

**Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 83,217 With 116 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**Over the Past 3 Months, 36 Iranians Were Released From Prisons in Dubai and the Northern Emirates (Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah and Umm al-Quwain) And Returned to Iran**

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## CBI Should Gear Up For Inflow of Released Financial Resources

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani directed the Central Bank to get ready for the imminent release of the country's currency resources frozen abroad.

Speaking at a Tuesday meeting of the Administration's Economic Coordination Headquarters, Rouhani said it is necessary to prepare for the inflow of the Iranian released currency resources for financial transactions.

The Central Bank of Iran and other organizations must make plans to handle the provision of the basic commodities and raw material for domestic production and adapt international banking interaction for the country's economic boom, he added.

In the meeting, the Central Bank gave a report of the arrangements made for the employment of the currency resources that would be unfrozen after the removal of sanctions considering that the negotiations on the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action are entering the final stage.

## U.S. Refusing to Fully Remove Iran Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Press TV has learned that the United States is still refusing to remove anti-Iran sanctions and honor the commitments required for its return to the 2015 nuclear deal after six rounds of talks in Vienna on a potential revival of the multilateral accord.

Giving a general picture of the U.S. approach toward the nuclear deal under the new administration, sources close to the Vienna talks told Press TV on Tuesday that President Joe Biden was sticking to his predecessor Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

According to the sources, Washington has so far refused to remove all sanctions on Iran, including congressional laws and executive orders as well as the regulations of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the Treasury Department, and the Judiciary, among others.

Among these sanctions are presidential executive Orders 12959, 13599, 13876 and 13499, along with the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA), the visa law, Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act and the dollar U-Turn.

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## Presidential Election a "Big No" To Sanctions Organizers



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Government Spokesman Ali Rabiee said on Tuesday that the 13th Presidential election in Iran which was held energetic with people's participation conveyed a very important message of a "Big No" to those behind the sanctions against the Iranian nation and those who had called the nation to boycott the election.

Speaking at his weekly presser and congratulating Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi, the spokesman said that the energetic presidential election held in Iran had one important message, which is "No" to those behind the sanctions, including those who were supporting U.S. maximum pressure.

He also condemned U.S. State Department Spokesman Ned Price's interventionist comments about the recent presidential election in Iran, saying the U.S., with its flawed democracy, is in no position to comment about polls in other countries.

Rabiee rejected the comments made by Price, who said on Monday that the U.S. views the process that made Ebrahim Raisi Iran's president-elect as "pretty manufactured."

"We have been hearing such comments for years. These remarks are an example of interference in the internal affairs of Iran. We condemn them," the Iranian spokesman said.

Rabiee added that the U.S. government is in no position to comment about the process of elections in Iran.

"Despite the flashy show of democracy in the U.S., everybody is aware today how defective and corrupt their (American) claimed democracy is," he stated.

On the latest developments in the Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, Rabiee said the whole process of advancing an agreement has been carried out.

"What remains is all about the political issues," the spokesman added, expressing hope that the JCPOA negotiations will yield results during the tenure of outgoing President Hassan Rouhani.

"Our republic has been preserved for many years along with the existing historical turmoil," the spokesman said. "The achievement of the Constitutionalism has been rediscovered to this day, that is, the ballot boxes. In addition, in this election period, the observance of dissent and tolerance was significant both among the candidates' supporters and among the candidates," the spokesman added.

He stated: "One of the examples of moral confrontation with the election campaign was the behavior of those candidates who came to the scene to participate in this campaign but did not get the opportunity and withdrew with dignity and decency. Therefore, it can be said that ethics decency were also eye-catching among the candidates and their supporters."

Iran's government spokesman congratulated the birthday anniversary of Imam Reza (PBUH), who is the eighth Shia Imam, saying that paying respect to him is part of Iranian nations' identity.

Ali Rabiee added: "One of the harms in some past periods was the lack of continuity of the legacy of previous governments."

Iran's government spokesman also highlighted that every government certainly has positive and negative effects on its record. "Still, it also has valuable experiences that the twelfth government will transfer to the government of Mr Raisi."

He explained further that this issue was discussed in two cabinet meetings and the meeting of the government's economic coordination headquarters, and the government will transfer this experience in regular programs.

"Every government is a link in the chain of a political system, and we need a political system that goes hand in hand to ensure the society's growth and keep this chain immune from breaking," he said.

Referring to the current government's efforts in combating COVID-19 and sanctions, Rabiee called the consensus of the elites a principle for overcoming difficult conditions.

He said: "However, the effects of sanctions on Iran remain for years and overcoming these difficult conditions and overcoming structural effects and socializing and tackling the combined problems of sanctions and COVID-19 requires the help and cooperation of all branches of powers and institutions, and this is an inevitable necessity."

## Yemeni Air Defense Forces Down Another U.S.-Built Spy Drone

SANAA (Dispatches) - Yemeni forces have intercepted and targeted a second US-built Boeing Insitu ScanEagle spy drone in as many days. The drone, operated by the Saudi-led military coalition, was downed while flying above the central province of Ma'rib.

The spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, said in a post published on his Twitter page on Tuesday that Yemeni air defense forces had used a domestically-developed surface-to-air missile to shoot down the unmanned aerial vehicle that was on an espionage mission in the skies of al-Mushajah area in the Sirwah district.

The Boeing Insitu ScanEagle is a small, long-endurance, low-altitude unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) built by Insitu, a subsidiary of Boeing, and is used for reconnaissance.

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## ViewPoint By: Hamid Reza Naghashian Now Iran a Drone Power

On Sunday, Iranians marked one of their amazing achievements in defending their sky and territory. On June 20, 2019, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps shot down an intruding American Spy drone, Global Hawk, over the coastal province of Hormozgan. At that time, Iran rejected Washington's claim that the drone was flying over international airspace. The downing of the aircraft sent a clear message to Washington: that Iran is serious about its deterrence claims. Iranian Major General and IRGC commander Hossein Salami said that the drone took off at 00:14 local time from a U.S. military base south of the Persian Gulf and flying toward Chabahar. He noted that, on its return journey, it violated the Iranian airspace near the Strait of Hormuz and therefore was shot down by Iranian missile.

Iranian air defense missile system "Khordad-3rd" that had shot down a sophisticated U.S. spy drone over the Persian Gulf was later put on display in Tehran during demonstrations marking the 42nd anniversary of victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Missiles fired by the homegrown air defense system had brought down a U.S. Navy MQ-4C Triton drone over the Persian Gulf in June 2019.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Forces fired one surface-to-air missile at the intruding U.S. aircraft after its stealth maneuvering in Iran's airspace.

Khordad-3rd employs a phased array radar and can launch 8 missiles by tracking 4 targets simultaneously.

This was just a sample of Iran's capabilities in defending its sky and defensive power and it also sounded warning to the West and especially to the U.S. that the Islamic Republic of Iran is unstoppable in making progress in any field of the military technologies.

Now two years after that amazing show of muscles to the U.S. forces, Iran has shown its magnificent progress in drone-manufacturing sector and the country itself has produced different advanced and sophisticated types of the drones which are both used in the military and civilian missions.

In 2020, Iran's systems go from small, lightweight short-range drones all the way up through medium-to-heavy UAVs in the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance roles (ISR).

Iran's progress in drone industry has changed the balance of the power in confronting the enemies and the downing of the U.S. drone has made the Americans be concerned about any mess-up with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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## IRGC-Produced COVID Vaccine to Be Unveiled Soon

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN (MNA) - Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri announced that the Covid-19 vaccine produced by the IRGC's University of Medical Sciences will be unveiled in the next few days.

Announcing unveiling the IRGC-produced coronavirus vaccine, Major General Mohammad Bagheri said that all the facilities of the Armed Forces are mobilized to fight the coronavirus. The Ministry of Defense-produce vaccine is in the second phase of clinical trials, and the vaccine produced by the IRGC's University of Medical Sciences will be unveiled in the next few days, he added.

Meanwhile on Monday, 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. 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.



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## Iran Congratulates Armenia on Successful Parliamentary Elections

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman congratulated the people of the Republic of Armenia, and those elected in the country's snap parliamentary vote, on holding the elections successfully.

In a statement on Tuesday, Saeed Khatibzadeh wished success for those elected in the vote in helping Armenia on its path of development and progress while ensuring internal stability there and strengthening peace in the region.

Khatibzadeh also underlined the significance of neighboring countries in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said Tehran regards expansion of ties with Armenia as important.

The spokesman expressed confidence that friendly ties between the two countries will further develop and deepen after the establishment of the new parliament and government in Armenia.

## Senior Commanders Discuss Building Strong Iran With Raisi

**TEHRAN (MNA) – The Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and a group of other high-ranking military commanders met with Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi and congratulated him on his victory in the Friday presidential elections.**

Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, and senior commanders of the IRGC, army, police, defense minister and a group of other high-ranking military commanders met with Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi at his office on Tuesday.

In addition to congratulating Ayatollah Raisi on his victory in the presidential elections, the senior military commanders emphasized the readiness of the armed forces to assist the new government and upgrade the capabilities of the Islamic Republic in various fields and the formation of a strong Iran.

During the meeting, Raisi, for his part, thanked the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and military commanders for their visit and expressed hope the Iranian



people would better off as compared to the past through using all the potentials available in the country.

