saying macroeconomic, labor market and fiscal outcomes since the start of 2021 showed the economy was more resilient to the impact of the pandemic shock.

"The roll-out of the UK's coronavirus vaccination

program has been rapid...which could dampen the impact of infection cases on healthcare capacity and support economic resilience to ongoing developments in the pandemic," Fitch said.

Last year, the economy shrank by 9.8%, its sharpest slump in more than 300 years and the biggest fall in output of any large advanced economy.



## World's Displaced Persons Population Exceeds 3m

GENEVA (Dispatches) - The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in its latest report that despite the problems and restrictions caused by the coronavirus outbreak in the world, three million people have been added to the world's displaced population last year.

In addition to restrictions imposed by corona, especially border closures in many countries, such as war, widespread violence and climate change, the displaced population is facing serious threats.

According to the United Nations, the world's displaced persons population is currently 84 million and 400,000, equivalent to the population of a country like Germany.

Countries such as Palestine, Venezuela, Yemen, Syria, Mozambique and Eritrea are among the world's hubs for displaced persons in 2020. In Yemen, about 4 million people, the bulk of them women and children, have been forced to leave their homes after seven years of civil war, according to the United Nations.

The OFFICE of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees earlier warned that the country is likely to see an increase in displaced persons and asylum seekers, given the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and the possibility of a rise in deadly attacks.

Currently, 4.5 million Afghans are displaced inside the country, and two and a half million people, many of whom live in Iran, have made their way out of Afghanistan, according to the organization.

During the coronavirus outbreak in the world, more than 160 countries closed their borders, and of these, 99 countries did not anticipate specific measures for exceptional cases that could occur to asylum seekers, making the problems of asylum seekers more difficult.

In addition to the displaced population, more than 4 million people have sought asylum in different countries, according to a 2020 UN report.

Turkey currently has the highest number of asylum seekers, hosting 3.7 million asylum seekers who have come mainly from Syria over the past years.

Between 2018 and 2020, about one million babies were born among the refugee population, accounting for 42 percent of the world's total refugee population, according to the report.

## Qatar Sees \$20b Bump To Economy From Soccer World Cup

DOHA (Dispatches) - Tokyo's 2020 Olympics may be a financial flop, but Qatar, host to one of the next big global sporting events since the start of the pandemic, expects its tournament late next year to provide an economic boost.

"We anticipate the contribution to the economy essentially would be around about \$20 billion," said Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary-General of the Committee for Delivery and Legacy that's building the infrastructure behind the 2022 World Cup. The sum is equivalent to about 11 percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2019.

The analysis is the result of "a very high-level study," he said, adding that more detailed projections won't be known until after the event takes place in November and December of 2022. However, the construction and tourism industries are expected to be top beneficiaries, Al Thawadi said in an interview that will air in full during next week's Qatar Economic Forum.

Qatar is trying to use the tournament to showcase its rapid expansion from a small pearl-diving enclave to Persian Gulf metropolis and transit hub. Stadium construction accounts for a small fraction of the infrastructure spending that it's undertaking ahead of the event; other projects include a metro system, an airport expansion, and the construction of a new city. Bloomberg Intelligence pegs the total value of all these building plans at \$300 billion.

The Qatar Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Investment Promotion Agency Qatar and Media City Qatar are underwriters of the Qatar Economic Forum, Powered by Bloomberg.

Al Thawadi, who's been involved since the effort to secure hosting rights almost a decade ago, said the World Cup is "meant to serve as an engine to push forward and accelerate a lot of the initiatives that the government has already committed to, already had planned, whether that's in terms of urban development or economic diversification."

Qatar has faced a barrage of criticism about its plan to host the world's preeminent soccer tournament, not only around allegations of human rights abuses but also concerns that matches will be poorly attended and fans flying in won't have much fun. In Qatar's conservative Muslim culture, women and men wear clothing that covers their shoulders and knees in most public places and alcohol is served only at high-end hotels, where modesty standards mostly aren't enforced.

"When people visit they always take into consideration people's cultures and norms," he said of host countries for the World Cup. Decisions to allow attire that violates dress codes, like tank tops and shorts, in commercial venues will be left to private business owners, he said, and alcohol will be available in designated areas like fan zones.

