

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 83,101 With 136 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, in A Message on Sunday, Congratulated the Iranian President-Elect Ebrahim Raisi on His Victory in the June 18 Presidential Election and Wished Him Success

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Tehran Rejects Shelving JCPOA Talks Until New Gov't Takes Office

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has dismissed reports that it may postpone the Vienna talks to restore the nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) until President-elect Ebrahim Raisi assumes office.

"There have been a lot of speculations about the postponement of an agreement to revive the JCPOA until the next Iranian administration. These reports are not confirmed and are not close to reality," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Monday.

According to Khatibzadeh, Iran's policy opposes the notion of putting off the possibility of removing the sanctions. "This is the policy of the Leader (Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei) which the negotiating delegation has followed," he said.

The spokesman also said the next round of talks in Vienna could be the final round between Iran and the other parties to the JCPOA which was inked in 2015 and ditched by the U.S. in 2018. "Diplomats are optimistic people, but it is too early to judge, and we have to see if all parties will make their political decisions," he explained. "What remains is more of a political decision than a negotiation, and if decisions are made, we can hope to enter the final round of talks."

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Iranian "Sputnik V" COVID Vaccine to Be Unveiled on Saturday

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's health minister praised scientists' efforts to make a COVID vaccine and announced that the Iranian version of the 'Sputnik V' vaccine would be unveiled on Saturday.

Speaking on Monday at Golestan Province's Task Force for Combating Coronavirus, Saeed Namaki announced that the first phase of the clinical trial of IRGC's COVID vaccine would be carried out at Baqiyatallah Hospital on Sunday.

Namaki stated: "With measures taken in terms of planning and after the domestic needs are completely met, Iran will become an exporter of COVID vaccine from the beginning of winter."

I went wherever I could to buy COVID vaccine, but some countries, even those which were our friends, did not sell the vaccine directly to us, he said.

He noted that due to the announcement of domestic mass production of COVID vaccine, the embargo on the sale of this vaccine to Iran was lifted.

Economy, Revolutionary Values, Top Priorities of New President



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's President-elect Hojjatolislam Raisi held his first press conference yesterday after clinching a landslide victory in the June 18 presidential election and in his opening remarks he said the Iranian nation voiced their message to the world through the presidential poll, noting that "one message was national unity and coherence."

"The message of the Iranian nation was the necessity of a change in the economic situation," he said.

The message of the Iranian nation, he continued, was the need to fight corruption, poverty and discrimination, and in one word the realization of justice in all aspects of the people's lives.

"This vast and meaningful presence of the people occurred in spite of the coronavirus situation and hostilities and the psychological warfare of Iran's enemies," he said.

Raisi said the message of the Iranian nation is insistence on the values of the glorious Islamic Revolution and steadfastness on the path of the late founder of the Revolution, Imam Khomeini, and the martyrs, especially General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in January 2020 by the United States.

He said the United States' "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has failed to bring the Iranian nation to their knees.

His government, Raisi said, will not pursue attritional talks with world powers with the aim of bringing the United States back into compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement, which Washington abandoned in 2018 under former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Raisi said the U.S. must remove the sanctions in a verifiable way in order for Tehran to reverse the nuclear steps it took in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

He said the current negotiating team involved in the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital, Vienna, will continue to hold the negotiations as the transition to the new administration takes place.

Raisi urged the U.S. to return to its commitments under the nuclear deal, known by its acronym as the JCPOA, noting that the Iranian people have shown resistance and perseverance in the face of the maximum pressure campaign, which included tough economic sanctions targeting the people's livelihood.

"The foreign policy of our administration will not start from the JCPOA nor will it be restricted to the JCPOA," he said, stressing that he intends to develop constructive and balanced relations with all countries.

Raisi said any negotiation that secures Iran's national interests will be supported by his administration, but "we will not tie the economic situation and people's [livelihood] to these negotiations and we will not allow talks for the sake of talks."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi pledged to bring back the lost public trust in the Iranian government, saying he hopes people will feel that his administration is the administration of bringing hope and building trust.

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Iran Stores More Oil on Tankers as It Waits to Enter Markets

LONDON (Reuters) - Iran could quickly export millions of barrels of oil it is holding in storage if it reaches a deal with the United States on its nuclear programme and has been moving oil into place to prepare for an eventual restart, four traders and industrial sources said.

The U.S. and Iran began in mid-June their sixth round of indirect talks on reviving a 2015 nuclear deal that former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of in 2018. Trump reimposed sanctions on Iran's energy sector, leading refiners in many countries to shun Iranian crude and forcing Tehran to pump well below capacity.

Iran sits on the world's fourth-largest oil reserves and relies heavily on oil revenues. If and when the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden and the Iranian government agree a deal that results in the lifting of sanctions, Iran plans to increase output to 3.8 million barrels per day (bpd) from the current 2.1 million bpd, according to oil ministry officials. That would return the country's production level to where it was before the sanctions, but would take time because of years of low investment in mature oilfields and heavily reduced output.

As a stopgap measure while it works on boosting production, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is expected to export from onshore and offshore storage that contains as much as 200 million barrel, according to energy consultancy and monitoring firms. This could allow the country to export an extra 1 million bpd, or 1% of global supply, for more than six months.

"Iran will be using its nearly 60 million barrels of crude inventory, of which 30-35 million barrels are built during the past two years, within a few months of sanctions removal," said Iman Nasseri, managing director for the Middle East with FGE consultancy. An increase of 1 million bpd of Iranian crude would put downward pressure on benchmark global oil prices, but investment bank Goldman Sachs said last month that the global oil market should be able to absorb the additional supply relatively quickly.

Fuel demand is rising as global economic activity recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and OPEC producers and their allies have been cautious about increasing supply to the market in part to avoid a shock should Iranian supply return.

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Bushehr Nuclear Plant Temporarily Shut Down

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Iran's sole nuclear power plant in the southern port city of Bushehr has been temporarily shut down over a "technical glitch" and is about to be functional again in "a few days."

In a statement late Sunday, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said the nuclear plant and its 1,000-megawatt reactor will be reconnected to the grid after the issue is resolved in a few days.

"Following a technical fault at the Bushehr power plant, and after a one-day notice to the energy ministry, the plant was temporarily shut down and taken off the power grid," said the agency. Iran's state electricity company, Tanavir, had on Sunday called on people to reduce the consumption of power during peak hours due to a "predicted rise in temperature" and "limitations in electricity generation" due to ongoing repairs at the power station.

The Bushehr plant was completed with the assistance of Russia after years of delay in September 2013.

In 2016, the two countries began work on building two additional 1,000-megawatt reactors at the power plant, which is expected to take at least 10 years to complete. The power plant is monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Grossi Says Willing To Meet With Raisi

TEHRAN (MNA) - Rafael Grossi, head of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency expresses a tendency to sit down with Iran's newly elected President Ebrahim Raisi to build trust and a relationship as soon as possible.

In an interview with Pass Blue, he said "I am open to working with the next president of Iran and to hear Iran's views."

"I want to sit down with the new leadership and build trust and a relationship as soon as we can. Because we are in this for the long haul," he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said: "As I said at my last press conference, it is becoming increasingly difficult to extend or keep this arrangement, which is temporary. Are we going to continue the temporary agreement or not? Is June 24 the end of it? Because if it is, there are a number of things we need to do, starting with the erasure of the information [recorded on the cameras inside Iran's nuclear plants]. This must be done in an appropriate way with our presence, as it is our equipment."

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JCPOA Talks Not to Be Open-Ended

TEHRAN (MNA) - European troika diplomats in a note to the media stressed that talks to revive the Iran nuclear deal, JCPOA, could not be stalled and that the most difficult issues in Vienna talks has not yet been resolved.

Following the U.S. emphasis on continuing nuclear talks to revive JCPOA between Iran and P4+1, the European diplomats are now also emphasizing the need to conclusion of these talks.

On Monday, Reuters reported that Western officials say talks with Iran could not continue for an uncertain period and without any conclusion.

The more Iran violates the agreement and produces prohibited nuclear materials, the more difficult it will be to revive the agreement, Reuters, which has become a mouthpiece for the West's constructive propaganda against Iran, quoted European officials as saying. Western officials warned Tehran on Sunday that negotiations to revive its nuclear deal could not continue indefinitely.

According to the report, diplomats from France, Germany and the United Kingdom in a note to the media and journalists also claimed "As we have stated before, time is on nobody's side. These talks cannot be open ended," adding that the most difficult issues still need to be resolved.



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Majlis Vows Full Cooperation With New Administration

TEHRAN (MNA) – Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf vowed the full cooperation of Majlis with the Ebrahim Raeisi's administration.

“While maintaining its independence and performing its legal duties, the parliament will do its best to cooperate fully with the elected government and to solve the problems of the nation,” Qalibaf said Monday at Parliament's open session.

President-elect of Iran Ebrahim Raeisi said on Saturday that he will form a hardworking, revolutionary and anti-corruption government.

Sanctions to Be Over Soon

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that U.S. sanctions on Iran which were wrong in the first place would be removed soon and foreign investment would pour into the country.

Speaking online in the inauguration of national projects, Rouhani said that this was the 75th inauguration ceremony, which shows the world that Iran is hub of investment and production.

He hailed Iranians' resistance during the last 3.5 year of economic terrorism by the U.S., describing it as being unprecedented in the history of the region and the world.