It is worth mentioning that prior to this, the Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Guards and members of IRGC Command, as well as the Commander of the Police Force and a group of other senior police commanders went to Ayatollah Raisi office to congratulate him on his election victory.

## Some States Follow Double Standards in Fight Against Narcotics

TEHRAN (IP) - Iranian Anti-Narcotics Police Chief criticizes some countries' double-standards approach toward countering drug smuggling while acknowledging Iran as the only flag-bearer of counter-narcotics endeavor.

In response to a question, Brigadier-General Majid Karimi said Iran's fight against narcotics was in the interest of the Western countries, but they boycott the police of the Islamic Republic of Iran in selling and buying equipment to and from other countries.

Even though the UN Secretary-General acknowledged Iran's commendable actions in the fight against drug trafficking, another problem with some Western countries was that they did not provide Iran with the intelligence about the traffickers and claimed that Iran imposes severe penalties on these individuals. Still, in cyberspace, they trumpet that drug smuggled to those countries from Iran, General Karimi said.

According to the Police chief, last year, joint operations against the drug-trafficker countries, including the UAE, Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain, were successful.

General Karimi stated that 76% of the drugs imported last year were discovered and confiscated in the eastern borders of Iran, adding that 1,010 tons of various types of narcotics were discovered, which increased 24% compared to last year.

He concluded that the basic approach of Iran's Anti-Narcotics Police was to develop information in the area and use the skills of knowledge-based companies, virtual news gathering, and the technical ability of experts.

## Biden Should Not Include Regional, Missile Issues in JCPOA

TEHRAN (MNA) – Stating that Biden should not include regional or missile issues in JCPOA, Iranian Parliament Speaker's Special Aide for the International Affairs said that he should focus on the deal and commit to return to the JCPOA.

"The foreign policy of the next administration of Iran, headed by Ebrahim Raisi, will be dynamic and logical with a strong discourse; A discourse that can serve Iran's interests in all areas," said Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in an interview with CNN regarding the victory of President-elect Raisi and the foreign policy of his administration.

In response to a question about Iran-US relation during the presidency of Raisi, he added, "The United States has always missed opportunities, and this depends more on the behavior of the American side, especially in deciding what relations with Iran should be."

"Biden wants to return to the nuclear deal and should not include regional or missile issues in JCPOA but should focus on the deal and commit to return to the JCPOA," said Amir-Abdollahian about the difference between the Trump and Biden administrations.

The Iranian diplomat also spoke about the outcome of the Vienna talks, saying "The JCPOA can enter the executive phase."

Former U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement approved by the UN Security Council in violation of its commitments and put a policy of maximum pressure on the agenda.

Joe Biden government officials have explicitly acknowledged the failure of the maximum pressure policy, but have so far refused to take the necessary steps to return to the agreement.

On Monday, Iran's President-elect Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi said that the U.S. should return to all its JCPOA commitment and lift sanctions, adding that regional and missile issues are not negotiable.

## UK Names New Envoy to Tehran

**IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK**

TEHRAN - The British Foreign Office announced on Monday that Simon Shrice had been appointed as the country's new ambassador to Iran.

Mr. Shrice, who starts his career in Tehran in August, will succeed Rob McEyre, who has been in charge since May 2018.

The launch of the new British ambassador to Iran will coincide with the inauguration of the government of President-elect Ebrahim Raisi in August.

Simon Shrice has worked at the British Foreign Office since 1998 and was second secretary of the British Embassy in Tehran between 2000 and 2003.

His other positions include the head of the South Asian Department, the head of the CounterTerrorism Department, the British ambassador to Yemen, the First

Secretary of the British Embassy in the US and the Director General of National Security at the British Foreign Office.

He is a graduate of Cambridge University and volunteered as a chemistry teacher at a public school in Tanzania for two years before joining the British Foreign Office.

## Iran Envoy Discusses Peace Process With Former Afghan President

TEHRAN (MNA) – In a meeting between the Iranian envoy to Kabul and the former Afghan President, the peace process and regional cooperation to achieving peace, was discussed by the two sides.

Iranian envoy to Kabul Bahador Aminian met with the former President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the peace process and regional cooperation for achieving success in this process.

In recent weeks, Iranian officials have traveled to Afghanistan to review the situation of the peace process and relations between Tehran and Kabul.

Speaking in his weekly presser on Monday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman stressed that Iran has always welcomed its brothers and sisters from Afghanistan.

"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.

## U.S. Stance on JCPOA Unacceptable

TEHRAN (IP) - A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iran's parliament says that the U.S. statements and stances regarding the JCPOA are unacceptable.

Speaking over the U.S.' possible new agreement with Iran as a substitution for the JCPOA, Abbas Golroo said: "If the U.S. National Security Adviser means that the time for the JCPOA negotiation is to be prolonged, I must say that the time has been set in advance and Iran's parliament will not allow the negotiations to be derailed."

The MP said on Monday that the one who makes the final decision is Iran and stressed that in the first step, all sanctions must be removed, and secondly, the Vienna talks should not be attritional or prolonged.

"Iran is ready to negotiate over the U.S. troops' presence and military bases in the region, as well as the Israeli occupation and the U.S. excessive support for the apartheid Israeli regime," stressed the Iranian MP.

The Iranian lawmaker emphasized that the U.S. should leave the region, end supporting the Israeli regime, stop making efforts to follow separatist policy, and halt sending weapons to destroy the region.

## Chamran Leads Tehran City Council Election

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - Interior Ministry announced the result of the elections of the Islamic City Councils of Tehran, Ray and Tajrish.

According to reports, Mehdi Chamran won the race with about 486,000 votes.

The 21-man list of principlaists won all 21 seats for the city council of Tehran constituency as Chamran was at the top of the list.

Fars news agency described the election as a "decisive victory of the list of the Coalition Council of Revolutionary Forces," a list that has the support of President-elect Ebrahim Raisi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf.

Chamran had previously been a Tehran City Council member. The name of Narjes Soleimani, daughter of Martyr Qasem Soleimani, is also seen in the third place among the Tehran City Council's election winners. Turnout in council elections has been very low. The Tehran City Council has 21 members.

## Four Outgoing Envoys Meet Zarif

**IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK**

TEHRAN – The outgoing ambassadors of four countries on Monday met Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to bid farewell.

According to reports, Austrian Ambassador Stefan Scholz, Philippine Ambassador Wilfredo C. Santos, Azerbaijan Republic Envoy Bonyad Hosseinov and Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Avazbek Abdurazakov met Zarif at the end of their missions in Tehran.

In the meeting, Zarif wished the envoys success in the future and appreciated their performance in Tehran. Zarif also expressed hope the ties between Iran and those countries would strengthen in the future.



## Iran, Oman Stress Strengthening Friendly Relations

TEHRAN (IP) - The ambassador of Oman to Tehran met with the deputy chairman of the Program and Budget Commission of the Iranian Parliament.

In this meeting, Mohammad-Reza Mirtajodini

called the relations between Iran and Oman brotherly and growing.

He also said: "Strengthening friendly relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman in various fields, especially in the parliamentary arena, has an effective role in removing obstacles to the development of cooperation between the two countries."

He said that the interactions between the two countries in the economy, trade, industry and tourism are of great importance.

Mirtajodini also added: "Developing cooperation between the two countries lies in cooperation between the scientific, academic, health, and medical sectors of the two countries, especially in the joint fight against the COVID pandemic."

The Ambassador of Oman to Tehran, Ebrahim Al-Moeini, for his part, stressed the need to increase the relationship between the parliaments of the two countries, saying: "Interactions and communication between the representatives of different parts of the parliaments of the two countries, including Commissions and Parliamentary Friendship Groups, play an important role in the development of bilateral relations and the promotion of regional and international cooperation."

He added: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the most important and influential countries in the Islamic world and the region, and Omani officials always consider increasing interactions with Iran in various sectors."

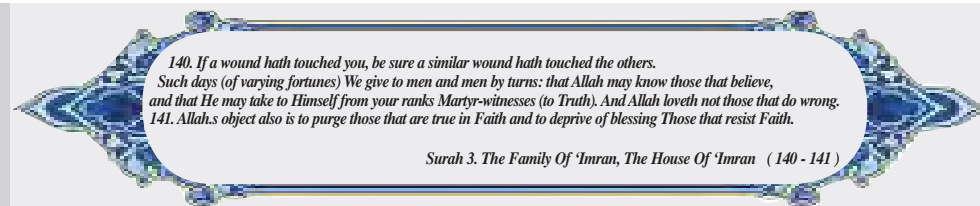
At the end of the meeting, Al-Moeini stressed the readiness of the Omani government and Parliament to develop economic interactions with Iran and increase ties between business people and the private sectors of the two countries.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:06
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:03
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:49



## Iran-China Trade Exchange Likely to Be Doubled After Removal of Sanctions

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - Chairman of the Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industries Mr. Majid-Reza Hariri believes the trade exchange between Iran and China may likely be doubled if the U.S. sanctions against Iran are removed.**

Speaking to ILNA, Mr. Hariri said that it is expected after the removal of the sanctions, the trade exchange between Iran and China faces a double-fold surge, adding that the total volume of trade between the two states was around \$16b in 2020 but this trade has potential to hit \$30b target.