## Lebanon Leaders May Face Sanctions Unless Crisis Solved

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Saturday that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions unless they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF.

Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s. A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last once resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020.

Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU".

"The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he said. "The Lebanese leadership must take its responsibility... a government must be formed and key reforms implemented immediately."

The EU's foreign policy chief said the bloc was willing to help Lebanon engage in reforms but only after a deal is struck with the International Monetary Fund. "Only an urgent agreement with IMF will rescue the country from a financial collapse... and there is no time to waste," he said.

"You are on the edge of a financial collapse."

But Borrell added that should "further obstructions to solutions" emerge, the EU "will have to consider other courses of action as some member states have proposed".

"The council of the EU has been including other options, including targeted sanctions... we prefer not to go down this road... but it is in hands of the Lebanese leadership," Borrell said.

## Indonesia Gets \$1.3b Loans From World Bank

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - The World Bank has approved two loans totalling \$1.3 billion for Indonesia this week to support its Covid-19 response and economic policy reforms, according to statements from the lender and the government.

A \$500 million loan was approved to fund Indonesia's free vaccination campaign and expand Covid-19 care and testing facilities, the multinational lender said in a statement on Friday. The \$800 million was approved earlier this week. The government on Friday said in a statement it would use the proceeds to open more sectors to private investment, especially in renewable energy,

improve access to basic food and facilitate access to the manufacturing sector. Indonesia is grappling with a spike in Covid-19 cases weeks after Eidul-Fitr festivities, during which many had travelled to their hometowns to celebrate.

On Thursday, the country reported the biggest daily increase in cases since Jan. 30 of 12,624 infections. Its total caseload of 1.95 million and more than 53,750 deaths are the highest in Southeast Asia. The World Bank has provided Indonesia with at least \$2.2 billion in loans this year including for programmes to deepen its financial markets and to respond to national disasters.

## IMF Sees \$45-Billion Deal With Argentina Pushed Into 2022

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The International Monetary Fund privately estimates that a deal allowing Argentina to reschedule payments on US\$45 billion owed to the lender will be pushed into 2022 as President Alberto Fernández has little incentive to quickly agree on the basis of a new program.

While the IMF has said it's constructively engaging with Fernández's administration, negotiations entailing fiscal austerity aren't expected to make much progress before Argentina's midterm elections in November, said five people familiar with the talks, asking not to be identified because discussions are private.

Pressure on Argentina for a faster deal has also eased as the government will likely have enough money to cover US\$4.58 billion in principal and interest payments due to the Fund later this year. It expects to receive US\$4.4 billion in IMF reserves in August, as part of a global injection of funds to fight the

economic impact of the pandemic, and has also seen larger-than-expected dollar revenue due to rising prices of soybeans, a top export product.

More crucially, Argentina and the IMF haven't so far agreed on economic projections that will be the basis for a new program, according to two of the people, one of whom called the estimates provided by the country overly optimistic.

The Economy Ministry declined to comment. The IMF said it had no additional comments beyond those made by its spokesman Gerry Rice on June 10, when he said the Fund is working on a programme to address Argentina's deep social and economic challenges, without offering a prediction on timing.

Calls are growing louder for Fernández to put forward a credible economic plan as his government also seeks to restructure debts with the Paris Club. Argentina didn't make a US\$2.4-billion payment due in May to the club of rich countries, and both sides continue negotiating during a 60-day grace period. Next year, Argentina owes US\$18 billion in principal to the IMF, an amount the president says the government can't pay.

U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo spoke to Economy Minister Martín Guzmán this week on the IMF and Paris Club discussions, saying the United States would support a "strong economic policy framework for Argentina that provides a vision for private sector job growth." Any agreement at the IMF requires U.S. support since it has the largest share of votes.

Argentina began talks last year with the IMF for a revamped programme to reschedule payments stemming from a record deal granted to the previous, pro-business government of Mauricio Macri. Guzmán initially aimed to close a deal by May.

As talks are expected to heat up after the election, the IMF will also be changing one senior official in Buenos Aires. As part of a routine rotation of senior staff, Ben Kelmanson, currently the Fund's representative in Turkey, will replace Trevor Alleyne, whose term in Argentina ends this year, a Fund spokesman said.