Referring to the recent U.S. Treasury Department's announcement on easing hurdles against importing coronavirus-related items, Rouhani said that this was a confession by the U.S. that they blocked everything for the Iranian nation, including humanitarian goods.

The U.S. admitted the fact only once Iran became a producer and exporter of masks and COVID-19 vaccines, the President stressed.

He underlined that despite inflation, the country is replete with any kind of goods, which shows that the economic war has failed to reach its goal of crushing Iran's economy.

Expressing hope that the U.S. sanctions would be lifted soon, Rouhani said that foreign investment would pour into the country and the free trade zones in Iran should serve as mobilizer in this regard.



He referred to the ties with Azerbaijan Republic, promising great positive developments in northwest Iran in this regard.

He added an imminent removal of the sanctions on Iran will result in the flow of foreign investment into the country.

In comments after inaugurating a number of projects in free trade and special economic zones via videoconference, Rouhani said the country's free trade zones should be at the forefront of attracting foreign investment.

“The sanctions will be soon lifted and foreign investment will flow into Iran,” he added.

The president also noted that the free trade zones of Iran have developed so much that they have been transformed from importers and consumers to exporters and producers.

The free trade zones have turned into bridges linking Iran to the neighbors and other world countries, Rouhani stated.

Remaining Part of Way Not Easy

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's top negotiator in Vienna talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal said that negotiations have gone a long way, but the remaining part of the road was not easy to pass.

Speaking after the sixth round of talks in Vienna on Sunday night, Abbas Araqchi said the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), informally known as the Iran nuclear deal, made a conclusion of the sixth round.

He added that all participants admitted that a great progress had been made, but they also acknowledged that there were some key issues that must be decided on in capitals. The top negotiator stressed that they have gone a long way and approached the end of the path, but the remaining part is not an easy road.

He expressed hope, saying that if the participants could take their decisions, the next round of talks would be the final one, but Iran would continue to insist on its national interests. A key demand from Iran is that the U.S. must guarantee that what happened during the Trump administration would not recur.

Iran Among the Leading States In Maritime Telecommunications

TEHRAN (MNA) - Mohammad-Reza Allahyar, the deputy of engineering and infrastructure development at Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), has said Iran is among the world's leading countries in maritime technologies and telecommunications.

Mentioning the virtual presence of PMO as Iran's representative at the 10th International Maritime Transport and Logistics Conference in Egypt, Allahyar said the PMO's Engineering and Infrastructure Development Department was in charge of the panel on the role of digital transformation in the development of container terminals, in the mentioned conference.

He underlined the positive impact of such international events on the global status of the Iranian maritime industry, saying: “Attending international forums and conferences can lead to the exchange of knowledge and experiences, while promoting the scientific and professional level of the participants, and fortunately, the Ports and Maritime Organization has had a good presence in the international arena and plays a significant role in this area.”

Regarding the PMO's measures for the digital transformation or smartening of the country's ports, the official noted: “In recent years, serious measures have been taken to achieve this goal and in the field of engineering and infrastructure development, efforts have been made to use up-to-date equipment and technologies.”

“Among the software that has been considered by the Ports and Maritime Organization for smartening of the ports, we can mention the decision-making-aid software for vessels, which was developed by domestic knowledge-based centers with the support of the PMO,” Allahyar explained.

“Currently, only two countries are able to provide this software, and fortunately, Iranian experts succeeded in developing it using a sea dynamics simulator model and the software is now being used in a trial basis,” he added.

Zarif Sys Consultations at Antalya Fruitful

TEHRAN (IP) - The Iranian Foreign Minister called the consultations with officials of different countries at the Antalya Diplomatic Forum were fruitful.

On Sunday, after talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the Antalya Diplomatic Forum provided an opportunity to discuss the issue of Afghanistan.

Zarif added: “At this meeting, a decision was made to form tripartite working groups on transit, security issues, illegal immigration, and drugs.”

Iranian Foreign Minister added: “It was decided to cooperate for the future of Afghanistan and bring together all groups concerning the democratic system and the constitution of this country.”

Zarif described the Antalya Diplomacy Forum as a good start for expanding Asian cooperation with Africa and Europe and expressed hope for a successful follow-up to the forum.

On the last day of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey, the first trilateral meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan was held on regional issues and the pursuit of the Afghan peace process.

Iran Slams U.S. Cruel Sanctions Against Cuba

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Iran-Cuba Friendship Association criticized U.S. inhumane sanctions against Cuba.

In his letter to António Guterres, Hadi Khansari referred to the condition of the world in the last two years and the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the economic and psychological pressures on the international community, especially Cuba.

He wrote: “Cuba has endured more than six decades of comprehensive U.S. sanctions against its people and government, which is the longest sanctions in the history of the world.”

“This has endangered the mental and physical health and quality of life in Cuba and had led to poverty and various problems pushing the country into a form of genocide,” he added.

“On behalf of the Iran-Cuba Friendship Association, we call for the lifting of these sanctions as soon as possible and condemn the inhumane and unjust sanctions.”

“We call on all human and legal communities to confront this inhuman and oppressive behavior of the United States. We hope that the world will become a place for equality, peace, and fair life,” he added.

Tokyo Calls for Reinforcing Friendly Ties With Tehran

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Japan's top government spokesman Katsunobu Kato said Tokyo intends to deepen friendly relations with Tehran.

“We hope Iran will play a constructive role in easing tensions in the Middle East and stabilize the situation under President-elect Raisi,” Kato was quoted by a Japanese media as saying.

“Peace and stability in the region is extremely important to Japan,” given about 90 percent of Japan's crude oil imports come from the Middle East, he added.

Zarif, Raisi Meet

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian FM Zarif and the newly-elected President Ebrahim Raeisi met and held talks on Monday.

The two sides discussed the JCPOA and Iran's foreign policy, according to Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh.

The meeting comes as Iran's top negotiator Araqchi has announced that Tehran's policies are not going to change under the administration of Raisi.

Asked about Tehran's stance under the next president, Araqchi said President-elect Raisi is a realistic and reasonable person, and that Iran's position will not change even after the transition of government.

First Iranian Oxygen Shipment Arrives in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The first Iranian oxygen shipment has arrived in Afghanistan's Herat Province as the war-torn country is grappling with a new wave of the coronavirus.

Abdul Hakim Tamana, the head of Herat's public health department, said the first oxygen tanker arrived in Herat from the Iranian city of Mashhad on Saturday.

According to the report, the Health Department of Razavi Khorasan Province in cooperation with the Consul General of Afghanistan in Mashhad and the Consul General of Iran in Herat secured a license for the consignment to leave Iran.

More shipments of medical oxygen will arrive in Afghanistan in the coming days to help the country cope with a shortage of oxygen in Herat and neighboring provinces to treat COVID-19 patients. According to IRNA news agency, Afghanistan's acting health minister, Wahid Majrooh, has recently said that 3,500 oxygen concentrators will enter Afghanistan from Iran soon.

As Afghanistan is grappling with the third wave of the pandemic, the oxygen shortage has become a major problem in the country's west. The Afghan Health Ministry has recently warned of a “humanitarian catastrophe” over the shortage.

Under an agreement between Iran and Afghanistan, Iran is set to send oxygen to Herat on a weekly basis. Since the outbreak of the new coronavirus in Afghanistan, Iran has provided the country with medical supplies and equipment to help fight the deadly pandemic.

Iran Reports 8.8% Growth in Car Output

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's ministry of industries (MIMT) says car output in the country increased in the two months to late May as domestic manufacturers continued to dominate a local market where major international brands have almost no presence.

MIMT figures published on Sunday showed that total car output in the first two calendar months to May 21 had reached 128,700 units, up 8.8% against the similar period last year.

Pickup truck production also surged by 12.9% over the same period to 9,477 units, while truck, small truck and truck cab output increased by 45.5% to 956 units, showed the figures.

Bus, minibus and van production by Iranian automotive companies declined 3.2% against April-May 2020 to 215 units, while tractor output reached 2,036 units, a decline of 23.3% year on year.

Production of combine harvesters was up by 6.9% to 62 units while tire output rose 1.3% against last year to a total of 40,200 metric tons. Iran has seen a major growth in manufacturing activity in recent years as industries keep consolidating their share of the domestic market on the back of lower imports.

Domestic car makers have benefited from a 2018 decision by French companies to leave Iran to comply with U.S. sanctions. Iran's annual car output rose by 19.1% in the year to March 20 against the previous year despite closures at production sites and disruptions to parts supply chains reported last year because of the spread of the coronavirus in Iran.

Central Bank of Iran figures published earlier this week showed that the country's manufacturing and mining sector had expanded by 7.1% in the year to late March against a 2.3% growth reported for the previous year.

Kowsari Elected as Tehran Representative in Majlis

TEHRAN (MNA) – Ismail Kowsari was elected as the representative of the people of Tehran in Iran's parliament, gaining 346,645 votes, a spokesman for the Tehran election office said.

The vote-counting process so as to elect one remaining representative in Tehran, Rey, Shemiranat, Eslamshahr, and Pardis electoral district has been completed, Hassan Beigi announced.

Gaining 346,645 votes out of the total votes, Ismail Kowsari was elected as the representative of the people of Tehran in Iran's parliament, he added.

Annual Exports of Cellulose Products Exceed \$100m

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran exported over \$100 million worth of cellulose products in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), according to Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki.