Touching upon the trend of trade between Tehran and Beijing, he noted that the trade exchange between the two countries is divided into two categories of oil and non-oil. He added that the oil trade exchange is confidential and both Iran's oil ministry and Chinese purchasers avoid revealing exact details of their trades. He stated but in the non-oil category China has been accounted for one-fourth of Iran's total imports of non-oil goods while currently the trade between the two countries is like the past and it has not changed significantly.

Hariri went on to say that as a bright outlook is expected for the removal of oil sanctions following the Vienna talks, the amount of trade between Iran and China will change considerably by the yearend if sanctions are removed because China is Iran's major oil customer and it can affect the trade approach of both countries.

He stated it is natural that if sanctions are removed, there will be an opening for Iran's imports because when the country sells more oil to China, the space for more imports from China will be broader.

He admitted that there is no precise statistics on the bilateral exchanges for recent five months and the released figures for the early months of the year cannot be a yardstick for assessing the whole amount of trade between Iran and China.

On the priorities of the next government's ministry of industry, mine and trade,



Hariri said that the ministry is part of the economic team of the government, and industry minister by himself is not important because he is one of the links of the executive chain of economic policy-making in the field of production and trade.

He noted that above all, one should see who will form the economic team of the government and how much they are in harmony and matched, adding that what has hurt the foreign trade in recent years has been inconsistency among the government's economic team.

Hariri went on to say that if the economic policy-making, economic diplomacy and monetary, financial and banking policies are not clear and transparent, one cannot expect the industry ministry to show its full capacity. He once again said that if sanctions are not removed, exports will not succeed and the current condition will continue. He also reiterated that if the country's tense relation with neighboring states or other countries is not resolved, the country will lose most of its markets and therefore all of these factors form a package.

Hariri once again emphasized that the future of national economy relies more on diplomacy team rather than relying on the economic team, and international and diplomatic policies are not in the hands of the governments and the whole establishment determines it. He said if the Vienna talks succeeds, then one can have demands from the economic team, and then the priority should be a time-tabled plan which can be measured and monitored for curbing the inflation.

## Tehran, Doha Confer on Expanding Bilateral Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Heads of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Commission held a meeting via video-conferencing and emphasized the development of cooperation between the two countries.

Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari as the Heads of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Commission participated in the meeting.

The two sides emphasized the need to hold a committee to follow up on the implementation of the resolutions of the seventh meeting of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Commission as soon as possible.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed issues related to industrial cooperation, tourism, sports, and other issues of interest, and made the necessary decision to develop and accelerate cooperation between the two countries.

The Qatari Minister Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari expressed hope that the eighth meeting of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Commission would be held in Doha, Qatar, in the near future.

Welcoming the Qatari side's proposal, the Iranian minister of energy also expressed hope that relations would continue to be strong and growing in the future Iranian government. This meeting is being held observing health protocols and guidelines due to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The seventh meeting of Iran-Qatar Joint Economic Commission opened in Isfahan on Nov 24, 2020, co-chaired by Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Qatar's Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari.

Iranian and Qatari top-ranking officials have taken part in the one-day meeting.

## Ira Has No Rival for Construction of House in Syria

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - Iranian Deputy Minister for Roads and Urban Development says Iran has no serious rival for construction of houses in Syria, as the country can take advantage of this opportunity in Syria.

Mahmoud Mahmoudzadeh said that Iran can build and rebuild hundreds of thousands of homes in Syria without any competition if it could only transfer money.

Mahmoudzadeh on Tuesday said, "The issue of transferring money for the activities of Iranian companies for Syria's reconstruction will soon be solved." He added that Iran can build at least 200,000 residential units, where it has no competition.

His remarks indicate that the reconstruction will be paid by Iran, which is in deep economic crisis due to U.S. sanctions but hopes that an agreement in nuclear talks with the United States in Vienna will be soon concluded and a major part of those sanctions lifted, providing Tehran with much-needed foreign currency.

Iran agreed to build 200,000 housing units in Syria (link is external) in February 2019, but it was unable to proceed, most probably because of U.S. sanctions that drained its foreign currency coffers. It is possible that the old plan is being revived with the anticipation of sanctions being lifted and funds frozen by other countries to be unblocked.

Mahmoudzadeh noted two issues of transfer of money and construction materials are hurdles in way of



involvement of Iranian constructors in Syria. He added that governments of the two countries can pave appropriate grounds for the private sector for export of technical and engineering services, adding that Syria is a country which needs broad renovation and development because of its long-time involvement in the

civil war.

He said Iranians can both involve in construction of house and improving developmental infrastructures so it can be a good market for Iranians who are active in the construction industry.

On competition of Saudi Arabia and Qatar with Iran for reconstruction of Syria, he said there is no rivalry because Syrian officials have given priorities to Iranian companies and therefore there will be no problem. He added that the main issue is to take measures by the central banks of the two countries for exchange of money.

Mahmoudzadeh added that Sanction does not merely suffer Iran because Syria also suffers from it.

Last week Iran's Roads and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami visited Syria and pledged to help Damascus in the reconstruction of the country.

In November 2019, Syria and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding to also rebuild the country's electricity grid. IRNA reported at the time that the agreement covered the construction of power plants, transmission lines and the possibility of connecting their power grids via Iraq.

## Iran, Cuba Joint COVID-19 Vaccine 62% Effective

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran-Cuba joint COVID-19 vaccine project manager said that reports suggested the vaccine proved 62 percent effective in the third phase of the clinical test carried out in Cuba.

The vaccine which is known as Pasteurcovac in Iran and Soberana-2 in Cuba has proved 62 percent effective based on results from the second-dose injections in the third phase of the clinical test which was done in Cuba, according to Ehsan Mostafavi, M.D.

He said that the vaccine had undergone clinical test in Cuba with a 28-day plan of two doses and another 28-day plan of two doses and a booster (with Soberana+ vaccine candidate) on 44,000 volunteers in Cuba and 24,000 volunteers in Iran.

Dr. Mostafavi stressed that none of the existing vaccines are 100 percent effective, as some of the people receiving them are infected again and some rare cases of severe infection and death are reported.

Global regulators have announced over 50 percent effectiveness as acceptable and effectiveness of a vaccine depends on different factors, including its design and production and the types of viruses in circulation.

Mostafavi also said that given the different strains of viruses in different countries and the coronavirus' mutations in the same location over time, any vaccine might have different levels of effectiveness in different conditions.

## Economic Growth Zeroed In Past Four Decades

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture says that despite all the claims, the country's share of the global economy has halved over the past four decades, and in other words, our economic growth during this period has been almost zero.

GholamHossein Shafei said that the country has faced a vicious and recurring cycle of problems such as inflation, unemployment rate, economic instability, persistent poverty and very high inequality.

He likened Iran's economy to a "worn-out wall" that many people paint on and abandon after a while.

Mr. Shafei continued: "In fact, we need a "deep surgery" in the country's economy.

According to the IMF estimate, Iran's share of the global economy has risen from two percent on the eve of the 1979 revolution to below 1 percent last year.

Also, the archives of data from this international body show that Iran is facing severe GDP growth fluctuations, and even in 1980 (the first year of the revolution) it grew -18.8 percent and in each of 1984 and 1988 the Iranian economy grew almost 10 percent smaller.

The international body has assessed that over the past 10 years, the country's economy has had negative growth in half a year and positive in the other half.

For example, in 2018 and 2019, the country's economy grew by about 13 percent, but last year it grew by only 1.5 percent compared to 2019.

## Iranian Envoy in Moscow Warns About Traveling to Russia

MOSCOW (IRNA) - After occurrence of difficulties for a number of Iranian visitors to Russia at two Moscow airports due to differing declaration of travel objectives with visa types and their being kept in airports in inappropriate conditions, Iran's ambassador to Russia criticized travel agencies' inappropriate informing of Iranian tourists and asked tourists to heed Russia's laws.



According to IRNA, during the past two weeks a number of the Iranian citizens who arrived in Moscow aboard Aeroflot Airlines planes could not present acceptable travel documents to Russian airport police, including declaring differing travel objectives with their visa types.

Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali says that the type of visas that these passengers held was FAN ID, which is the visas issued for foreigners who wish to enter Russia to watch the 2021 World Cup games in Saint Petersburg.

But the airport border police had while questioning the Iranian tourists holding such visits found out that they were travelling to Russia for other different reasons, and therefore held them at the airport.

Jalali said that as soon as the embassy was informed of the difficulties with which the Iranian citizens had got, the embassy began intensive negotiations with concerned Russian officials for problem resolving.

The Iranian ambassador meanwhile appreciated the Russian Embassy in Tehran for its collaboration aimed at problem resolving in that respect.

Both embassies had then issued communiqués aimed at preventing the recurrence of similar problems from then on, including acquiring appropriate visas with traveling objectives, both by the passengers and by the travel agencies.

Jalali said that there were a number of little children, elderly folks, and sick Iranian citizens facing the visa type problem at two Russian airports, and therefore, the embassy contacted both the Russian security officials and police commanders, in addition to airport border guards.

Jalali in particular criticized those Iranian citizens who had several times visited Russia and were hence familiar with the laws and regulations in advance, as well as the traveling agencies, whose job is seeing into the well-being and comfort of their passengers and informing them of every legal detail.