## Singapore Loses Top Spot In Competitiveness Ranking



LONDON (Dispatches) - Singapore has tumbled from its ranking as the world's most competitive economy to fifth place, but remains Asia's top performing economy.

The Republic ranked first in the past two years in the Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Ranking, whose latest list was released yesterday. Switzerland topped the league table, followed by Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands.

IMD said: "Singapore managed to top the economic performance factor, one of four factors in the ranking, but fell to ninth in global business efficiency and 11th in global infrastructure."

"It ran into problems with job losses, lack of productivity and the economic impact of the pandemic."

"Similar to other countries that declined, Singapore experienced a shrinkage in its economic activity, in particular, a sharp decline in employment growth, and a sizeable worsening in public finances due to an increase in both government deficit and public debt."

But Singapore did well with international trade and technological infrastructure, ranking first in both, said IMD, which is based in Switzerland and Singapore.

Singapore also ranked highly in international investment and business legislation.

Yesterday, Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong said the Government will review IMD's report and enhance Singapore's competitiveness. "IMD's ranking shows that we are facing increased global competition and Singapore cannot afford to stand still or take our economic competitiveness for granted," he said in a post on his ministry's Facebook page.

"We must continually strive to provide an environment where businesses can thrive and create good jobs for our people. We must also remain an open and connected hub for global businesses and talent."



## 2 Killed in Training Plane Crash

TEHRAN (MNA) – A training plane has crashed in the northeastern province of North Khorasan killing two people on board.

Two people died when a training plane belonging to Fara Spehr Company crashed in Garmeh County in the southwest of the North Khorasan in northeastern Iran, Commander of the North Khorasan Police Force Brigadier General Saeid Motahari said on Sunday. Motahari said both people who were on board the plane were killed in the incident.



## U.S. Pulls Anti-Missile Batteries From Middle East

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Biden administration is withdrawing Patriot antimissile batteries from four Middle East countries as the U.S. reduces its military footprint in the region amid a reduction in tensions with Iran, a U.S. news outlet reported.

The Pentagon is pulling about eight Patriot antimissile batteries from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait and Jordan, as well as a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system from Saudi Arabia that had been deployed by the previous Trump administration, the Wall Street Journal reported citing unnamed U.S. officials.

The redeployment includes hundreds of U.S. troops who operate the systems and began earlier this month following a June 2 phone call in which U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin informed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of the shift, according to the Journal.

The withdrawal of anti-missile batteries marks a return to a more normal level of defence in the region where the U.S. continues to maintain tens of thousands of troops even as it has reduced forces deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, the Journal reported.

"We still have our bases in the countries of our Gulf partners, they aren't shutting down, there is still substantial presence, substantial posture in the region," a senior defense official told the Journal.

The U.S. deployed Patriot antimissile batteries and troops to Saudi Arabia after Iranian drone attacks hit Saudi oil facilities and to Iraq in 2020 after a spate of missile and rocket attacks on US forces by Iran and Iranian-backed militias.

The U.S. military acknowledged that more than 109 U.S. troops had suffered concussions and other brain injuries in an Iranian ballistic missile attack on the Ain al-Assad military base in Iraq.

President Joe Biden, who took over from former President Donald Trump in January, has sought to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East and U.S. diplomats



have been engaged in indirect talks with Iran on reviving the Iran nuclear deal.

U.S. and Iranian diplomats engaged in a sixth round of talks in Vienna earlier this month as Iran considers rejoining the 2015 agreement prohibiting it from obtaining nuclear weapons in exchange for relief from punishing U.S. economic sanctions.

Trump had unilaterally withdrawn from the Iran nuclear agreement and instituted a "maximum pressure" campaign on Tehran that Biden officials have said failed to achieve goals and had the effect of accelerating Iran's nuclear development.

## Czech Republic Richer Than Italy



PRAGUE (Dispatches) - For the first time in its history, the Czech Republic's GDP per capita by PPS has surpassed Spain and Italy, according to a 2020 IMF report.