“This industry [cellulose] has developed significantly over the past decade, for example, until 10 years ago we were an importer of tissue papers, but today we are among the exporters of this product,” Niaraki said at the opening ceremony of Iran's 4th International Specialized Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products, and Related Machinery in Tehran on Monday.

The official noted that the production of tissues and packaging papers in the country grew significantly last year, and more than 700,000 tons of packing papers were also produced in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21).

According to the official, domestic producers are currently capable of providing all types of cellulose products that the market is demanding, however, technical issues and the lack of raw materials have led the country to import most of the required materials for the production process.

Currently, 120,000 tons of sanitary tissues are consumed annually in the country, while the production in this field is more than 200,000 tons.

Projects on Participation of Iranian Companies in Karabakh to Be Determined

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Hopefully, projects in which Iranian companies will participate in Karabakh, will be identified in the near future, Iran's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said.

Mousavi noted said that large Iranian public and private companies and holdings have announced their readiness to participate in the reconstruction of Karabakh.

“Iranian companies want to see these areas prosperous and developed,” said the ambassador. He went on to add that during a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif recently, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stated that Azerbaijan invites Iranian companies to participate in the reconstruction work in Karabakh.



PRAYER TIME

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

138. Here is a plain statement to men, a guidance and instruction to those who fear Allah.
139. So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: For ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith.

Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran (138 - 139)

Iran, Bangladesh Explore Capacities for Joint Cooperation, Investment

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Bangladesh Ambassador to Tehran A.F.M. Gousal Azam Sarker in meeting with the head and some officials of Arak Chamber of Commerce reviewed opportunities for joint cooperation and investment between Iran and Bangladesh and called for boosting the economic relations.

In the meeting which was held upon the invitation of Head of Arak Chamber of Commerce, the chamber presented capabilities and capacities of Markazi Province for more cooperation between the province and Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Ambassador Mr. Azam Sarker said that in his view, growth and development has a special and valuable place and pulling all energy and capability of the private sector is very crucial for achieving progress.

He added that to this end, Bangladesh government has tried to hand over the trade and investment to the private sector to witness successes in the economic activities, and therefore, efforts have been considerably made and many privatizations have been done in order to make Bangladesh economy shift from a state-run economy to a private-sector one.

He stipulated that fortunately despite high population in the country, Bangladesh government is able to supply required basic goods for the public, and even it also exports in some sectors.

Azam Sarker went on to say that in the past 12 years, Bangladesh economy has taken a long stride in a way that its GDP has grown from 6% to 8%, adding that the government has also taken policies to in order that investors and traders can trade with Iran and it will help Bangladesh to enter its third phase of economic growth.

He also expressed interests of Bangladesh for expansion of ties with Iran due to their historic and cultural ties, adding that Bangladesh currently requires raw material for advancing its economic goals and it seems Markazi Province of Iran has enough capacity to meet the needs of Bangladesh to the raw materials. He noted since both countries enjoy having good political ties, this potential exists that their bilateral trade relation picks up.



Azam Sarker reiterated that joint investment is the missing link for trade between Iran and Bangladesh, adding that with this action, transfer of technology and rise in the trade exchange will be the ground for some changes that it will lead to golden opportunities for both countries and even other countries.

He also pointed to the capabilities of Bangladesh in the field of pharmaceutical productions, ceramic, building small and big ship (exporting them to countries like Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands) and notified that Bangladesh ranks second in fiber production in the machine-manufacturing industry and leather industries, adding that the country has good investment in the apparel industries.

The ambassador noted that Bangladesh is importer in the fields of LPG, bitumen, steel and aluminum and it provides its needs from Iran and other countries. He added that the country has some shortages in producing some food products like onion and garlic and Iran can provide Bangladesh with food stuff and both countries can exchange bilateral trade of products like banana, coconut, fruit juice and fruits.

Azam Sarker said both countries will benefit from the joint investment project. He said different tax and customs exemptions for investments are of the major advantages of the investment, and production in Bangladesh and traders and businessmen in Bangladesh can trade with international currencies.

Then Head of Arak Chamber of Commerce Mr. Naser Beiki, for his part, hailed the Bangladesh government for its good management in different grounds and said since Markazi Province is an industrial province, the condition is good for bilateral ties with Bangladesh.

Meanwhile the secretary of the chamber Mr. Joodaki said Iran's exports to Bangladesh were around \$80m in 2019 but due to the coronavirus pandemic this figure declined last year. He said exchange of trade delegations between the two countries, Iran and Bangladesh can boost their bilateral trade.

Exports to Syria Jumps 73% In 2 Months on Year

TEHRAN (MNA) -

Iran's value of export to Syria hit \$49 million during the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), which was 73 percent higher than the figure for the same period of time in the past year, a director in Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Soheila Rasoulinejad, the director of the Syria Desk in TPO's Office of Arabian Countries, also stated that Syria is ranked 14th in Iran's most important export markets.

Components and parts of steam turbines worth \$30 million, equivalent to 60 percent of the exports, accounted for the largest share of exports to this country, followed by goods such as electrical conductors, iron or steel rods, and baby milk powder, the official further said.

She put Iran's import from Syria and \$2 million during the said period. According to the chairman of Iran-Syria Joint Chamber of Commerce said that trade is rising between the two countries.

Last month, Keyvan Kashefi said that currently Syria is moving towards reconstruction, and items in the fields of construction, bridge and dam building, electricity supply, and technical and engineering services are at the top of Iran's list of exports to this country.

Syria's trade statistics show that trade with China and India has not changed in the past three years, but Iran's trade with Syria is on the rise, he added.



Iranian Vaccines to Reach Global Market

TEHRAN (IP) - President of the Pasteur Institute of Iran said that Iranian coronavirus vaccines would definitely take a significant share of the global market.

Alireza Biglari appeared on a live TV program on Sunday night to talk about the export of Pasto-COVO vaccine.

He said: "Given the 100-year history of vaccine production, proven safe and effective vaccine and effectiveness against new mutations, the export market for this vaccine will be open."

He noted: "The Pasteur Institute complex has a hundred-year history in the field of production and this complex is one of the oldest manufacturers of vaccines in the region and the world."

Biglari added: "It has been proven that this vaccine can be used safely between the ages of 18 and 90."

The head of the Pasteur Institute of Iran said: "44,000 people in Cuba and 24,000 people in Iran have received the second dose of the joint vaccine of the Pasteur Institute of Iran and Cuba."

Biglari went on to say: "The joint vaccine of the Pasteur Institute of Iran and the Finlay Institute of Cuba are in the final phase at the same time, and 44,000 people in Cuba and 24,000 in 8 cities of Iran have received the second dose."

He added: "In the past year, vaccine technology in the country has advanced by 20 years, in other words, COVID- 19, with all its problems, has provided a unique opportunity for the country's vaccine industry."

Int'l Paper, Related Machinery Exhibition Opens

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's 4th International Specialized Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products, and Related Machinery kicked off at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Monday, IRNA reported.

The inaugural ceremony of the four-day exhibit was participated by Deputy Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mehdi Sadeqi Niaraki.

As reported, there are currently 120 paper production plants in Iran, whose major challenge is the supply of raw materials.

According to Abolfazl Roghani Golpayegani, the head of the Iranian Syndicate of Paper and Cardboard Manufacturers, currently, the per capita consumption of paper products in Iran is 22 kilograms (kg), while in Europe the figure stands at 55 kg and in the United States is 160 kg.

The annual consumption of textbook paper is 40,000 tons, while some 120,000 tons of sanitary paper is also consumed annually in the country. The production in this field is more than 200,000 tons.

Last week, Golpayegani had said that considering the country's potentials and capacities, Iran could easily become a hub for paper production in the region.

"Due to the general conditions and available facilities, Iran has the potential to become a regional production hub in many industries including the paper and cardboard sector," Golpayegani said.

Iran Lost \$100b In Crude Revenues Since 2018



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh says the country has lost an estimated \$100 billion in crude revenues since 2018 because of US sanctions that hampered sales and due to lower prices in international markets that was caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Zanganeh provided the estimates in a report submitted to a high-profile economic meeting chaired by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in Tehran on Sunday, according to Rouhani's official website.

The report said the loss had been accumulated since the middle of 2018 when the then US government abandoned an international deal on Iran's nuclear program and imposed sanctions on Tehran.

It said, however, that lower crude oil sales had forced the Iranian government to change the way of funding its daily routines as well as the projects needed to develop the infrastructure in the country.

The report insisted that dependence on crude revenues had declined to only 10% in the annual budget adopted by the government for the calendar year to March 2021, down from 42% in 2012-2013.

Iran's crude sales were the main target of US sanctions imposed in May 2018. Exports declined to their lowest when Washington toughened the bans a year later by removing the waivers given to certain customers of the Iranian oil in Asia.

However, Iran crude shipments increased in the second half of 2020 as the country found innovative ways of getting round the US sanctions to sell its oil.

That has come despite a major crisis gripping the international markets since earlier last year when the spread of the coronavirus hit demand for fuel and caused oil prices to crash.

President Inaugurates Development Projects Worth \$14.7b

TEHRAN (MNA) - Some 52 development projects worth 620 trillion rials (over \$14.7 billion) were put into operation or commenced in Iran's free trade and special economic zones on Monday, in the 74th series of inauguration ceremonies since the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20).