## Endangered Turtles in Iran's Qeshm Protected

QESHM (IP) - Iran's Department of Environment is protecting the Hawksbill sea turtle, an endangered turtle species in Iran.

The shores of Shib Deraz village in Qeshm Island, Hormozgan province, southern Iran, has become a habitat for the Hawksbill sea turtle in the spring.

Each Hawksbill sea turtle spawns 60 to 70 eggs. In the current year, about 7,500 eggs were collected by the inhabitants of the village and the staff of the island's department of environment and then were transferred to the protected site in the area.

Each egg hatches after 70 days, reaching maturity between 25 to 35 years old, while the average lifespan of each turtle is 70 years.



# German Conservatives Unveil Post-Merkel Plan

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany’s conservatives on Monday promised no tax hikes, pragmatic action on climate change and a tough stance on Russia and China as they unveiled their plan to win voters in September’s election in the absence of their veteran leader Angela Merkel.

Armin Laschet, the leader of Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and Markus Soeder, chief of the smaller Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), pledged “stability and renewal” as they launched their manifesto in Berlin ahead of the September 26 vote -- the first in 16 years not to feature Merkel. Laschet -- the conservatives’ pick to succeed Merkel as chancellor -- called for a “modernisation drive for Germany”, promising to combine “consistent climate protection with economic strength and social security”.



# Suicide Bomber Wounds French Troops in Mali

BAMAKO (Reuters) - A suicide bomber in a car attacked a French reconnaissance mission in central Mali on Monday, wounding some of the soldiers and local residents, the French army said.

The French military did not say how many were hurt, but the mayor of the town of Gossi, where the attack happened, said he had heard many people were wounded.

“The detonation was so loud it blew out the windows of some houses,” said the mayor, Moussa Ag Almouner. “We still hear shots, planes flying over the place.” No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Islamist militant groups linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State operate in the area.



# Sweden’s Political Survivor Lofven Finally Stumbles



STOCKHOLM (AFP) - Prime MinisterStefan Lofven has weathered the decline of social democracy in Europe, the rise of the far right and even the Covid-19 pandemic, but he finally tripped up on Monday, losing a historic vote of no confidence in Sweden’s parliament.

The 63-year-old Lofven, a former welder and union leader with the square build and nose of a boxer, guided the Swedish left back to power in 2014, and then hung on by moving his party closer to the centre right after the 2018 elections.

A master of consensus for some, a dull and visionless party man for others, he finally fell out with the Left Party propping up his government, becoming the first Swedish government leader to be defeated by a no confidence vote.

“Sweden is in a difficult political situation, a very difficult one,” Lofven told a press conference following his defeat. He has a week to choose between elections or resignation.

It may however be too early to count out the man who emerged victorious from elections deemed lost in 2018, and it’s possible his negotiating skills could forge a new majority.

Born in Stockholm in 1957, poverty forced his single mother to give him up when he was 10 months old to a foster family in Solleftea, 500 kilometres (310 miles) north of the capital, where his foster father was a factory worker. He became a welder and spent 15 years in a defence factory, and head of the metal workers’ union from 2006 to 2012.

While the traditional left struggled in Europe -- only six social democratic or socialist heads of government remain in the 27-member EU -- Lofven managed to stay on top, even though he confused supporters by moving to the right, earning a reputation as a “right-wing socialist”.

“Stefan Lofven could go down in history for his inventiveness and willingness for sacrifices to keep the Social Democrats in power,” political commentator Ewa Stenberg wrote in Dagens Nyheter newspaper at the weekend.

“The Prime Minister has survived many crises,” Stenberg said, adding that he now faces his greatest test so far.

“He now needs to do the political equivalent of what escape artist Harry Houdini did over a hundred years ago,” she said, stressing several seemingly impossible political knots had to be untied.

While controversial, the decision to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic with mainly non-coercive measures was not what weakened.

In fact, the Swedish strategy, promoted by state epidemiologist Anders Tegnell, boosted his ratings in opinion polls, even as the death toll rose to over 14,000 in the country of 10.3 million people, a far worse toll than in Nordic neighbours.

# West Hits Belarus With New Sanctions Over Ryanair Piracy

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - Western powers hit Belarus with a wave of new sanctions on Monday in a coordinated response to Minsk’s forced landing of a Ryanair plane last month to arrest a journalist on board, an act that is set to prompt further economic sanctions.

The European Union, the United States, Britain and Canada blacklisted more officials, lawmakers and ministers from the administration of President Alexander Lukashenko, whose air force intercepted the Ryanair plane flying between Athens and Vilnius on May 23 in what the West called state piracy.

“We are united in our deep concern regarding the Lukashenko regime’s continuing attacks on human rights, fundamental freedoms, and international law,” the European Union, the United States, Britain and Canada said in a joint statement.

“We are united in calling for the regime to end its repressive practices against its own people,” they said.

In Monday’s mix of travel bans, asset freezes and sanctions on state-owned Belarusian companies, Western governments sought to escalate their pressure on Lukashenko, who is accused of rigging elections last August and cracking down on the opposition to prolong his now 27 years in power.

There was no immediate reaction from Lukashenko who has denied rigging the vote, accused the arrested journalist Roman Protasevich of plotting a revolution, and increasingly turned to Russia for support.

The EU included Russian businessman Mikhail Gutseryev, the largest single foreign investor in Belarus, in its sanctions read more . That is likely to further strain Brussels’ ties with Moscow, which accuses Europe of interfering in its affairs.

The latest round of sanctions since last year’s disputed elections takes the EU’s tally of Belarusian lawmakers, officials, judges and military commanders to 166 people, including 78 who were blacklisted on Monday.

Britain, the United States and Canada added individuals to their sanctions lists, although it was not immediately clear if those now blacklisted in Belarus are all subject to the same travel bans and asset freezes across all countries.



# Acting Armenian PM Holds Power

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Armenia’s acting prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, kept power in a parliamentary election that boosted his authority despite being widely blamed for a military defeat last year in the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, results on Monday showed.

Pashinyan’s Civil Contract party won 53.92% of votes cast in Sunday’s snap election, preliminary results showed. Former President Robert Kocharyan’s Armenia Alliance trailed on 21.04%, and questioned the result, Interfax news agency reported.

The government called the election to try to end a political crisis that began when ethnic Armenian forces ceded territory to Azerbaijan in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in fighting last year.

Six weeks of hostilities caused international concern as the wider South Caucasus region is a corridor for pipelines carrying oil and gas to world markets. It is also a geopolitical arena where Russia, the United States, the European Union and Turkey all jostle for influence.

Pashinyan, 46, faced street protests after the defeat and demands for his resignation over the terms of a peace agreement under which Azerbaijan regained control of territory it had lost during a war in the early 1990s.

While Pashinyan described the deal as a disaster, he said he had been compelled to sign it to prevent greater human and territorial losses.

He wrote on Twitter on Monday that his party would have a constitutional majority - at least 71 deputies out of 105 - and “will form a government led by me.”

Pashinyan said Armenia would strengthen ties with Russia-led regional groups, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

“We are determined to work on improving, deepening and developing relations (with CSTO and EAEU countries), and we will definitely move in this direction,” Russia’s RIA news agency quoted Pashinyan as saying in an address broadcast on Facebook.

# French Far Right Irked by Election Results

PARIS (Reuters) - France’s far right performed worse than predicted in Sunday’s regional elections, exit polls showed, leaving victory in the southern battleground of Provence-Alpes-Cote d’Azur and a platform for the 2022 presidential election in the balance.

Marine Le Pen’s Rassemblement National expressed frustration at a record low turnout, as the centre right made its first comeback at the ballot box since a disastrous showing in the 2017 presidential election and President Emmanuel Macron’s party finished fifth.

The high abstention rate in Sunday’s first-round vote, projected at 68.5% by pollster Elabe, coincided with a sunny Sunday and emergence from months of tough COVID-19 curbs. “I can only but regret this civic disaster, which has very largely deformed the electoral reality of the country and given a misleading idea of the political forces at play,” Le Pen said.

“If you want things to change, get out and vote.”

An IPSOS exit poll showed the centre-right Les Republicains winning 27.2% of the national vote, ahead of the far right on 19.3%, followed by the Green party, the Socialist Party and Macron’s La Republique en Marche on 11.2%.

For Le Pen’s far-right, that is a drop of more than 7 percentage points nationwide compared to the last election in 2015, which came on the back of the Paris Islamist attacks.

The regional elections, for which a second round of

voting will be held on June 27, offer a taste of the voter mood ahead of next year, and a test of Le Pen’s credentials.

She has made a concerted push to detoxify her party’s image and erode the mainstream right’s vote with a less inflammatory brand of eurosceptic, anti-immigration populist politics.

In the northern Hauts-de-France region, Les Republicains performed stronger than expected, according to exit surveys, polling ahead of the far right with a wider-than-forecast margin.

The party’s lead candidate in the north, Xavier Bertrand, who is pitching to be the conservative’s presidential candidate in 2022, said the centre right had shown it was the most effective bulwark against the far right.

Macron’s ruling party did as badly as expected, with party spokesperson Aurore Berge calling it a “slap in the face”. The president has failed to plant roots locally, although his popularity nationwide remains higher than his predecessors.