Analysis of a 2020 report from the International Monetary Fund shows that the Czech Republic is richer than Italy and Spain, in terms of GDP per capita by purchasing power standards, for the first time since the country was established in 1993.

Previous findings from the 2021 World Happiness Report, meanwhile, showed that happiness levels in the Czech Republic were higher than in the UK or France in 2020. Additional data showed that the Czech standard of living was higher than euro adopters Slovakia and Slovenia.

The varied reports and associated analysis were shared by Lukáš Kovanda of the Czech government's National Economic Council (NERV) and Chief Economist at Trinity Bank to foreign exchange trading server FXstreet.cz yesterday.

Shortly after, they were tweeted by Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš.

According to the International Monetary Fund, real GDP growth in the Czech Republic fell to the tune of -5.6% last year due to economic effects from the coronavirus pandemic.

However, the IMF expects real GDP growth in the Czech Republic to rebound by 4.3% in 2021, which would represent greater growth than in 2018 or 2019.

The Czech inflation rate, based on prices of consumer goods, rose 3.2% in 2020 (an eight-year high) but is forecast to rise by a more modest 2.3% in 2021.

While the International Monetary Fund forecasts Italy and Spain to see similar economic rebounds as the Czech Republic, both of their economies were hit much harder by the crisis. Italy saw a 8% drop in real GDP growth in 2020, and Spain 11%.

In terms of the terms of the World Happiness Rankings, meanwhile, the Czech Republic has surged over the past decade and reached new highs in 2021. In 2021 rankings, which combine scores from 2018-2020, the Czech Republic even topped the United States. Read more about this year's Happiness Rankings here.

Kovanda puts some perspective on the Czech Republic's growth over the past three decades.

"If anyone said in November 1989 that within thirty years the Czechs would be a happier nation overall than the French — not only economically but also in society as a whole — it would probably be considered science fiction," he writes on FXstreet.cz.

"Although we have not caught up with the Germans in wages, we overtook the French in general satisfaction. We can celebrate. But reasonably."

The economist credits a specific figure in Czech politics with the successes achieved over the past decade.

"Happy anniversary to the key architect of this success!" Kovanda writes on Twitter. Former Czech President Václav Klaus turned 80 years old yesterday.

## Coronavirus Causes Global Rise in Civil Unrest

LONDON (Dispatches) - The coronavirus pandemic has caused a global rise in civil unrest and political insecurity, according to the 15th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI) released.

The GPI, an annual report produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness and is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness.

"This year's results show that the average level of global peacefulness deteriorated by 0.07 per cent," said the report, highlighting that this was "the ninth deterioration in peacefulness in the last thirteen years."

"However, the change in score is the second smallest in the history of the index," it added.

According to the 2021 GPI, while global conflicts and crises that emerged in the past decade declined, they were replaced "with a new wave of tension and uncertainty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising tensions between many of the major powers".

In 2020, the world witnessed almost 15,000 violent protests and riots. The damage it caused came with a hefty price of about \$15 trillion or 11.6 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).

Among those, more than 5,000 were pandemic-related and were recorded between January 2020 and April 2021. Speaking to Al Jazeera from Sydney, Australia, Steve Killelea, CEO of the IEP said: "There has been a very slight decrease in peacefulness in 2020. That was mainly caused through an increase in the number of violent demonstrations and the levels of political instability."

"Part of that was fuelled by lockdowns from COVID-19 and the economic issues that followed."

India, Eastern Europe and the United States showed the most deterioration on that level due to the rise in demonstrations over coronavirus-related restrictions.

According to Killelea, the effect of the pandemic has been mixed.

"Initially, we saw a drop in the number of homicides and violent crime as lockdowns were put in place. But that changed after a period of time," he said.

"It is still too early to fully gauge the long-term effects of the pandemic on peace," said the report.

It is estimated that more than two-thirds of the world's population has experienced lockdown measures, lasting from weeks to months.

According to World Bank estimates, the global economy shrank by 4.3 percent in 2020, wiping out trillions of dollars. Countries already facing economic hardship sank further into debt.

A report by Oxfam International (PDF) estimates that it could take more than a decade for the world's poorest to recover from the economic fallout of the pandemic.