President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated the mentioned projects through video conferencing in various provinces including East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Khuzestan, Hormozgan, Gilan, and Sistan-Baluchestan, Mehr News Agency reported.

Put into operation in Kish, Qeshm, Arvand, Aras, and Anzali free trade and special economic zones, the said projects are going to provide direct employment for about 2,090 people.

As reported by IRNA, in this series of inaugurations 15 production and development projects with a total investment of 26.19 trillion rials (about \$623 million) were put into operation in the Aras Free Trade Zone which will create jobs for 575 people, while 11 infrastructure projects worth 2.25 trillion rials (about \$53.57 million) were inaugurated in Arvand Free Zone, which will provide employment for 260 people directly.



Also, 15 projects were put into operation in Qeshm Free Trade Zone, the investment value of which is 24.80 trillion rials (about \$590 million) and will create jobs for 880 people. In Kish Free Zone, nine projects worth 26.89 trillion rials (about \$640 million) were inaugurated which create job opportunities for 375 people.

The president also ordered the beginning of several development projects with a total investment of 420 trillion rials (\$10 billion). These projects are going to create jobs for 7,117 people when put into operation.

One of the most important projects that were inaugurated on Monday in the Arvand Free Trade Zone, was the Shalamchah-Basra railway.

Shalamchah-Basra railway route which connects the southwestern Iranian city of Shalamchah to Basra in Iraq is 32 kilometers long along which a 700-meter bridge is also constructed.

According to the Secretary of Iranian Free Zones High Council Hamidreza Mo'meni, currently, 621 development projects are being implemented in free trade and special economic zones, which have average physical progress of 50 percent.

Iran, India Sign Agreement to Share Knowledge About Rotavirus Vaccine

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Pasteur Institute of Iran (IPI) and Bharat Biotech of India have signed an agreement on exchange and transfer of knowledge about rotavirus vaccine.

The agreement which was signed after over two years on June 19, 2021, will be an effective step towards decrease in number of children with rotavirus.

The vaccine would protect against infections with rotavirus that is the main cause of young children's diarrhea.

At the signing ceremony held virtually with participation of Head of IPI Ali-Reza Biglari and Chairman of Bharat Biotech Krishna Ella, the two agreed to provide rotavirus vaccine for domestic vaccination and transfer its production technology.

According to report of Iran's Embassy in India, Tehran and New Delhi have expressed readiness to expand bilateral relations in the areas of health, treatment and joint production of vaccine.

In a related development, Iran's Ambassador to New Delhi Ali Chegeni has expressed hope that grounds would soon be prepared for dispatch of coronavirus vaccine manufactured by Bharat Biotech Company to Iran.

According to experts, agreement between Iran and India can be considered as a basis for further bilateral ties in jointly producing vaccine and exchanging world's modern technologies.



Biden to Meet With Afghan President

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Joe Biden will meet at the White House with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah on Friday to discuss U.S. troop withdrawal amid a surge in fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban across the country.

In their first face-to-face meeting, Biden will seek to reassure Ghani and Abdullah of U.S. support for the Afghan people including diplomatic, economic and humanitarian assistance, the White House said in a statement. Biden will also repeat his pledge to ensure that the country never becomes a safe haven for terrorist groups.



Russian Envoy to U.S. Returns to Washington

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov, was in an optimistic mood ahead of his return to Washington on Sunday, expecting meetings scheduled with U.S. colleagues next week to be constructive, the RIA news agency reported.

President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Joe Biden agreed to return their respective ambassadors to Washington and Moscow during talks in Geneva on Wednesday, a first summit between the two that they both described as pragmatic rather than friendly. Moscow recalled Antonov for consultations after Biden said in March that he believed Putin was "a killer". The U.S. ambassador later returned to Washington for consultations too.



Taliban Say Islamic System Only Way to Afghan Peace



KABUL (Dispatches) - The Taliban said Sunday they remain committed to peace talks but insisted that a "genuine Islamic system" in Afghanistan was the only way to end the war and ensure rights -- including for women.

Talks between the militants and the Afghan government have been deadlocked for months and violence has surged across the country since May when the U.S. military began its final withdrawal.

Fears are also growing that if the Taliban return to power, they will reimpose their harsh version of Islamic law, under which girls were banned from school and women accused of crimes such as adultery were stoned to death in stadiums.

Despite the rise in violence, Taliban co-founder and deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar said Sunday that the group was committed to the peace talks.

"Our very participation in the negotiations... indicates openly that we believe in resolving issues through (mutual) understanding," Baradar said in a statement.

He said the only way to end the conflict in Afghanistan was to establish an Islamic system after the departure of all foreign forces.

"A genuine Islamic system is the best mean for solution of all issues of the Afghans," Baradar said.

His statement acknowledged the fears in Afghanistan and abroad about the kind of system that would emerge -- and its impact on women -- saying that fell "within the ambit of the intra-Afghan negotiations".

Baradar also assured that the rights of all Afghans including women will be accommodated in that system according to "the glorious religion of Islam" and Afghan traditions.

But many fear that the Taliban's interpretation of rights will clash with the changes that have happened in Afghan society since 2001.

In May, a U.S. intelligence report said the gains made over the past two decades on women's rights would be rolled back if the militants returned to power.

As the U.S. military presses ahead to meet the September 11 deadline to complete the troop withdrawal, the Taliban have fought daily battles with government forces and claim to have captured 40 districts.

The growing fear and uncertainty about the future has forced many Afghans to try and leave, including thousands of men and women who fear reprisals because they worked with foreign forces.

Baradar called on Afghan youths to not leave the country, and also stressed that the Taliban will ensure that minorities, humanitarian organizations and diplomats had nothing to fear.

French Far Right Tests Voters' Appetite In Regional Elections, Turnout Low

PARIS (Reuters) - French voters went to the polls on Sunday in regional elections that will test the appeal of far-right leader Marine Le Pen's softened image less than a year before the next presidential election with a record low turnout expected.

Coming after a gruelling year and a half of lockdowns, curfews and restrictions, Sunday's first round is likely to prove dire for President Emmanuel Macron, whose party is projected to win none of mainland France's 13 regions.

Boosted by a resurgence of law-and-order issues during the campaign, despite the fact French regions have no police powers, Le Pen is hoping to capitalize on a rebrand that has seen her ditch promises of "Frexit" and inflammatory rhetoric.

"She appears less extreme in the eyes of the French, less dangerous for democracy, than she did a decade ago," Brice Teinturier, an analyst with pollster IPSOS told Reuters. The best chance for her Rassemblement National party is in the south of France, the region around Marseille and Nice, where one of Le Pen's lieutenants, a former conservative minister, is projected by one opinion poll as winning the race even if all parties rally against him.

Gaining one region, for the first time ever, would give Le Pen a major boost less than a year before presidential elections, and would be a slap in the face for Macron, who has painted himself as a bulwark against the far right.

"If the choice is effectively between the Rassemblement National and the centre-right, like Mr. Macron, personally I will not vote (in the presidential elections)," film director Emmanuel Barraud, 61, told Reuters outside a polling station in Paris.

"I think we must accept that the game is over, and we must start preparing for the future and the future is reconstructing a real Leftist party."

Turnout by late afternoon was one of the lowest for a French election in history at just 26.7%, down from 43% in 2015 and 39.3 % in 2010. Pollster OpinionWay predicted an abstention rate of 68%.

The far right is also likely to do well in two other regions, around Calais in the north and in Burgundy, helped by low turnout in a country whose attention is shifting to summer holidays to forget the pandemic.



Military Movements Banned in Libya After Haftar's Border Takeover

TRIPOLI (Dispatches) - Libya's presidential council has banned any military movement across the country without its approval after forces loyal to renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar said they took control of a border crossing with Algeria and declared it a military zone.

"The Supreme Commander of the Libyan Army announces a complete ban on the movement of military units, regardless of the nature of their work, without his prior approval," the media office of the Burkan al-Ghadab (Volcano of Rage) Operation, the government-led counteroffensive launched last April, said in a statement on Twitter.

It is also banned the movement of "military convoys for any purpose, or to transfer personnel, weapons or ammunition", the statement said. If necessary, the "repositioning or moving" of military convoys should only take place "in accordance ... and with the approval of the Supreme Commander", it added.

Earlier on Saturday, a large military force loyal to Haftar said it took control of the southern Essen border crossing with Algeria, declaring the area a military zone in which movement was strictly forbidden.

Images posted online showed dozens of armoured vehicles positioned in and around the crossing, which has been closed for several years due to the conflict in Libya.

The move came after Haftar, in a statement on Thursday, announced an operation in the area "to track down the ... terrorists and expel African mercenary gangs which threaten security and stability".

This is the first military operation of its kind by Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army since the signing of a ceasefire deal late last year and the takeover by the unity government. "Libya has seen relative peace since the ceasefire agreement was signed in October, so this is a very significant movement," said Al Jazeera's Malik Traina, reporting from Tripoli.

"It is the first time [since then] that such a large military mobilisation has happened," he added. Local sources in the south told Al Jazeera that the convoy that arrived on Saturday consisted of Tuareg fighters and forces loyal to former strongman Muammar Gaddafi.

Rival Protests in Peru as Tensions Rise Over Presidential Vote

LIMA (Dispatches) - Supporters of socialist Pedro Castillo and conservative Keiko Fujimori took to the streets by the thousands in Peru on Saturday, as tensions rose over the result of a June 6 presidential election.