Opinion surveys project Le Pen will poll highest in the first round of next year’s presidential vote, propelled by a support base fed up with crime, threats to jobs from globalisation and a ruling elite viewed as out of touch with ordinary citizens.

Le Pen’s party has never before controlled a region. If she wins one next week, it would send a message that a Rassemblement National president in 2022 cannot be ruled out.



# Ethiopians Vote in Elections Seen as Test for PM

ADDIS ABABA (Dispatches) - Ethiopians have voted in a crucial parliamentary election taking place against the backdrop of war and famine in the northern Tigray region and questions over the poll’s credibility, with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed expected to cement his hold on power.

On Monday long lines of voters were seen in some parts of the capital, Addis Ababa, while security was stepped up across Africa’s second-most populous country. Polling stations were scheduled to close at 6pm (15:00 GMT) but were extended at the last minute by three hours to allow for final voting, the electoral board said.

Abiy, a Nobel Peace laureate who freed political prisoners, welcomed back exiles and ended a long cold war with neighbouring Eritrea before sending troops to confront the dissident leadership of Tigray late last year, has promised this election will be Ethiopia’s most competitive in history, free of the repression that marred previous ballots.

He said on Monday that the spirit of this election “is much better in many ways than the previous elections” adding that the country is “witnessing the atmosphere of democracy”. But international concern has been growing about the vote, and opposition groups have accused Ethiopia’s ruling party of harassment, manipulation and threats of violence that echo abuses of the past.

In more than 100 of the country’s 547 constituencies, polls are not even open -- either because of the ongoing war in the northern Tigray region or logistical issues elsewhere. No date has been set for voting in Tigray’s 38 constituencies. The rest will vote in September -- and the next government likely will not be formed until that happens.

Abiy is also facing growing international criticism over the war in Tigray, sparked in part because the region’s now-fugitive leaders objected to Ethiopia postponing the election last year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opposition groups also sounded warnings of election day harassment on Monday. Opposition candidate Berhanu Nega with the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice party told reporters that his party had recorded more than 200 instances of its election observers being “kicked out” of polling stations or denied access. He said he hoped the troubles “do not reflect the whole process”.







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## Bitcoin Tumbles 10% in Wake of Deepening China Crackdown

TOKYO (Reuters) - Bitcoin tumbled almost 10% on Monday as recent volatility in the cryptocurrency market showed no signs of dampening down, with market players citing jitters over China's expanding crackdown on bitcoin mining in thin liquidity for the losses.

Bitcoin fell as low as \$32,094 to its lowest in 12 days, dragging smaller coins down. It was last down 8.3%, on course for its biggest daily drop in a month.

The world's biggest cryptocurrency, long plagued by volatility, has lost over 20% in the last six days alone and is down by half from its April peak of almost \$65,000. Still, it has still gained over 10% this year.



## UK Retains Finance Crown But France Is Catching Up

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain has retained its title as the most attractive destination for financial services investment, however, the gap with France has narrowed.

According to data from EY latest UK Attractiveness Survey for Financial Services, foreign direct investment (FDI) in financial services fell across Europe by 23% in 2020 as COVID-19 impacted business confidence and travel.

The UK attracted some 56 FDI projects last year, the highest in Europe, however, this was 43 lower than in 2019 before the outbreak of coronavirus. The fall marked the largest year-on-year decline in a decade. The survey of global investors revealed that the UK also had the most investment friendly COVID-19 recovery plans, backed by 48% of respondents. At a city level, London maintained its position as Europe's most attractive destination for financial services FDI, backed by 44% of respondents, followed by Stockholm (19%) and Amsterdam (17%).

Within the UK, Scotland was the second most attractive region with six projects – its two main cities, Edinburgh and Glasgow, recording three projects each. However, Scotland also recorded a decline in 2020 – a fall of 25% – from eight projects in 2019.

The North West and Yorkshire & the Humber recorded three projects each in 2020, down from five and six respectively in 2019. France seized second place as Europe's second most popular FDI location (with the largest source of financial services investment into Europe coming from the US).

France recorded 49 financial services projects last year. This was 11 more than in 2019, a rise of 29%, and narrowed the gap with Britain as it overtook Germany.

Germany, which had been second in 2019 with 43 projects, dropped to third place in 2020, with 37 projects. Spain, which took the third spot in 2019 with 40 projects, fell back to fourth place in 2020 with 31 projects.

Half of global investors said they planned to establish or extend operations in the UK over the next year, up from 10% in September 2020 and an increase on the 45% recorded in April 2020. In addition to this, more than half (54%) of those surveyed said their investment plans in the UK were going ahead as normal despite COVID-19. This includes 6% of respondents who plan to increase their investment.

Of the 31% who said they were planning a decrease, the vast majority said it would only be a small cut. "The UK has consistently been the number one location for international financial services investment since EY started tracking FDI levels and market attractiveness over twenty years ago," Anna Anthony, UK Financial Services managing partner at EY, said.

"While its lead may have narrowed in 2020, most likely only short-term in response to pandemic-related business disruption and Brexit, investor sentiment suggests that the UK is looking to a strong future, and will continue to outperform the rest of Europe in attracting post-COVID 19 financial services investment.

"Investors have consistently been drawn to the strength and resilience of the City, its deep capital markets, gold-plated regulatory system and for the innovation and talent it offers. Despite the challenges of the last few years, the evidence points to this not only continuing, but growing in strength, ensuring the UK remains a world leading financial services centre."

## Tourism Growth Contributes to UK Economic Recovery

LONDON (Dispatches) - Businesses that have borne the brunt of Covid-19 restrictions helped the economic recovery to accelerate in the UK during May, according to the latest Lloyds Bank UK Recovery Tracker.

Eleven of the 14 sectors monitored by the tracker reported faster output growth month-on-month during May, up from nine in April, as the UK moved further out of lockdown.

The tourism and recreation (62.4 in May versus 51.9 in April) and transport (63.2 versus 53.5) sectors reported the sharpest rise in output growth month-on-month.

A reading above 50 signals output is rising, while a reading below 50 indicates output is contracting.

The former – which includes pubs, hotels, restaurants and travel agents – and the latter – which includes bus and rail operators, and providers of logistics services – both benefited from a release of pent-up consumer demand and domestic travel resuming during May. However, what is unclear is the extent of the impact that the four-week delay to further easing of lockdown restrictions will have on these sectors.

While the output of every UK sector monitored by the tracker grew for the second consecutive month in May, healthcare growth slowed most markedly month-on-month (52.5 versus 58.5), making it the worst performing sector monitored by the tracker for the first time since April 2019. Some pharmaceutical businesses commented on a slowdown in client spending after the surge in order volumes earlier in the pandemic.

Tourism and recreation also reported an increase in employment for the first time since January last year as businesses benefitted from the relaxation of lockdown restrictions. Re-opening and pent-up consumer demand have already led to talk of labour shortages.



However, it is likely that the delay to further easing of restrictions could see some reduction in hiring pressures – at least in the short term.

Jeavon Lolay, head of economics and market insight, Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, said: "When we look at the pace of growth, sectors that have been acutely affected by Covid-19 restrictions are now outpacing sectors that have been able to operate more freely during lockdown.

"Whether the four-week delay to further easing of restrictions will impact this trend is unclear.

"But while the delay is understandably disappointing for many businesses, there's no denying that the economy is now on a much sounder footing."

## Persian Gulf States Show Limited Progress Kicking Oil, Gas Dependency

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The clock is ticking for Persian Gulf economies to end their overreliance on fossil fuels, as more countries around the world pour resources into accelerating their transitions to green energy and a low carbon future.

But a report released on Monday from credit ratings agency Moody's found that despite (Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council ((PGCC) states announcing ambitious plans to kick their crude habits, economic diversification efforts have yielded only "limited" results, and further progress could be held back by lower oil prices and too many blueprints targeting the same non-oil sectors.

"While we expect the diversification momentum to pick up, it will be dampened by reduced availability of resources to fund diversification projects in a lower oil price environment and by intra-PGCC competition in a relatively narrow range of targeted sectors," said Moody's.

The credit ratings agency also said plans to expand hydrocarbon capacity in the region, combined with "government commitments to zero or very low taxes", do not bode well for the Gulf to significantly lessen its heavy dependency on fossil fuel revenues.

Despite variations among PGCC countries, the group stands out globally for its overreliance on hydrocarbons when it comes to generating revenue and filling state coffers.

Oil and gas production accounted for as much as 45 percent of Kuwait's economic output in 2019, about 35 percent of Qatar's and Oman's, and nearly a quarter of Saudi Arabia's and the United Arab Emirates', the report notes. Bahrain was hydrocarbons accounted for less than 15 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) pre- the only PGCC country where pandemic.

Hydrocarbons also generated the lion's share of government revenues with Bahrain and the UAE deriving more than 50 percent of government revenue from oil and gas, and Kuwait, Qatar and Oman showing the highest level of dependency.

"This is partly a consequence of PGCC governments' long-standing commitment to a zero or very low tax environment, which is part of the implicit social contract between the rulers and the citizens but also reflects the desire to incentivize non-oil sector growth and development," said Moody's.

As the report notes, the key difference between the PGCC states and other countries that rely heavily on oil and gas "is an effective absence of direct taxes" including personal income taxes and property taxes.