More generally, however, the most violent protests over the past year were in Belarus, Myanmar, Russia, the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan.

Belarus, a country of 9.5 million that Russia sees as a security buffer against NATO, has been rocked by mass demonstrations since August last year, following the presidential election that Alexander Lukashenko said he won. His opponents claim the vote was rigged and want him to quit.

Myanmar sank into chaos since the military's February 1 overthrow of Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government. Countrywide strikes, boycotts and protests paralysed the economy as tens of thousands of people were displaced by heavy fighting between the military and ethnic minority rebels and newly formed militias.

Still, Afghanistan has remained the world's most violent country for the past four years. It is closely followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan and Iraq, according to the report.

On the opposite side of the scale, Iceland has held the position of the most peaceful country in the world since 2008. Along with New Zealand, Denmark, Portugal, Slovenia, it makes up the top five most peaceful countries worldwide.

According to Killelea, there have been improvements in the number of deaths from violent conflict over the past year. "There was an increase in militarization over the past two years. But if we go back over the past decade, it had been improving, which is likely to continue over the next few years."

According to Killelea, only three of nine regions covered by the institute, showed improvement in the level of peacefulness over the past year.

"Looking at the nine regions covered, three improved and the other six deteriorated. The largest deterioration was North America," said Killelea, explaining that the deterioration was mainly related to violence during the last US election, the occupation of Capitol Hill and Black Lives Matter.

On the other hand, the largest improvement occurred in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), followed by Europe and South Asia, although the MENA region still remains the least peaceful region in the world, according to the report.

Meanwhile, the country that recorded the highest fear of violence was Brazil, "where nearly 83 percent of Brazilians were very worried about being a victim of violent crime," said the report.

But the actual experience of violence was greatest in Namibia, "where 63 per cent of the population experienced serious harm from violence or [had] known someone who had in the previous two years," it said.

## Study Suggests Free, Nutritious School Lunches Help Create Richer, Healthier Adults

LONDON (Dispatches) - According to a new study from Lund University in Sweden, universal school lunch programs make students healthier, and increase their lifetime income by 3 per cent.

Study suggests free, nutritious school lunches help create richer, healthier adults

According to a new study from Lund University in Sweden, universal school lunch programs make students healthier, and increase their lifetime income by 3 per cent.

The findings of the study were published in the journal 'The Review of Economic Studies'.

Health disparities arise early in life and play a major role in economic outcomes among adults. Yet there are few studies on the long-term effects of school-based nutrition policies aimed at counteracting them. Researchers from Lund University and Stockholm University have showed that universal school lunch programs have significant long-term benefits for students' education, general health and income.

## Raisi Is Here to...

FROM PAGE 1

Raisi is associated with the Principlist camp, but he said he ran in the election this year as an independent when he announced his presidential bid last month.

He was campaigning with the slogan "Popular Administration, Strong Iran" on a platform of uprooting corruption in the executive branch, fighting poverty, creating jobs, containing inflation, and corruption.

His good record in the Judiciary in fight with corruption gave him an upper hand in the elections and now the people are waiting for his performance in the executive branch to alleviate their economic problems and eradicating corruption from the country and economy.

Raisi has proved he is a man of words, and for this reason some 18 million people have trusted on him by casting their votes in favor of him. As it is expected and he has claimed, he is the president of the whole nation even those who have not voted for him and he is determined to unite the country through good and prudent performance in his new job.

Now the nation has given him a chance to prove his capability in the executive branch like what he has done in the Judiciary in order to sail the boat of the country towards shore of peace and prosperity with wise administration and using revolutionary ministers who can help him in being a successful president for all.

Hojjatolislam Raisi needs to choose revolutionary and young ministers unlike the current government which is comprised of old and passive staff who have put the economic condition in a chaotic condition. The new president-elect should correct the mistakes of his predecessors in order to win more hearts and trust in the country and make the people hopeful of the future of the Islamic Republic, something which has been badly damaged during the current government and needs to be fixed.

The newly-elected president as it is expected will interact with the world but it does not mean he and the country will bow down on the excessive demands of the countries. He like any official in the country backs talks and interactions but all unanimously are against giving concessions to any country.