Castillo, who received 50.125 percent of the vote with a difference of 44,058 ballots, has declared himself the winner. Fujimori got 49.875 percent of the votes and has made claims of large-scale election fraud.

In Peru's capital, Lima, supporters of Castillo gathered at the "2 de Mayo" square, calling for the left-wing candidate to be formally announced as president-elect.

Fujimori's supporters also held a rival demonstration in a different part of the city demanding the annulment of the run-off election. The National Jury of Elections says it is still reviewing votes and is yet to declare a winner.

"We are not going to allow them to ignore the popular will, to ignore the electoral result. We are going to defend democracy," said Veronika Mendoza, a former leftist presidential candidate who attended the rally for Castillo.

"Unfortunately, Mrs. 'K' [Keiko Fujimori] is a corrupt woman who should not be president and should accept her defeat because what won here is the democracy, the fair vote of the people," said Ruben, another pro-Castillo demonstrator.

International observers have said there is no evidence of fraud and that the election was clean.

Pollster Ipsos Peru also said it had done a statistical

analysis of the ballots and found no evidence of abnormal voting patterns that would have benefitted one candidate over the other. But Fujimori, daughter of jailed ex-president Alberto Fujimori, showed no signs of relenting.

"We are not going to accept our votes being stolen," she told her supporters in Lima.

"We'll give our lives for the country; it's not about Keiko, it's about Peru, no to terrorism, no to communism," said Nancy Falla, who attended the pro-Fujimori rally. The tense vote count is the culmination of a bitterly divisive election in Peru, where many low-income citizens supported Castillo while mostly wealthier ones voted for Fujimori.

The opposing candidates have pledged vastly different remedies for rescuing Peru from the economic doldrums brought on by the COVID-19 crisis.

The Andean country has the worst coronavirus death rate in the world, recording almost 190,000 deaths among its 33 million population. Two million Peruvians have also lost their jobs during the pandemic and nearly a third of the country now lives in poverty, according to official figures.

Fujimori, 46, has pledged to follow the free-market model and maintain economic stability, while Castillo, 51, has promised to redraft the country's constitution to strengthen the role of the state, take a larger portion of profits from mining firms and nationalise key industries - Peru is the world's second-biggest producer of copper.



Armenia Votes in Neck-and-Neck Parliamentary Election

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Armenians were voting in a parliamentary election on Sunday, with opinion polls putting the party of acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and that of former President Robert Kocharyan neck-and-neck.

The Armenian government called the snap election to try to end a political crisis that erupted after ethnic Armenian forces lost a six-week war against Azerbaijan last year and ceded territory in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Pashinyan has been under pressure ever since, with regular street protests demanding he step down over the terms of the peace agreement that ended the conflict. Under the deal, which was brokered by Russia, Azerbaijan regained control of territory it had lost during a war in the early 1990s.

Pashinyan himself described the agreement as a disaster, but said he had been compelled to sign it in order to prevent greater human and territorial losses.

According to a recent Gallup International poll conducted on June 7-10, 24.1% of voters were ready to vote for Kocharyan's Armenia Alliance and 23.8% for Pashinyan's Civil Contract party.

Whoever forms a majority in the south Caucasus country's parliament gets to elect the prime minister, who is nominated by the president.

Both Pashinyan and Kocharyan voted on Sunday morning in the capital Yerevan. The prosecutor general's office said it had received 64 reports of voting crimes, including people voting multiple times, bribery, and violence at polling stations, the Sputnik media outlet reported, citing a spokesman.

The defence ministry rejected allegations that servicemen were being forced to vote, explaining that conscripts voting in groups was systematically beneficial and said it was continuing to monitor the voting process.

Nationwide turnout stood at 38.17% by 1300 GMT, Sputnik reported. Polls close at 1600 GMT.

Armenia, which hosts a Russian military base, is a close ally of Moscow, though Pashinyan, who came to power on the back of street protests and on an anti-corruption agenda in 2018, has had cooler relations with the Kremlin.

"We wish a successful election to our close ally and partner," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday. Turkey, which supported Azerbaijan in last year's conflict, will also be watching closely.





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Fully Furn

Parsian

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Kamranieh (\$2400) 230sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, & F.F
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Bitcoin Falls 7% to \$35,431.15

LONDON (Reuters) - Bitcoin dropped 7% to \$35,431.15, losing \$2,666.53 from its previous close.

Bitcoin, the world's biggest and best-known cryptocurrency, is down 45.4% from the year's high of \$64,895.22 on April 14.

Ether, the coin linked to the ethereum blockchain network, dipped 8.66% to \$2,165.68, losing \$205.45 from its previous close.



FDI Into Malaysia Plunges Nearly 55%

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Foreign direct investment (FDI) into Malaysia recorded a net inflow of RM14.6 billion in 2020, down 54.8 per cent from RM32.4 billion in 2019, the lowest since 2009.

However, as of end-2020, the FDI position registered a higher value of RM698.8 billion, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) said in a statement on the country's FDI and direct investment abroad (DIA) for 2020 today.

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the world's economic activities were severely disrupted throughout last year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that, in turn, affected the global investment performance.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), global FDI flows fell 42 per cent in 2020 compared to that of 2019, hence, the FDI into Malaysia last year also suffered a decline.

"Although FDI flows dropped in 2020, the declining trend did not continue at the beginning of 2021," he said.

He said the FDI inflow into Malaysia showed a recovery by registering RM9.1 billion in the first quarter of 2021 (Q1), the highest investment since the Covid-19 pandemic hit Malaysia.

"The improved investment was contributed by higher inflow in equity and investment fund shares, precisely in manufacturing and services sectors."

The services sector, which contracted 60.5 per cent year-on-year to RM6.9 billion last year, led the largest decline in FDI.

"However, the downturn in services was not an unpropitious sign since this sector remained as the major contributor to FDI flows, attracting 47.0 per cent of total investment, particularly in financial activities.

"Meanwhile, manufacturing was the second-highest contributor, which received higher equity precisely in electrical and electronics (E&E) products, followed by mining sector in the form of debt instruments," he added.

Among 190 trading countries, Mohd Uzir said the Asia region continued to be the top source of FDI in Malaysia in 2020 with a net inflow of RM18.3 billion, mostly from Singapore, Thailand, and China which amounted to RM11.5 billion.

Nevertheless, this was a downturn from a net inflow of RM26.9 billion in the preceding year, reflecting the downward trend of investment performance in the region.

Overall, the accumulated FDI has increased by RM11 billion, amounting to RM698.8 billion, with the services sector as the largest recipient at 51.6 per cent or RM360.4 billion, driven by financial and wholesale activities.

This was followed by the manufacturing sector, which accounted for 39.2 per cent of total FDI, precisely in E&E products.

Similar to the FDI performance, the DIA flow also dropped by 54 per cent to RM11.9 billion owing to lower investment in mining and services sectors.

The Chief Statistician said that services also remained as a vital sector for DIA, contributing 54 per cent of the total investment, particularly in financial and telecommunication activities, followed by the manufacturing sector, primarily in food and beverages, and petroleum, chemical, rubber and plastic products.

He said these investments were mainly channelled to Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), and Indonesia.

As for the DIA performance in Q1 2021, Malaysia's DIA showed an increasing trend by recording a net outflow of RM7.8 billion in this quarter, significantly contributed by higher outflow in equity and investment fund shares.

Aramco Closes \$12b Pipeline Deal With China, UAE Backing

RIYADH (Dispatches) - China's Silk Road Fund and Hassana Investment Co., controlled by the Saudi Arabian government, joined a group investing \$12.4 billion in Saudi Aramco's oil pipelines.

The consortium, led by U.S. firm EIG Global Energy Partners LLC, has now closed a deal to acquire a 49 percent equity stake in Aramco Oil Pipelines Co., a new subsidiary, according to an emailed statement. The group includes Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund Mubadala Investment Co. and Samsung Asset Management. Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates and, along with Saudi Arabia, a key member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries cartel.

The subsidiary will have rights to 25 years of tariff payments for oil transported through Aramco's crude pipeline network. Aramco, the world's biggest oil producer, will retain ownership of the other 51 percent of the shares.

Aramco may look to raise money from a similarly structured deal for its natural gas pipelines as part of a plan to sell non-core assets, people familiar with the matter have told Bloomberg. The funds would help the company maintain a \$75 billion annual dividend, almost all of which goes to the government.



South Korea Far Behind World Average In Renewable Energy

SEJONG (Dispatches) - South Korea was found to have fallen far short of the world average in renewable energy use, amid a global ramp-up in efforts to attain carbon neutrality by 2050.

The world economies' average in the percentage of renewable energy of the total energy supply reached 13.51 percent, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development that cited the latest available data (for 2019 or 2018) from the Extended World Energy Balances. South Korea's portion stood at 2.36 percent in 2019.

The OECD defines renewable energy as the contribution of renewables to total primary energy supply. It includes the primary energy equivalent of hydro, geothermal, solar, wind, tide and wave sources. Energy derived from solid biofuels, biogasoline, biodiesels, other liquid biofuels, biogases and the renewable fraction of municipal waste are also included.

The figure held by Korea was also significantly lower than those of major Asian economies: 30.79 percent in the Philippines, 25.69 percent in Indonesia, 23.26 percent in Bangladesh, 22.59 percent in India, 9.24 percent in China, 6.24 percent in Japan and 3.41 percent in Malaysia.