Only Oman has broached the specter of a personal income tax, saying it was studying the introduction of one, but it would only apply to the wealthiest individuals. Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler Mohammed bin Salman stated in a recent interview that there would be no personal income taxes introduced in the kingdom.

Four PCC states have however implemented value-added taxes, or VAT, with Oman being the latest to introduce the levy in April.

## Emir Opens Qatar Economic Forum Focusing on Post-Pandemic Growth

DOHA (Dispatches) - Qatar's Emir officially opened the Qatar Economic Forum 2021, which will focus on global leadership and strategies to support post-pandemic economic growth.

The three-day virtual event held in cooperation with Bloomberg under the slogan "New Horizons for Tomorrow" began on Monday and will bring together more than 100 world leaders, diplomats, academics and businessmen.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani said in his opening remarks that the inaugural event "represents a springboard for a series of forums aimed at enriching the dialogue on the global economy and proceeding to the next post-COVID-19 phase".

Al Thani said that while the role of the state in tackling the coronavirus pandemic is "indispensable", efforts must also include civil society and the business sector and must be coordinated globally.

The Emir also called on world leaders for increased cooperation to achieve a "just and comprehensive distribution of the vaccine in a manner that would pave the way for establishing an integrated global social and economic system in line with the sustainable global development goals to achieve wellbeing and stability to our peoples".

Ghanaian President Nana Akufo, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Rwandan President Paul Kagame, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Senegalese President Macky Sall, and Armenian President Armen Sarkissian are among the more than 100 speakers participating in the forum, which due to the pandemic will be held entirely via video conference.

## South Korea Exports Post Early Double-Digit Gains

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's exports are set to climb by double digits again in June as the global economy shakes off the effects of the pandemic, though a slower pace from recent months suggests the days of outsize gains may have passed.

Exports rose 29.5% in the first 20 days of the month from a year earlier, the customs office reported Monday. Adjusted for calendar effects, average daily shipments increased 33.7% in the period, which had half a business day less compared with last year.

As vaccinations speed up and lockdowns ease across the world, South Korea has seen overseas demand grow beyond memory chips to cars, smartphones and other consumer goods. The gains were less than the 45.6% jump for the full month of May, largely due to a less favorable base effect while exports can speed up during the remaining days of a month.

South Korea's trade figures offer a timely assessment on the health of global commerce as its manufacturers are positioned widely across supply chains. Sales to the U.S., Europe and Japan posted hefty gains, but a slower pace of rise in China suggests export gains to other economies may also moderate as recoveries there enter a more mature post-pandemic phase.

Consumers in major economies may also pivot spending to services from goods as virus restrictions ease. Still, most economists agree that the export outlook for Korea remains positive.

"It's about time the exports momentum started to weaken on base effects," said Yoon Yeo-sam, an analyst at Meritz Securities in Seoul. "But they'll largely remain favorable enough so as not to disrupt the trajectory of economic growth while allowing the Bank of Korea to keep shifting its focus to financial stability."

June's early trade data show exports remain the driver of South Korea's recovery, and is likely to bolster views that the BOK is gearing up for an earlier rate hike than most developed peers. In a report last week, the BOK said U.S. fiscal stimulus, rising global ship sales, and pent-up demand from overseas consumers are likely to buoy exports for the rest of the year.

Exports to China, South Korea's largest overseas market, rose 7.9% between June 1-20, compared with a year earlier. Overall semiconductor shipments increased 28.5%.

Exports to the U.S. rose 41.3%, while shipments to the European Union jumped 48.8% and those to Japan increased 33%.

Shipments of cars rose 62.2%, while oil products increased 58.6%. Sales of wireless communications devices rose 15.8%. Ship exports fell 27.7%.

South Korea's overall imports rose 29.1% in the first 20 days of June.

## Pakistan, IMF Differences Persist



ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan and the IMF have so far failed to narrow down their differences, so both sides have decided to put completion of the sixth review under the \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) on hold for the next few months, it has been learnt.

Pakistan and the IMF authorities could not evolve a consensus on the staff-level agreement, so the completion of the sixth review under the EFF was put on hold till September 2021. The IMF Board was scheduled to take up approval of 6th review by July this year. But now it was decided that it would be completed by September if IMF staff showed satisfaction over implementation of conditions and agreed structural benchmarks, top official sources confirmed to The News here on Sunday.

The inability of Islamabad to complete the sixth review of IMF program will have far-reaching consequences for the economy because two program loans having worth of \$600 million meant for energy sector and bringing capital sector reforms from the Asian Development Program (ADB) would not be materialized in the absence of letter of comfort from the IMF. However, Pakistani authorities are confident that the much-awaited program loan of \$800 million from the World Bank (WB) was on the cards as the WB's Executive Board was scheduled to meet on June 30, 2021 in Washington, DC, for approving this loan after conceding that Pakistan's macroeconomic framework was largely stable despite the fact that sixth review was still pending. However, there are two conditions still in pending mode so its disbursement would be linked to fulfillment of these major conditions. The government requires approval of the Council of Common Interest (CCI) in order to fulfill one condition.



# Iran Nuclear Plants Must Increase Power Generation to 8,400 MW

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Energy says the share of the power generated by the nuclear plants must reach 8,400 MW by the next 20 years.

Attending the open session of the Parliament on Tuesday, Reza Ardakanian said that it was expected that by 2028, two 1050 MW units would be activated to add a total of

2,100 MW to the current capacity that was 1050 MW.

Ardakanian further said that by the next 8 years, another two units of nuclear plants would join the grid in the Makran region, south and southeastern Iran, to add another 2,100 MW to the capacity and ultimately with the next step growing the capacity to 8,400 MW.



# Covid Pandemic Result of Degradation of Natural Areas, Species’ Loss, Exploitation

LONDON (Dispatches) - The Covid-19 pandemic is a result of degradation of natural areas, species’ loss and exploitation, UNEP country head Atul Bagai said, underlining that countries, including India, must intensify their efforts to prevent and reverse ecosystem degradation.

He also highlighted that climate change, pollution and loss of biodiversity are three crises facing the entire planet and India, and are interconnected.

India has taken the path of short-term economic interest over decades and this has diminished the ability of ecosystems to provide and support both humans and other life forms, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) official said.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is a result of the degradation of natural areas, species’ loss and exploitation. This needs to change. India is already making a concerted effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and be part of the global effort to reach net-zero emissions by 2050,” he said.

“India must intensify these efforts and participate actively in the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration that was launched on the World Environment Day, 2021, to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems,” Bagai said.

Several actions on this front are relevant for India, which include taking policy and legislative action, raising awareness and making smart choices, he said.

“For a better future, India must work towards creating food systems that work with nature, reduce waste, and are adaptive to change and resilient to shocks. This could also take the form of halting purchases of products that are not certified as sustainable or planting and donating for restoration initiatives,” the UNEP official said.

Bagai said that a barrier to restoration is limited awareness of negative effects of ecosystem degradation.

This can be rectified in many ways that include discussions on the value of ecosystems, campaigns that draw attention to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, empowering small-scale farmers and women farmers, changing patterns of consumption, challenging social norms and business practices, and capacity building and education, he said.

“We need to inculcate in India a culture that respects nature and cares for it. A healthier respect for nature will give us a healthier country and healthier people,” Bagai said.

On the role of the youth on the climate change issue, he said they are part of the larger international youth movements demanding drastic and visible action in the face of global warming and climate justice, biodiversity loss, and development at the cost of the environment.

“My best advice to young people who are concerned about environmental issues is two-fold -- get informed and get involved. There is a wealth of opportunities to make a difference. Often the best place to get started is in your local community. There is much to be done, and we need everyone involved,” he added.

In recent years, he said there has been a surge in global attention on marine litter and plastic pollution.

“However, scientific knowledge on marine plastic litter and effective countermeasures remains insufficient. Keeping this in mind, the UNEP is



implementing two major projects in India that focus on plastic waste management and reduction of marine plastic pollution,” Bagai said.

UNEP, with the support of the governments of Japan and Norway, is undertaking a multiyear assessment of how plastic finds its way into riverways, and ultimately the ocean through the ‘CounterMEASURE’ project and the India Norway Marine Pollution initiative.

Both projects aim to reduce marine litter and other pollutants from land-based sources and track plastic waste leakage from land into rivers.

‘CounterMEASURE’ has been working in Agra, Haridwar, Allahabad, Patna and Mumbai to address the problem of plastic waste. Technical studies have been conducted, including analysis of microplastics, macroplastics and mapping of plastic pollution hotspots in these cities and in the river Ganga, Bagai said.

The new phase of the project will look at the impact of plastic pollution on migratory species as well.

“We’ve also trained relevant stakeholders and conducted outreach for raising awareness and behaviour change. The UNEP is further supporting India by developing a national roadmap on marine plastic litter and hosting policy dialogues,” he said.

Talking about the concept of inclusive wealth, Bagai said it is a measure of the social value, not dollar price, of all its capital assets, including natural capital, human capital and produced capital.

“It can provide insights into whether current growth is sustainable or is based on over exploiting natural capital. This information can help develop policy better suited to sustaining growth while better managing human and natural capital,” he said.

On the other hand, he said the shortcomings of gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of social well-being are now well known. GDP was introduced as an index of the size of a country’s economy – an accounting measure of all goods and services produced in a country over a given period of time, Bagai said.