So this mindset can boost domestic progress and production without tying the fate of the domestic economic progress to talks with any country. Above all it can bring prosperity and unity back among the people who have suffered in recent years.

## Emergency Use of...

FROM PAGE 1

The daily writes that the disease continues to surge, despite the fact that more than 5.28 million doses of vaccine have been administered so far. On these days last year, daily virus deaths were around 87. But today, conditions are not like the past year despite vaccinations, and it is a disaster.

The daily further says 24-hour COVID-19 deaths are still three-digit, with more people losing their lives to the virus each day.

Iran reported its first cases of COVID-19 in February 2020. The country put restrictions to curb the disease but eased them in April that year partly because of their economic impacts. Some of the restrictions including a nighttime ban on traffic in hard-hit cities are still in place. Iran is also working on producing its own vaccines, in the wake of problems to receive enough shots from other countries. Iranian authorities blame the problems on bans caused by US sanctions on the country's financial sector.

## Zarif, Atmar...

FROM PAGE 1

Iranian Ambassador to Turkey Mohammad Farazmand also in a tweet announced the holding of the meeting, saying that trade, transit, migration, drug trafficking and counterterrorism were among the topics discussed at the meeting.

Zarif arrived in Antalya on Thursday, June 17, to attend the Antalya Diplomatic Forum.

He has met with some officials present in Antalya, including the foreign ministers of Iraq, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Croatia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Poland as well as EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell and the Head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah.

## Bland, Henley Share Halfway Lead at U.S. Open

SAN DIEGO (Reuters) - The unlikely pair of Richard Bland and Russell Henley shared the halfway lead at the U.S. Open on Friday as Phil Mickelson trailed by seven shots in the one major he needs to win to complete his career grand slam. Englishman Bland, renowned as a steady straight-hitter, was in his element at Torrey Pines, fashioning a four-under-par 67 that matched the best second-round score. American Henley later stood poised to enjoy the sole overnight lead until he lipped-out a four-foot par putt at his final hole for the only bogey on his card in a 70.

**Switchboard:**  
(+98) (21) 44253448  
**Public Relations Tel:**  
(+98)(21) 44253450  
Editorial Board: 44253449  
**Public Relations Fax:**  
(+98)(21) 44253395  
**Advertising Department:**  
Tel/Fax: (+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234  
**Website:**  
http://www.irannewsdaily.com

**E-Mail Address:**  
info@irannewsdaily.com  
**ISSN 1024-6053**  
**P.O. Box:** 15875-8551  
**Address:** No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St. Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
**Printed by:** Honar Sarzmin Sabz  
**Distributed by:**  
Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute  
**Managing Director:** Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

## Ibrahimovic Undergoes Knee Surgery

MILAN (Dispatches) - Sweden international Zlatan Ibrahimovic has undergone successful surgery on a knee injury which ruled him out of Euro 2020, club side AC Milan confirmed. "Ibrahimovic underwent an arthroscopic (procedure) to his left knee in Rome," AC Milan said in a statement, adding that "the procedure was a success." "Zlatan is doing well and will start his rehabilitation immediately." The 39-year-old pulled up in Milan's 3-0 league win over Juventus on May 9.

## Germany Bounce Back With 4-2 Win Over Portugal

MUNICH (Dispatches) - Three-times European champions Germany shrugged off their opening game loss and announced their arrival as serious contenders at Euro 2020 with an emphatic 4-2 win over highly-rated Portugal in their Group F match on Saturday.

Cristiano Ronaldo had given the defending champions a 15th minute lead but Germany went in at the break 2-1 up thanks to own goals from Ruben Dias and Raphael Guerreiro. The Germans turned on the style in the second half with goals from Kai Havertz and the impressive Robin Gosens making it 4-1 before Diogo Jota pulled a goal back for Portugal. The win moves Germany, who face Hungary in their final game, into second place in the group on three points, a point behind leaders France and level on points with the Portuguese. Hungary drew 1-1 with France earlier on Saturday.

Germany, smarting from their opening defeat to the French, started with purpose and confidence and thought they had grabbed the lead in the fifth minute through Gosens but VAR ruled that Serge Gnabry had been in an offside position.