The data puts Korea at the bottom among OECD members. The average of the 37 OECD members and the average of European countries in the OECD came to 10.91 percent and 15.95 percent, respectively. High rankers in the French-based organization included Iceland with 90.13 percent, Norway with 54.58 percent, Latvia with 41.37 percent, Sweden with 40.78 percent, Denmark with 36.93 percent, Colombia with 26.02 percent, Chile with 24.27 percent, Portugal with 23.16 percent and Lithuania with 20.36 percent.

Among next on the list were Italy (18.23 percent), Germany (14.63 percent), Greece (12.82 percent), France (10.68 percent), Mexico (8.85 percent) and the Netherlands (7.17 percent).

Among the English-speaking countries in the OECD, 41.84 percent was seen in New Zealand, 16.37 percent in Canada, 12.49 percent in the UK, 7.91 percent in the US and 7.1 percent in Australia.

Experts at home and abroad say that Korea has to make full-fledged actions to achieve the goal of reducing greenhouse emissions by 37 percent by 2030. Some overseas reports pointed out that Korea's performance in the environment sector had stayed at a meager level.

Korea hosted the 2021 P4G Seoul Summit last month. P4G -- Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 -- is a global initiative launched in 2017 to accelerate the response to climate change and the implementation of the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

Twelve countries, including South Korea, took part in the gathering in Seoul. A government official of Korea stressed that environmental problems and its consequences could eventually become a matter of survival for countries. He said "natural disasters such as floods, droughts and typhoons in the aftermath of an abnormal climate have caused critical food shortages in many locations around the world."

Italy, Hosting G20, Will Call for Tougher "Gig Economy" Rules



ROME (Reuters) - Italy will call for tougher rules governing 'gig economy' workers when it hosts labour ministers of the world's biggest economies in the Group of 20 next week.

Italy's labour minister, Andrea Orlando, said countries should require big companies such as Amazon to take responsibility for working conditions at their suppliers, as part of reforms to ensure contractors are well-treated.

"Large corporations must also take responsibility for small ones. They can no longer say that what happens outside their sheds does not concern them," Orlando was quoted as saying by Italian daily La Repubblica.

Lockdowns to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have increased demand for casual workers such as food delivery drivers, while cleaners and care workers have faced health and safety risks.

The G20 summit in Sicily comes as the European Union is set to propose an EU-wide regulatory framework by year-end, and courts and regulators have sought to address perceived shortcomings in the gig economy.

It will also take place amid public anger in Italy over the death of a trade unionist killed on Friday by a truck driver during a demonstration against job losses at U.S. logistics company FedEx.

Trade unions blame outsourcing and the use of workforce management algorithms on international platforms for an erosion of rights and wages.

Orlando said it was a challenge to enforce trade union rules on platforms based abroad, but this should not give companies an excuse to avoid employment standards. "It is no coincidence that it will be the subject of the G20," Orlando said.

Turkey's Inoculation Drive Boosts Hopes for Strong H2 Performance

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The recent sharp momentum in Turkey's COVID-19 vaccinations, which has seen more than 1 million doses being delivered each day last week, is raising hopes of a strong economic performance in the second half of the year.

The inoculation campaign was constrained since its launch in January by sporadic vaccine procurement, but fresh supplies have been arriving this month.

On Friday inoculations passed the 40 million mark and 40% of adults have had at least one dose, according to a Reuters tally. Since Monday, more than 6 million were vaccinated, Health Ministry data showed, 5 million of them receiving a first dose.

A total of over 26.67 million people have received their first doses as of Saturday, while over 14.34 million have been fully vaccinated. To add further pace, the country as of Sunday lowered the vaccination eligibility age to 30.

The stepped-up pace has helped raise forecasts for Turkey's economic recovery following a full lockdown that lasted until the first half of May.

The country has been gradually easing measures since then.

JP Morgan last week revised its full-year economic growth forecast upward to 6.8% this week, citing the COVID-19 inoculations. "Turkey managed to accelerate the vaccination pace sharply," it said in a note to clients. "Despite the slowdown in loan growth and higher interest rates, such a recovery encouraged us to revise our full-year GDP growth forecast to 6.8% from 6.1%."

Turkey's economy expanded 1.8% in 2020, one of only a few globally to avoid a contraction due to the pandemic thanks to a state-lender-led credit boom mid-year.

It grew 7% in the first quarter of this year and some economists expect it to expand around 5.5% this year.

Turkey's tourism sector is facing a second summer in the doldrums because of international travel restrictions but could get a late boost if the vaccination pace continues and COVID-19 cases are contained.

Its top visitor source, Russia, on Friday announced it would resume flights to Turkey starting from Tuesday, thanks to a series of preventative COVID-19 measures in the country.

Egyptian Economy Continues Growing

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Franklin Templeton, a global leader in asset management with 70 years of experience, said that the Egyptian economy has been successful in achieving growth rates despite the sharp fall in most economies worldwide.

The Managing Director, Director of Research, Director of Portfolio Management, Frontier and MENA at Franklin Templeton Emerging Markets Equity group Bassel Khatoun said the Egyptian pound was able to show the stability of its exchange rate, backed by bringing inflation rates under control and strong international reserves of the Central Bank of Egypt.

Khatoun's remarks to this effect came during a virtual international conference for directors of portfolios and international investment funds in Dubai city last week.

He said the investment bank was overweight on Egypt as well, as the economy continued to grow in an environment where most economies contracted sharply.

"Its currency has also remained largely stable supported by a combination of controlled inflation and solid international reserves. Although low liquidity has been a challenge for the market, strong fundamentals and increasingly attractive valuations contribute to support our positive view," he said.

Khatoun added that the strong fundamentals of the economy and the attractive valuations of the Egyptian market support a positive vision of investment in the Egyptian market, despite low liquidity that posed a challenge to the market.

He pointed out that the wise public lock-down policies and the intensive operation to launch vaccines globally contributed to the return of normal daily life in the Middle East and North Africa, and are likely to accelerate the economic recovery in the region.

Khatoun pointed out that crucial financial and economic reforms, along with a timely injection of liquidity, will boost GDP growth in 2021 to 2.7 percent in the Middle East and North Africa.

He expected the economies of the MENA region to witness stronger growth in 2022 to 3.8 percent, with the rise in crude oil prices and implementation of spending plans for ambitious projects to continue this upward trend.

Iranian Private Sector Helping Reconstruction of Syria

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's deputy minister of roads and urban development elaborated on the agreement between Tehran and Damascus to strengthen Iran's private sector in the reconstruction of Syria.

Referring to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Tehran and Damascus for the reconstruction of Syria, Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh said: "During the recent visit to

Syria, the groundwork was laid for implementing the previous agreement, and agreements were reached on the money transactions and transport."

The Iranian official added: "Iran and Syria exchanged experience in building mass housing for middle-income groups and benefiting from Iran's experience in this field."



China Gives One-Billionth Covid Shot as Brazil Toll Hits Milestone

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China on Sunday announced it had administered its one-billionth shot in the world's biggest coronavirus inoculation drive as Brazil's death toll from the pandemic passed 500,000.

The global death toll from Covid-19 is now more than 3.8 million and many nations are still battling outbreaks, but vaccine drives in some countries are allowing activities that were unthinkable a few months ago.

China's vaccine milestone comes after the number of shots administered globally passed 2.5 billion on Friday, according to an AFP count from official sources.

But the Asian giant's vaccination efforts initially got off to a slow start after a successful fight against the virus left little sense of urgency to get jabbed.

A lack of transparency and previous vaccine scandals have also led to resistance among many residents.

Authorities have set an ambitious target of fully vaccinating 40 percent of China's nearly 1.4 billion people by the end of this month.

Some provinces are offering vaccines for free to encourage people to roll up their sleeves. Residents in central Anhui province have been given free eggs, while some living in Beijing have received shopping coupons.

China's success against the virus stands in stark contrast to Brazil, which on Saturday became the second nation after the United States to surpass half a million Covid-19 deaths.

Vaccination efforts have been slow with only 11 percent of the Brazilian population inoculated, as a third wave of infections spreads through the nation.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who previously hit out at vaccines, has promised to immunize the entire population by the end of the year -- something specialists consider unlikely.

He has been criticised for downplaying the illness from the outset, opposing lockdown measures and plugging unproven medical treatments.

On Saturday, thousands of Brazilians again took to the streets to protest against his handling of the pandemic.

"His position on Covid and his denialism are absurd. He has abandoned reality and common sense," said Robert Almeida, a 50-year-old photographer marching in Rio.

"There is no explaining this, it is surreal."

In India, there were also fears that people were not taking the Covid threat seriously enough, just a few weeks after crematoriums were operating around the clock dealing with virus victims.

Doctors are worried that India is letting its guard down again too early as shopping malls and markets buzz with customers once more.

One shopper at a New Delhi mall told AFP she was "fed up being cooped up inside".



"I needed this break, for how long you can remain locked up?" sales executive Surili Gupta, 26, said.

"The coronavirus is not going any time soon, so one has to learn to live with it."

The pandemic is also casting a shadow over the Tokyo Olympics, which will start in just over a month.

A member of the Uganda Olympic team tested positive for coronavirus on arrival in Japan Saturday, officials said.

The nine-strong party, including boxers, coaches and officials, are just the second team to arrive in Japan after the Australian women's softball squad on June 1.