“Over time, however, it began to be used not just as a measure of market activity but a measure of a country’s overall well-being. In doing so, GDP ignores the value of human capital, the non-market values of natural capital, and the economic value of environmental externalities, such as pollution,” he said.

## Now Iran a... FROM PAGE 1

After shooting down of Global Hawk, Head of the Aerospace Division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) General Amir Ali Hajizadeh has said Iran is now among the top five countries in the world in the field of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

“Today, after forty years since the Islamic Revolution, we have seen tremendous progress in many areas, especially drones and we are among the top five countries in the world in the field of UAVs,” he said.

Drone is not the only field Iran has progressed in it as the country has made very good progress in the field of radars, the downing of the MQ4 aircraft being an example. Add these progresses to the missile power of the country, Iran is now the most powerful country in the region in the missile area.

After downing of the advanced U.S. drone, Hajizadeh said that enemies should learn a lesson and change their rhetoric toward the Iranian nation.

Over the past years, Iran has made major breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing military equipment and hardware despite sanctions and economic pressures on the country.

On Sunday Iran marked this strong reaction to the U.S. intrusion into its airspace and it was almost coincided with victory of Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi in the presidential election and now the country can see more progress in any sector especially in the defense programs because only with having strong defense and even attacking forces the country can repel threats and it is expected that by election of Raisi, Iran sees more progress in any component especially in drone industry as the country can turn into a drone exporting country.

Iran’s military force in the air, land and sea has made the country safe against any attack by the enemies and people should thank its dear sons in the Army,IRGC, scientists and experts for sacrificing their lives for guaranteeing security for the nation and repelling the probable attacks.



## Yemeni Air... FROM PAGE 1

A day earlier, the media bureau of Yemen’s popular Ansarullah resistance movement released a video of Yemeni air defense forces intercepting and shooting down the same type of unmanned aerial vehicle with a surface-to-air missile over the Sirwah district.

Meanwhile, Yemeni Foreign Minister Hisham Sharaf Abdullah said his compatriots would not accept a peace agreement with the Saudi-led coalition as long as its brutal siege against the crisis-stricken Arab country remained in place.

“The Yemeni people cannot accept truce and peace deals in light of the continuous blockade, which is being enforced by the Riyadh and Abu Dhabi regimes under the supervision of London and Washington,” Lebanon-based and Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network quoted him as saying.

He added, “Our arms are yet wide open to honorable and just peace, which would take the interests and dignity of Yemenis into account.”

Sharaf Abdullah said, “Yemen’s steadfastness and resilience on political, military and social fronts have thwarted all international bids in favor of the coalition of aggression, its crimes and siege.”

The top Yemeni diplomat went on to say that attempts are underway to depict Saudi Arabia as a mediator and to absolve its responsibility for the onslaught on Yemen and its dire consequences over the past 7 years.

Sharaf Abdullah underscored that humanitarian issues must not be politicized, and that the Yemeni nation is entitled to unhindered access to airports, ports, foodstuff, medicine and oil derivatives.

Saudi Arabia, backed by the U.S. and regional allies, launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

Yemeni armed forces and allied Popular Committees have, however, gone from strength to strength against the Saudi-led invaders, and left Riyadh and its allies bogged down in the country.

The Saudi war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead, and displaced millions more. The war has also destroyed Yemen’s infrastructure and spread famine and infectious diseases across the country.

# Europe Powers Up Electric Car Battery Drive

LONDON (Dispatches) - As electric car sales soar, Europe has started to build up its capacity to produce batteries on the continent but it remains far from reducing its dependence on Asia.

China, Japan and South Korea produce most of the world’s electric car batteries.

Europe now has projects to build 38 gigafactories with a combined annual output of 1,000 gigawatt hours (GWh) and an estimated cost of 40 billion euros (\$48 billion), according to a June report by Transport & Environment, a non-government organisation.

This annual supply could be reached by 2029-2030 and would be the equivalent to the production of 16.7 million battery electric vehicles, a T&E spokesman told AFP.

“Given the monstrous increase in demand, there is a major stake at hand for manufacturers to break the battery makers’ oligopoly,” said Eric Kirstetter, a sector analyst at consulting firm Roland Berger.

“They will also have to ensure access to materials for the electrodes (anode and cathode), which will determine the batteries’ price and availability,” he added.

In Sweden, the start-up Northvolt expects to reach annual production of 150 GWh in Europe by 2030, with one plant under construction now and two much bigger ones on the drawing board.

Northvolt has previously said that production capacity would reach 32 GWh by 2024, or enough batteries for 600,000 electric vehicles per year.

In another report, Transport & Environment said battery electric vehicles could account for all new sales of units in the 27-nation European Union by 2035 -- if policymakers introduce tighter CO2 targets and strong support for infrastructure to charge cars. Automakers, which are under pressure to transition out of fossil fuel vehicles, are putting money into battery production.

German giant Volkswagen has invested in Northvolt and also plans to build five other battery plants.

Stellantis, which owns brands such as Alfa Romeo, Chrysler, Citroen, Dodge and Fiat, is working on two of its own, while electric pioneer Tesla wants to make its future gigafactory near Berlin one of the biggest in the world with 250 GWh of capacity by 2030. European governments are backing the



projects because they want the continent to maintain a major role in future automobile manufacturing.

Asian manufacturers are also investing in Europe, with the Chinese group AESC planning to work with Toyota and Renault on battery plants in Britain and France.

Two South Korean companies, LG Chem and SKI, have already opened factories in Poland and Hungary, and China’s CATL is building one in Germany.

European Commission vice president Maros Sefcovic said in March that the continent needed to achieve strategic independence in what has become a critical sector.

He wants European factories to cover the region’s needs by 2025.

That is a tall order, according to Oliver Montique, an analyst with Fitch Solutions.

Montique targets 2040 for the establishment of “an entirely closed loop supply chain where the vast majority of battery materials are extracted, refined, processed and produced into battery cells on the continent.”

Europe wants to build factories that pollute less than in Asia or the United States, and EU officials are working on a standard that would impose criteria on how raw materials are obtained and used batteries are recycled.

To develop a new generation of batteries that are less dependent on the lithium-ion technology dominated by Asian companies, the European Commission launched a research and development program in January backed by 2.9 billion euros.

European factories could employ 800,000 people, the commission estimates, but they would need to be trained quickly.

Battery factories will also need raw materials.

Demand for lithium is expected to soar by a multiple of 18 by 2030, the European Commission has forecast, and the sector will also likely need five times more cobalt.

Germany and the Czech Republic have substantial reserves of lithium, but Montique advises EU leaders to also ensure supplies from reliable partners.

“I’m thinking of Australia, Canada, Brazil and Chile,” he said, “so that the supply-side is unlikely to be threatened either through normal commercial constraints and/or political reasons.”

## U.S. Refusing to... FROM PAGE 1

The sources said that the U.S. administration was still keeping in place the arms embargo on Iran and the respective executive order issued by Trump.

This is while the UN arms ban on Iran was lifted last year under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Security Council Resolution 2231, but the Trump administration reinstated the same embargo with an executive order.

The sources noted that the United States has not yet agreed to a complete removal of oil, banking and transportation sanctions in a way that there won’t be a need for periodic renewals.

According to the information obtained by Press TV, America had only proposed a temporary suspension of oil and banking sanctions for 120 or 180 days, after which Iran would need to have the consent of the U.S. president again to continue its activities.

A report by the Iranian parliament says it would be a strategic mistake in a detailed report by the Iranian parliament

According to the sources, the U.S. has not yet accepted a real verification of the sanctions removal, and that it has opposed the removal of the bans altogether and instead relayed the idea of a step-by-step approach.

Additionally, the U.S. has not ruled out the possibility of another withdrawal from the JCPOA and has not provided a guarantee that it will not pull out from the agreement again, the sources said.

Washington has not yet accepted Tehran’s request for a guarantee that anti-Iran sanctions would not be re-imposed and that the so-called snapback provision in the JCPOA would not be invoked.

The sources said the United States keeps insisting on its excessive demands and the imposition of new nuclear commitments on Iran.

Press TV has been informed that the United States does not consider itself obliged to pay compensation for the damages caused by its withdrawal from the JCPOA and the imposition of illegal sanctions on Iran.

According to the information, Iran has urged the United States to avoid pressuring the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to reopen the so-called possible military dimensions (PMD) file on Iran’s nuclear program, something that has not yet been accepted by Washington.



## Rahm Wins U.S. Open

SAN DIEGO (Reuters) - Jon Rahm became the first U.S. Open champion from Spain when he finished with two brilliant birdies to outlast Louis Oosthuizen by one stroke at Torrey Pines. An emotional Rahm quickly dedicated the victory to his late compatriot Seve Ballesteros, the man who put Spain on the golfing map by winning five major titles before dying of brain cancer at age 54. "This is definitely for Seve. I know he wanted to win this one most of all," said Rahm, his voice cracking with emotion.

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## Fourth Day of World Test Championship Final Washed Out

LONDON (Dispatches) - The inaugural World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand at Southampton was hit by yet more bad weather on Monday as rain washed out the whole of the fourth day's play -- the second time in the match a day's play had been abandoned without a ball bowled. Friday's opening day suffered a similar fate and, with bad light bringing about an early close on Saturday and Sunday, only 141.1 overs out of a scheduled 360 have so far been bowled.