Against the run of play, Portugal grabbed the early lead, hitting the Germans on the break with Bernardo Silva picking out Jota on the left of the box and his low cross was tapped in from close range by Ronaldo.

It was the Portugal skipper's third goal in two games and his first ever against Germany but Joachim Loew's side kept their cool and continued to play positive football before eventually getting their reward.

The Germans drew level in the 35th minute when Joshua Kimmich's cross from the right was volleyed at the back post by Gosens and flew into the net off the outstretched foot of Portugal defender Dias as he looked to stop Havertz converting.

It was another own goal that gave Germany the lead -- Kimmich drove in a low ball from the right and Guerreiro's attempted clearance flew past his goalkeeper Rui Patricio.

Portugal replaced Bernardo Silva with Renato Sanches at the break but Germany took a firm grip on the game with a third



goal six minutes after the restart -- a well-worked passing move ending with Havertz turning in a low ball from the left delivered by the influential Gosens.

Germany were buzzing now and it was no surprise when they made it 4-1 on the hour with Gosens finishing off another well constructed attack, heading home a Kimmich cross at the far post.

Portugal struck back quickly though when a deep free-kick from Guerreiro looked to be heading out but Ronaldo acrobatically hooked the ball inside to Jota who slotted home.

Meanwhile Antoine Griezmann salvaged a 1-1 draw for France against Hungary in Budapest as the world champions missed the chance to clinch a place in the Euro 2020 last 16 on Saturday.

Hungary threatened to blow Group F wide open when Attila Fiola gave the hosts a shock lead in first-half stoppage time after catching out the France defence.

But Griezmann, the Golden Boot winner at Euro 2016, equalised on 66 minutes as an unconvincing France avoided a first competitive defeat since June 2019.

"It's a point, it's not what we were hoping for, but given the context we'll take it all the same," France coach Didier Deschamps told TF1.

"After a first half in which we should have led, we found ourselves trailing after their only chance.

"Obviously playing in front of their fans and that support, it gave them strength."

## Barcelona Sign Depay on Free Transfer From Lyon

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona announced the signing of Memphis Depay on Saturday, with the striker to join when his contract with Lyon expires at the end of this month.

Barca have agreed a two-year deal with Depay, who becomes the club's third signing on a free transfer this summer after moves for Sergio Aguero and Eric Garcia had already been confirmed.

They have also paid nine million euros to activate a clause to recall right-back Emerson from Real Betis.

Depay has long been a key target for Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman, who worked with the player when he was in charge of the Dutch national team.

Koeman was in the crowd in Amsterdam on Thursday to see Depay score an early penalty for the Netherlands in their 2-0 victory over Austria at Euro 2020.

The 27-year-old was reportedly close to sealing a 25-million-euro move to Barca last year while a reduced fee was also mooted in January, but the club decided to wait for his contract to expire. "FC Barcelona and Memphis Depay have reached an agreement to join the Club, once his contract with Olympique de Lyon has ended.

## Rublev Reaches First Grass Final in Halle

HALLE (Dispatches) - World number seven Andrey Rublev is into his first grass court final on the ATP tour after beating Georgian qualifier Nikoloz Basilashvili in the last four at Halle.

The 23-year-old Russian was made to work for his 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 semi-final victory in just under two hours.

"It's my first final on grass and in Halle," said Rublev, who was the only seed left in the draw from the quarter-finals onwards.

"I think I can play on every surface and I will try my best again tomorrow."

In the final, Rublev will meet Ugo Humbert, who beat Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/5) in the other semi-final later Saturday.

Humbert, ranked 31st in the world, has been in impressive form in Halle and the 22-year-old dumped out French Open semi-finalist Alexander Zverev in the last 16.

Earlier in the week, Auger-Aliassime, 20, also underlined his status as one to watch on the ATP tour with a shock second-round win over childhood idol Roger Federer in Halle.

## Scotland Had to Make A Splash at Euro 2020

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Scotland midfielder John McGinn said a bare-chested fan sliding through a puddle inspired his side's impressive display in their 0-0 draw against England at Euro 2020.

Aston Villa star McGinn was watching internet footage of Scotland fans in London ahead of Friday's Group D clash with the Auld Enemy when he came across the daredevil supporter.