It was the first positive Covid test among Olympic arrivals from overseas, according to Japanese media.

"I heard the person has been isolated based on regulations," Hidemasa Nakamura, the Tokyo 2020 Games delivery officer, told reporters, renewing a pledge to take strict measures against infections.

Authorities in many countries continue to wrestle with crowds flouting coronavirus rules on social distancing and mask-wearing.

Police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd, who defied an 11pm coronavirus curfew on Friday in an area around a race course in Brittany.

There were "very violent clashes" when 400 police intervened that lasted more than seven hours through the night.

"It was war," said Flo, a 22-year-old who attended.

Grossi Says...

FROM PAGE 1

Being asked if he wants the information recorded on the cameras inside Iran's nuclear plants to be erased, he explained that: "Of course not. But I also don't want to continue in this way forever."

About being already limited in what IAEA inspectors can see, he said: "It is very limited. And this is why in my last report I included a table to show the things our inspectors are not seeing. This needs to be understood by the general public. So what I am trying to say is that right now, we should not be limited further, but at the same time, this temporary agreement is not a sustainable solution. This agreement cannot be seen as a replacement for a correct verification approach to a nuclear program of the dimension of Iran. We are on a ventilator."

"I hope that in the time between now and then we will make real progress. If this is not the case, my reports to the board of governors are very transparent, and I will explain this very clearly. But I hope we will not be in that situation," he added.

About the ongoing JCPOA talks in Vienna, he said: "We are not a party to the negotiations. We try to support the process by consulting with the negotiators. We help them to see how the things that they negotiate the fare in terms of a reality check and verifiability."

"We need a system that will allow us to have all the visibility of Iran's nuclear program. This is going to be a complex operation because for the original Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, there was a different situation when it comes to Iran's nuclear capabilities. A lot has changed in the past years in this regard. My right and obligation are to tell them what I need as an inspector, to make sure that the ambitious agreement is based on solid information. But the politics of the agreement are decided on at the Grand Hotel in Vienna."

Answering how much of Iran's nuclear program suffered as a result of the explosion at the Natanz nuclear plant, one of Iran's main nuclear installations, on April 11, he explained: "My last report in a way reflects this. The assessment of the damage is, of course, a matter for the Iranian security services. But one metric that you can look at is the pace of increase in the production volumes. It has been a serious event, and this shows in the activity there. But we also see lots of work in terms of replacement of centrifuges [machines to enrich uranium], so the activity has continued."

Tehran Rejects...

FROM PAGE 1

Khatibzadeh noted the progress made during the talks, saying the sides have reached a clear, unambiguous text on how to bring all parties – first and foremost the U.S. – back into full compliance with the deal.

Answering a question of whether Iran wants guarantees from the current U.S. administration, Khatibzadeh said, "It is true but I won't talk about details. It is a topic that is being discussed behind closed doors."

"The United States once showed during the Trump era that it can arrogantly ignore the interests of other countries, so Iran wants guarantees from the current U.S. administration," he added.

The foreign ministry spokesman also responded to a question of whether the Iranian negotiating team has made the agreement conditional on the removal of certain individuals from the U.S. sanctions list despite the agreement on trade and economic sanctions, saying, "These reports are not accurate. Iran has never made reaching an agreement conditional on the removal of certain individuals from the U.S. sanctions list. Iran's principled policy is to lift all sanctions."

"In the Vienna talks, we will not accept any more commitment than what is written in the JCPOA, and we will not consent to any profit less than what is foreseen in the JCPOA. We are very serious in this regard," Khatibzadeh added. "The United States has once made it clear that it is not adhering to international law and has shown how it tries to misuse the smallest detail in order to not to meet its obligations."

"It would be better for Europeans to return to their commitments," he said on the warning of European diplomats about the prolongation of the Vienna talks.

He urged the European parties to pursue a constructive approach in the talks and return at least to a minimum implementation of their commitments.

"We will not allow negotiations to be eroded. Details are as important to us as generalities. No agreement can be reached unless everything is agreed upon," Khatibzadeh stressed.

The spokesperson also answered a question about Zarif's remarks in readiness for sending the ambassador to Riyadh, saying, "What Zarif said is nothing new."

Iran has always welcomed Saudi Arabia returning to the region, and it is committed to dialogue with Saudi Arabia on bilateral, regional and international issues, he added.

"Extensive developments are taking place in our neighborhood, and we call on everyone to reduce violence and adhere to genuine inter-Afghan dialogue and to commit to a peaceful destiny for Afghanistan in the presence of all ethnicities and minorities in this country," he said.

"This has always been the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in this matter, because the national security of Afghanistan is part of the national security of Iran, we will follow this issue seriously and in detail," the spokesman added.

Iran has always welcomed its brothers and sisters from Afghanistan. Afghanistan must be a land of peace and tranquility for Afghans, he highlighted.

Iran Stores More Oil...

FROM PAGE 1

"From a macro perspective, a return of Iranian barrels to the market should not derail OPEC+ intentions to gradually increase production as long as demand in Europe and the United States continues to recover," said Florian Thaler, the CEO and co-founder of consultancy OilX.

Iran has boosted the volume of crude it has stored on oil tankers in recent months, according to data intelligence firm Kpler, in what may be a preparation for a restart to exports. Some of those tankers are already in Asia, historically the biggest market for Iran's oil.

"We currently estimate around 78 million barrels of oil and condensate are stored on water and this compares against only 41 million barrels at the same time last year," said Homayoun Falakshahi, a senior analyst at Kpler. "A lot of tankers are already parked close to East Asian markets, so it could be a question of days," he added.

Tankers holding 8 million barrels of Iranian oil including condensate were using waters outside Singapore's coast to carry out transfers when needed, two shipping sources said. Iran reduced exports to China in April and May and pumped more into storage, perhaps with the aim of selling it at a higher price when sanctions are lifted, a senior Chinese trader said.

Iranian oil in floating storage stood at between 50 million and 60 million barrels according to estimates from consultancies FGE, IHS Markit and OilX.

FGE and OilX said most of Iranian floating storage was condensate, a preferred feedstock

for petrochemical plants in China, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates.

According to FGE, Iran has around 120 million barrels of crude and condensate in on-land storage, almost one third of it in overseas storage facilities, mainly in China.

Two Western trade sources said there was between 20 to 30 million barrels of storage space in that region of China earmarked for Iranian oil.

A handful of mostly privately controlled Chinese companies which have stepped into the market over the past two years have been leasing up land storage in the eastern province of Shandong - China's hub for independent refineries- and northeast China's Liaoning province, said a Chinese trader close to some of these firms. At least 13 million barrels of storage space are dedicated to storing Iranian oil, the trader estimated.

Expecting a deal in coming weeks or months, NIOC's marketing division has been in contact with historical customers. At least one European refiner has held in-depth discussions with NIOC on resuming purchases and Indian refiners say they plan to reduce spot purchases to make way for Iranian contract barrels. read more

Chinese and Indian firms, and European consumers such as Saras, Eni and Repsol are expected to show interest in Iranian barrels, according to Falakshahi.

Iranian officials are optimistic they can increase production quickly, and one senior Iranian oil ministry official said earlier this month that most output could be restored within a month. Observers expect it will take a little more time.

Economy, Revolutionary...

FROM PAGE 1

The president-elect promised that his administration will not be limited to a specific political party or group, pledging that he will be open to any governmental manager who is a patriot and wants to serve the people and the Islamic Revolution.

"Anyone whose heart beats for the people and the Revolution will be our partner everywhere in the country," he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to foreign policy, saying, "The world should know that the situation has changed with this epic presence of the dear people of Iran. To date, the maximum pressure on our people has not worked, they must reconsider and return [their commitments]. Our nation has shown resistance to the pressures, and the world should know that our government's foreign policy does not start with the JCPOA because it will not be limited to the JCPOA."

"We will pursue interaction with all countries of the world as a principle of broad and balanced interaction in foreign policy and in any negotiation in which national interests are guaranteed, this negotiation will certainly be supported, but we will not tie the economic situation and the conditions of the people to the negotiations," he underlined.

"We will not allow negotiations to take place in face of other negotiation, we will not allow negotiations to be eroding. Every meeting should have benefits for the great nation of Iran. Then we will continue negotiations in order to remove restrictions and sanctions," Raisi said.

In response to a question by Euro News correspondent about the importance of the JCPOA to his administration and his message to the United States and Europe, Raisi reiterated, "European countries and the United States must consider what they have done to the JCPOA; The United States violated the deal and the Europeans did not fulfill their obligations."

"The U.S. should return to the JCPOA and fulfil all its commitments to the nuclear deal. The Europeans must not be influenced by American pressure and act on what they have promised; This is the demand of the Iranian nation from them," he added.

In response to a question from a Press TV correspondent who asked about his plan to revive the JCPOA and force the United States to lift sanctions, the president-elect stated, "What has been the policy of the Islamic Republic and it has been stated many times is that our nuclear actions are peaceful actions and in line with the rules that this science and knowledge have in various fields of industry, agriculture and medicine. The actions of the Islamic Republic so far have been taken in accordance with the declarations of international organizations within the framework of laws and regulations."

"Despite the fact that the actions of the Islamic Republic, according to their own statement, were carried out within the framework of the regulations, why do they place obstacles and problems in the way of Iran's nuclear actions, while they have repeatedly admitted that Iran's nuclear actions have not had any problems so far," he noted.