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SPORTS

WEDNESDAY JUNE 23, 2021

# Surprising Hawks Eliminate Top-Seeded 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (Dispatches) - Trae Young and the Atlanta Hawks are taking their stunning turnaround to the Eastern Conference finals. Young made a late 3-pointer and scored 21 points to help Atlanta win for the third time in the series in Philadelphia, a 103-96 victory over the top-seeded 76ers on Sunday night in Game 7. The Hawks will open their first East finals since 2015 against the Bucks on Wednesday night in Milwaukee. Atlanta had been 0-9 in Games 7s on the road. But the Hawks ignored their ignominious history and got another victory in Philly, where they already won in Game 1 and Game 5. Not even the Hawks could have seen this coming when they were in 11th place in the Eastern Conference in March with a 14-20 record and fired coach Lloyd Pierce. Under replacement Nate McMillan, the Hawks turned into birds of prey and Young led a charge into the postseason for the first time since 2017 that kept rolling with a first-round win over New York.

Joel Embiid, the NBA MVP runner-up, Ben Simmons and a high-priced cast of stars were supposed to put the upstart Hawks in their place. It never happened. Young shook off an otherwise off night from the floor and kept shooting until he hit that 3 for a 93-87 lead with 2:31 left in the game. Kevin Huerter, who led the Hawks with 27 points, sealed the win with three free throws, and the packed house of 18,624 fell as silent as it was when the season opened without any fans.

Sixers fans let the home team have it and booed them off the court. They were reprimanded by the public address announcer for throwing trash on the court. Embiid scored 31 points. This marked only the second year since 1973 -- when the NBA began seeding for the playoffs by conference



-- when neither No. 1 seed will make the conference finals. West No. 1 seed Utah was eliminated by the Clippers.

### SUNS 120, CLIPPERS 114

Devin Booker had 40 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists for his first career triple-double and Phoenix overcame Chris Paul's absence to win at home in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

Paul sat out because of COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Clippers star Kawhi Leonard missed his third straight game because of a sprained right knee.

Tied at 93 to start the fourth, the Suns went on a 12-2 run and pulled ahead 105-95 on Cam Johnson's dunk with 8:08 remaining. The Clippers wouldn't go away, though, cutting a 10-point deficit in the final two minutes to 116-114 when Terance Mann hit a 3-pointer with 22 seconds left.

Booker scored on a dunk on the next possession to seal Phoenix's seventh straight victory, getting a free lane to the basket on the blown defensive coverage.

Game 2 is tonight in Phoenix.

Booker was productive and efficient in one of his best games of his career. He shot 15 of 29 from the field, carving apart a defense that had to play just 36 hours after closing out the Utah Jazz on Friday night.

## Shapovalov Withdraws From Tokyo Olympics



LONDON (Dispatches) - Canada's Denis Shapovalov has decided not to compete at the Tokyo Olympics due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the world number 12 said on Monday.

The 22-year-old Shapovalov is the latest player to opt out of the Olympics as Spaniard Rafa Nadal and Austria's Dominic Thiem both announced last week they would not compete in the July 24-Aug. 1 men's tennis tournament in Tokyo.

"Representing Canada means the world to me, but due to the current situation my team and I have decided this is the best decision for everyone's safety," Shapovalov wrote on Twitter.

"I can't wait to represent Canada at future Olympic games."

Shapovalov, who reached the quarter-finals at last year's U.S. Open, pulled out of this year's French Open with a shoulder injury a day after he lost in the Geneva final.

He has competed in two tournaments since, most recently in a Wimbledon tune-up at Queen's Club in London where he lost in the semi-final on Saturday.

## Bromell Clinches Men's 100m

LONDON (Dispatches) - Trayvon Bromell kept his stellar year going to win the men's 100 metres at the U.S. Olympic trials on Sunday, securing his ticket to Tokyo, as superstar Allyson Felix booked an age-defying fifth trip to the Olympic Games.

The world leader Bromell entered Eugene, Oregon, this week amid enormous expectations and did not disappoint, scorching the track in 9.80 seconds five years after a brutal injury at the Rio Games that cast his very career into jeopardy. "God is real - that's my only answer," Bromell told a television reporter after the race inside the newly renovated Hayward Field.

Ronnie Baker, 27, and 26-year-old Fred Kerley finished second and third, respectively, with personal bests of 9.85 seconds and 9.86.

The trio will look to fill the void left behind by Jamaica's Usain Bolt, who retired in 2017 with eight Olympic golds as the world's most famous and beloved sprinter.

The evening spelled disappointment for 39-year-old Justin Gatlin, who had hoped to reach his fourth Games but appeared to struggle with leg pain and finished last, as well as 23-year-old Noah Lyles, who finished seventh and will now turn his focus to the 200m, the event in which he won the world championship in 2019.

Felix finished second in the 400 metres at the U.S. trials in 50.02 seconds to claim her spot for the Summer Games, extending a glittering career with nine Olympic medals already in her coffers.

With her 2-1/2-year-old daughter, Camryn, watching from the stands, Felix once again showed why she is the most decorated female track athlete in American history, exploding off the blocks and fending off a stacked field.

"It has been a fight to get here and one thing I know how to do is fight," Felix said after the race. "To make the fifth one - so special."

Her chance of competing in Tokyo appeared in doubt as she trailed going into the final 50 metres, but she kicked into high gear and fought to the finish line, before rolling onto her back and kicking her legs in the air in celebration.



Sky Sports reported that Spurs are expected to reject the bid with Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy holding out for at least 120 million pounds for his prized asset. Despite Kane winning the Golden Boot for top goalscorer and top assist provider last

# Man City Make £100m Move for Kane

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City have made a bid of 100 million pounds (138 million dollars) to Tottenham for England captain Harry Kane, according to reports on Monday.

Kane, 27, has publicly expressed his desire to add trophies to his excellent goalscoring record and is believed to be keen on a move away from his boyhood club this summer.

Season, Spurs finished seventh in the Premier League and missed the Champions League for the second consecutive season.

By contrast, City claimed a third Premier League title in four seasons, but missed out on the club's first ever Champions League by losing 1-0 in the final to Chelsea.

The English champions are looking for a replacement for all-time top goalscorer Sergio Aguero, who has left City after 10 years to join Barcelona.

Kane is yet to win any major trophy for club or country.

He is hoping to change that next month at Euro 2020, but his tournament has got off to a slow start. Gareth Southgate has substituted his skipper in both matches, against Croatia and Scotland, and Kane has failed to score.

However, Southgate has already confirmed Kane will start Tuesday's final Group D match against the Czech Republic.

## England Shutting out Euro 2020 Noise

LONDON (Dispatches) - Raheem Sterling says England are shutting out the "noise" and "panic" from outside their Euro 2020 camp after their laboured goalless draw against Scotland.

The Manchester City forward was part of Gareth Southgate's team that was booed off the pitch at Wembley on Friday and came in for widespread criticism from elsewhere.

But the 26-year-old, who scored the only goal in England's opening win against Croatia last week, said the players knew how to ignore the external pressure.

"I do feel there's a bit of an overreaction... I just feel there's more of a panic on the outside than inside the building," he said.

"At the same the players who have been at a few tournaments, who have huge experience, try to help the other ones.

"I don't see anyone in the camp that feels any pressure or feels hard done by. As much as we can inside the building the best thing we can do is focus on the training field, focus on what's being doing inside."

"The more you listen to outside noise, the more it can affect you," he added.

Sterling said home advantage could be crucial.

"There is always an advantage being on home soil, that's for sure," he said.

"With the fans raring and making it a hostile place to come, I do think it can be a good advantage and, like I say, we've got four points, I keep stressing we've got four points and we've got one game to go and we're going to need our fans on Tuesday to get us across the line."



## France Lose Dembele for the Rest of Euro 2020

PARIS (Dispatches) - France have lost Ousmane Dembele for the rest of Euro 2020 after X-rays showed the Barcelona winger's knee injury would not heal in time, the French Football Federation said on Monday.

Dembele, 24, was hurt in the closing minutes of the 1-1 draw against Hungary in Budapest on Saturday after coming on as a substitute. X-rays on Sunday evening showed he would not be back before the end of the Euros.

"The recovery time is incompatible with keeping him in the squad," the FFF said.

Dembele came off the bench in both France's matches in the Euros.

He replaced Adrien Rabiot for the final seconds of the opening win over Germany and replaced Rabiot again after 57 minutes in Budapest with France losing and hitting the post with a shot before limping off in the 87th minute.

Under UEFA rules which only allow for goalkeepers to be replaced during the tournament. France cannot call up a stand-in for Dembele, who has 27 caps.

France started with eight attackers in their 26-man squad including Kingsley Coman of Bayern, a similar type of player to Dembele who has yet to play a minute in the Euros.

After moving from Borussia Dortmund for 135 million euros (\$160 million) in August 2017, the second highest fee Barcelona have paid for a player, the "Mosquito" struggled with a series of hamstring injuries. This season, he only had one injury break and made 44 club appearances, scoring 11 goals.

Dembele, who was part of France's World Cup winning squad in Russia in 2018, had a good run up to Euro 2020, scoring in a World Cup qualifier against Kazakhstan in March and against Wales in a friendly at the start of June.