Watching the fan's hilarious slide through the water eased McGinn's pre-match nerves, while the Tartan Army's vocal rendition of the Scottish national anthem at Wembley served to fire up the entire team.

The result was a superb performance from Scotland, who subdued England's attack and could easily have earned them a first win against their neighbours since 1999.

## Samsonova Downs Azarenka to Reach Berlin Final



and I'm very happy for it," Samsonova said. Samsonova claimed her second Top 20 win of her career by firing 24 winners

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Russian qualifier Liudmila Samsonova made light of her world ranking of 106 to defeat former number one and two-time Grand Slam champion Victoria Azarenka to reach the Berlin WTA grass court final.

Samsonova, 22, will face world number 12 Belinda Bencic for the title on Sunday after her 6-4, 6-2 win over Azarenka.

"It's all incredible for me, it's so new, and I'm very happy for it," Samsonova said.

(including 11 aces) past the Belarusian.

She is the fifth qualifier to reach a singles final on the WTA this season and will comfortably make her Top 100 debut next week.

Switzerland's Bencic, seeded fifth, ended the run of Alize Cornet to progress to the final with a 7-5, 6-4 win.

Bencic improved to 3-1 against Cornet as her victory placed her into the fourth grass-court final of her career.

Bencic won the 2015 Eastbourne title for her best-ever grass-court result on tour.

"I always try to play as many tournaments on grass as possible because I just love the surface," Bencic said.

France's Cornet, 63rd in the world, reached the last four after an upset win over former Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza.

## Kane Still World's Best Striker

LONDON (Dispatches) - Luke Shaw insists England captain Harry Kane is still the "best striker in the world" despite his dismal start at Euro 2020.

Kane has been substituted twice after producing lethargic displays and failing to score in England's Group D matches.

He finished Friday's 0-0 draw against old rivals Scotland at Wembley looking a forlorn figure on the bench after exiting 15 minutes from full time.

The Tottenham striker's sudden dip in form comes after he finished as the Premier League's top scorer this season.

Having won the Golden Boot at the 2018 World Cup and he is transfer target for Premier League champions Manchester City.

But he was an isolated figure as England's creative midfielders failed to give him a steady supply of chances in the goalless stalemate against the Scots.

Asked if he was worried about Kane's performances, England left-back Shaw replied: "No concern at all, for me personally I think he is the best striker in the world.

"He is a very important part of the team, in fact the most important part. I think whether he has not been at his best or not he is a massive part and a crucial player for us.

"We need him whether his performances are as people expected or not, but this happens in tournament football.

"You can score a goal at any moment and he is such a crucial player, not just on the pitch but off the pitch, he has got all of our backing and I'm not worried at all."



## Norrie Stands Between Berrettini And Queen's Title

LONDON (Dispatches) - Top seed Matteo Berrettini says he hopes he does not sleep too well ahead of Sunday's Queen's tournament final after beating Alex de Minaur 6-4, 6-4 in the semi-finals.

The 25-year-old Italian has yet to drop a set on his debut at Queen's and although Australian number one De Minaur gave him a good workout he had too much power for his opponent.

Berrettini has beaten two Britons on his way to the final -- Andy Murray and Dan Evans -- and will have to beat another Cameron Norrie if he is to lift the trophy.

The 25-year-old South Africa-born Norrie beat Canadian second seed Denis Shapovalov 7-5, 6-3. An early break for Berrettini in the first set over the fourth-seeded De Minaur and then at 4-4 in the second was sufficient to seal his place in the final of the key warm-up tournament for Wimbledon.

"The goal of the week is to win the title," said Berrettini.

"There is one more step, for sure, to achieve that but to reach the final is a great achievement with the history of the tournament.

"I had to play my best to beat Alex."

Berrettini -- who has been in fine form and arrived on the back of a quarter-final appearance at the French Open -- has won the Serbian Open this year and reached the final of the Madrid Masters.

He grinned when asked does he usually sleep soundly on the eve of a final.

"If I sleep too well then something is off," he said.

"I have to be nervous and the adrenaline has to kick in... I just hope I will sleep enough."