The President-elect said on the issue of relations with Saudi Arabia, "Relations with all countries of the world, especially relations with neighboring countries are important to us; Our priority will be relations with our neighbors, and there is no obstacle on the part of the Islamic Republic regarding the reopening of embassies between the two countries in relation to Saudi Arabia."

"We have been pursuing relations with China since the beginning of the victory of the Islamic Revolution and various governments, and today we have good relations with China and there is a lot of potential between the two countries," said Raisi in response to the Chinese correspondent.

"We will definitely work to revive these capacities and have very good relations with China, and the comprehensive plan will be one of the documents, and the implementation of this plan will definitely be on the agenda," he added.

Gardner Cruises to Sachsenring Moto2 Win

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Remy Gardner cemented his grip on the Moto2 lead, cruising to victory in Germany on Sunday after his main title rival Raul Fernandez crashed when running second.

The Australian, who rides a Kalex, finished 6.158 seconds ahead of Spaniard Aron Canet on a Boscuro, with Italian Marco Bezzecchi third on a Kalex.

Fernandez led briefly early in the race before Gardner overtook.

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Samsonova Downs Bencic in Berlin Final

BERLIN (AFP) - Qualifier Liudmila Samsonova capped her breakthrough week on Sunday by winning her first WTA title with victory over Belinda Bencic in the final of the Berlin grass court tournament.

Samsonova, 22, made a mockery of her world ranking of 106 to recover from losing the first set to earn a 1-6, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Swiss fifth seed Bencic. It was another display of power tennis from the Russian who stunned former world number one Victoria Azarenka in Saturday's semi-final.

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SPORTS TUESDAY JUNE 22, 2021

Verstappen Denies Hamilton to Win French

PARIS (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen won the French Grand Prix on Sunday to extend his lead over Lewis Hamilton in the Formula One drivers' title race.

The Red Bull driver hunted down and overtook the Mercedes world champion with over a lap to go at a gusty Le Castellet to claim his third win out of seven races this season.

"Towards the end I enjoyed it! At the beginning it was super difficult out there with the wind," said Verstappen.

This was a massive statement by the Dutch driver and his resurgent Red Bull team who won their third successive race after Monaco and Baku.

It pushed Verstappen 12 points clear of Hamilton ahead of back-to-back races on Red Bull turf in Austria.

Sergio Perez in the other Red Bull came in third with Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes finishing fourth.

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner had said before the race "if we can beat them here, we can beat them anywhere" of Mercedes, who were itching to get back onto a regular track like the circuit Paul Ricard after getting lost on the streets of Monaco and Baku.

But things got off to a bumpy beginning for pole sitter Verstappen, who went off the track in a horror start coming out of turn one, Hamilton accepting the unexpected gift to take the lead.

"I couldn't keep the car under control," complained Verstappen.

Hamilton had led 105 of the 106 laps for his wins here in 2018 and 2019, and he set about extending his near total stranglehold at the Provencal track.



With drivers starting to complain of tyre wear Charles Leclerc was the first to come into the pits for a change of footwear for his Ferrari.

Verstappen wasn't far behind, with Hamilton coming in for a slick stop on lap 20, coming out as Verstappen flashed past with Perez, still to pit, the new leader.

The Mexican, winner in Baku last time out, was hauled in on lap 25, leaving Verstappen in the lead and Hamilton half a second behind.

"We can't keep this up until the end of the race that's for sure" Verstappen told his pits over the team radio referring to tyres on lap 29.

And on lap 32 in he came in again, resuming in fourth, 25sec behind Hamilton, but with better grip he was only seven seconds behind in third by lap 40.

With nine laps to go Verstappen muscled past Bottas, the gap ahead to Hamilton just five seconds.

Hunting his prey down it made for an epic end and he duly picked off the Silver Arrows on the penultimate lap to trigger wild celebrations in the Red Bull garage.

"The whole race me and Lewis were fighting each other, so it will be like this the rest of the season," Verstappen said.

Jamieson Frustrates India In World Test Final

LONDON (Dispatches) - New Zealand's Kyle Jamieson dismissed Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant in quick succession on his way to a superb five-wicket haul as India were bowled out for 217 in their first innings of the World Test Championship final at Southampton on Sunday.

Towering paceman Jamieson finished with miserly figures of 5-31 in 22 overs, including 12 maidens, for what was the 26-year-old's fifth five-wicket haul in just eight career Tests.

At tea, New Zealand were 36-0, a deficit of 181 runs.

Tom Latham was 17 not out and Devon Conway, who marked his Test debut earlier this month with a double century against England at Lord's, unbeaten on 18.

But Mohammed Shami, getting lift from a good length, was unlucky to hit the shoulder of both openers' bats, only for the ball to balloon safely over the slip cordon on each occasion.

After a wet outfield delayed Sunday's start by 30 minutes, India resumed on 146-3.

India captain Kohli was 44 not out and Ajinkya Rahane unbeaten on 29.

A combination of gloomy skies and a green-tinged pitch, which assisted an already formidable pace attack, made batting conditions extremely difficult.

Kohli, 10 years to the day since his Test debut against the West Indies in Kingston, had not added to his score when he fell to the eighth ball he faced Sunday.

The nearly 7ft (2.13 metres) tall Jamieson got a full-length delivery to nip back and strike the star batsman on the front pad.

Kohli reviewed Michael Gough's decision but the English umpire's 'out' verdict was upheld to end a stand of 61, with ball-tracking technology indicating the delivery would have hit the top of leg stump.



Berrettini Emulates Becker in Winning Queen's Crown

LONDON (Dispatches) - Top seed Matteo Berrettini became the first debutant since Boris Becker in 1985 to win the Queen's tournament, beating Briton Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 on Sunday.

The 25-year-old Italian may have dropped his first set of the week but his booming serve held up with 19 aces

bombarding Norrie as he secured his fifth ATP title.

Becker went on to win his first Wimbledon title aged just 17 weeks later but Berrettini, 25, was happy solely to focus on Sunday's victory.

"This is the nicest trophy for sure with all due respect to the others I have won," said Berrettini, who won 45 successive service games after being broken twice in the first round.

"It has been an unbelievable week if I think about his (Becker) name and my name on the same board it is crazy.

"I dreamed about playing in this tournament as I watched it as a kid."

Berrettini, ranked ninth in the world and one of 10 Italians in the top 100, paid tribute to his opponent.

"He is a great player. We had never played each other before but he he showed this year he can play on all surfaces.

"Today I am happy for myself for sure (he grinned).

"In the rallies Norrie is dangerous so it was important to have my service in order.

"These courts are really nice and easy to adapt to even if the weather was English for the last days of the week."

Berrettini -- the first Italian to win the title -- said his entourage might force him to enjoy a restrained celebration.

"Probably room service and sparkling water," he said.

Norway's Football Clubs to Decide on World Cup Boycott

OSLO (Dispatches) - Norway's football community will on Sunday decide whether to boycott next year's World Cup in Qatar.

Under pressure from grassroots activists the Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) is holding an extraordinary congress to decide whether to pass up football's showpiece event.

"Both sides have been active. I am very uncertain about the result," the federation's president Terje Svendsen told AFP ahead of the meeting.

Ole Kristian Sandvik, spokesman of the Norwegian Supporters Alliance (NSA), said the games in the Gulf state in 2022 will "unfortunately be like playing on a cemetery," using a term commonly employed by opponents of Norway's participation.

Norway, which has not qualified for a major international competition since Euro 2000, is currently fourth in its World Cup qualifying group.

So although qualification seems an uphill task, the result of the vote could have an impact on whether Norway and its star Erling Braut Haaland -- one of the hottest properties in world football -- continue to play qualifying matches.

The movement calling for a boycott began when the Tromso IL club spoke out against alleged human rights abuses in February.

"We can no longer sit and watch people die in the name of football," the first division club said.

Qatar has faced criticism for its treatment of migrant workers, many of whom are involved in the construction of stadiums and infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup, with campaigners accusing employers of exploitation and forcing laborers to work in dangerous conditions.

Qatari authorities meanwhile insist they have done more than any country in the region to improve worker welfare.



Marquez Takes German MotoGP for First Win Since 2019

SACHSENRING (Dispatches) - Marc Marquez banished 18 months of struggles on Sunday as he dominated in the rain at the Sachsenring to win the German MotoGP.

The six-time world champion, who returned this season after crashing in the opening race last year, escaped early and stayed clear of in-form Portuguese Miguel Oliveira and championship leader Fabio Quartararo.

Marquez started on the second row of the grid but burst through at the start and was battling for the lead with fellow Spaniard Aleix Espargaro of Aprilla when rain started to fall.

While other riders grew more cautious, Marquez reacted by attacking harder.

"The victory was a low possibly, but when I saw a few drops on laps four and five I thought: 'this is my race'," he said.

"When more drops fall, I pushed more. I take a risk. Then the second race started with Oliveira."

Catalonia GP winner Oliveira emerged from the pack to give chase but was more than a second back. The laps followed a consistent pattern.

Marquez, who is still recovering from the complicated break to his right arm, gained time turning left and lost time on right-handers. But he managed to preserve a cushion of more than a second.

"It was his 11th straight victory at the Sachsenring, which like him was off the MotoGP circuit last season, but it was the first for him and the Honda team since Valencia in November 2019.

