

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 83,985 With 140 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

# IRAN NEWS

The National Observatory of Iran Was Put Into Operation on Monday In Kamoo City, Isfahan Province, And It Can Create a Communication Bridge Between the Canary Islands, China, and India With Iran

VOL. XXVII, No. 7258 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

TUESDAY JUNE 29, 2021 - TIR 8, 1400

2

DOMESTIC

Zarif Slams West for Targeting Survivors Twice



> SEE PAGE 2

3

DOMESTIC

Iran Seeks Russia's Help to Boost Its Northern Ports



> SEE PAGE 3

4

INTERNATIONAL

French Presidential Hopefuls Seek Momentum In Regional Election Run-Offs



> SEE PAGE 4

8

SPORTS

Verstappen Dominates Styrian F1 GP, Hamilton



> SEE PAGE 8

## Iran GDP Could Grow by 3.5% If JCPOA Revived

TEHRAN (PressTV)- A major global trade body estimates that Iran's GDP would expand by 3.5% this year if JCPOA is revived.

The Institute of International Finance (IIF) has estimated that Iran's economy will continue to grow by a modest rate of 3.5% this year if the country and world powers succeed in talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal.

An IIF report published on Sunday said that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) will continue to grow next year and in 2023 by 4.1% and 3.8%, respectively in case the nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, is revived.

Iran and world powers have been engaged in rounds of talks in the Austrian capital Vienna since April as they seek to salvage the JCPOA more than three years after a former government in the United States pulled out of the agreement and reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

The IIF report estimated that Iran would continue to grapple with relatively high rates of joblessness even if the JCPOA is revived and U.S. sanctions are lifted.

It admitted, however, that unemployment rate will decline from a current rate of 20%.

See Page 7

## Victims of Sardasht Chemical Attack Deserve Respect, Solidarity

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fernando Arias said in a statement on Monday that the victims of Sardasht chemical weapon attack by the Saddam Hussein regime and all others who have experienced the torment and pain caused by chemical weapons deserve all our respect and solidarity.

He made the remark to commemorate the victims of a June 28, 1987 chemical weapon attack on the city of Sardasht, in northwestern Iranian province of West Azarbaijan, when Iraqi war planes targeted the city with chemical weapons, killing over 100 citizens of the city and injuring thousands by the deadly weapon.

Iraq under the leadership of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein imposed an eight-year war against Iran in 1980.

The OPCW official further said in his message that "I deliver these remarks on the 34th anniversary of the 1987 chemical weapons attack on the village of Sardasht in Iran."

See Page 7

# Leader Censures West For Harboring Terrorists



TEHRAN (PressTV) – Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has censured certain Western countries for turning into safe havens for terrorists while continuing their claim of championing human rights.

Members of the Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group are walking free in France and other European countries, Ayatollah Khamenei said on Monday, addressing a meeting with the chief and officials of Iran's Judiciary.

"The French government and others shamelessly preach human rights despite hosting these killers, supporting them, and even giving them the podium in their national parliaments," the Leader said. "That is to say, the brazenness of these Westerners is really an extraordinary and strange thing."

The Leader also commemorated Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, the head of Supreme Judicial Council of the time, who was assassinated in a bombing carried out by the MKO in Tehran on June 28, 1981.

He said the MKO committed a great crime against the Iranian nation by assassinating "this prominent figure" along with 70 other Iranian figures on this day forty years ago.

Ayatollah Khamenei also thanked Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi for bringing about a great change to the Judiciary since he assumed office more than two years ago.

"In these two years and a few months that he was in charge of the Judiciary, he really worked hard, he strove, and good things were achieved in the Judiciary," the Leader said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei hailed the June 18 presidential election as "truly an epic", saying no one can take the magnificence of the election away from the country.

"Where in the world is it common to see that all members of the opposition propaganda apparatus get actively involved to scare people away from voting in the election," the Leader said.

"Attempts are still made – they (the opposition) write letters and speak via the cyberspace – to deny the greatness of this election, but to no avail," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"This effort is in vain. Analysts who had their eyes fixed on this election understand what has happened."

Anti-Iran groups led a campaign of intimidation and bullying to force potential voters not to participate in the election. Nonetheless, nearly 49% of the eligible voters turned out to cast their ballots in an election that Raisi won with over 18 million or 72% of the votes.

Drawing a comparison between Iran's election and the 2020 presidential election in the US, Ayatollah Khamenei said the Americans are not a role model to follow when it comes to political issues.

"One must speak with courtesy and observance of ethical and religious dimensions, without insulting and slandering, rather than using the cursing and insulting methods of the Americans and [former U.S. President Donald] Trump," he said.

The Leader noted that the U.S. presidential election became a scandal in the eyes of the world people, adding American rulers have ironically begun to criticize Iran's election only a few months after having a scandalous election themselves.

Ayatollah Khamenei praised the Iranian candidates who lost in the election for their decorum and warm congratulatory messages to the president-elect.

The real winners of the election, the Leader said, are the Iranian people and all those who helped bring excitement to the polls.

"Therefore, the candidates who didn't secure votes are among the winners as well, and on the contrary, the losers of the election are those who put all their efforts to drive the people away from the ballot box, but the people, with their presence, rejected them and dashed their hopes."

## Iraqi Resistance Factions Vow Revenge After Deadly U.S. Airstrikes

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraqi resistance forces have pledged revenge after the United States conducted deadly airstrikes on the Iraq-Syria border.

U.S. warplanes attacked three targets allegedly belonging to Iraqi resistance groups along the border between Iraq and Syria at around 6 pm Eastern Time Sunday in the early hours of Monday in the region.

According to Sabereen News, four Iraqi fighters were killed in the attack on the headquarters of the 14th Brigade of Popular Mobilization Forces, better known as Hashd al-Sha'abi.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Iraqi resistance factions pledged to "avenge the blood of our righteous martyrs and wreak vengeance on the perpetrators of this heinous crime". They also warned the U.S. against repeating its aggression. Earlier in the day, Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada group, which operates under the command of Hashd al-Sha'abi, warned of severe retaliation.

"From now on, we will enter an open war with the American occupation. The first of which is targeting its hostile aircraft in the sky over our beloved Iraq," the group said.

See Page 7

## No Decision on Camera Deal With UN Nuclear Inspectors

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has not made a decision yet about whether to extend an agreement with the U.N. atomic watchdog over access to surveillance footage at its nuclear sites, the country's foreign ministry said Monday.

The remarks by Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh come after a three-month deal between Tehran and international nuclear inspectors to preserve video data at the country's atomic installations expired last week, following a one-month extension.

"No decision, either negative or positive has been made," Khatibzadeh told reporters. "Neither the continuation of the deal nor the erasure (of data). We are in the previous position for the time being."

In February the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the IAEA agreed for a three-month monitoring deal to give time to the negotiators to possibly revive the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. However, after the three-month period the negotiators failed to reach an agreement on revitalizing the JCPOA. To give more time to the negotiators, the monitoring deal was extended for another month. The deadline came to an end on June 24.

See Page 7

## Time for Other JCPOA Parties to Make Tough Decisions

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's top negotiator to Vienna talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal says Tehran has already made its tough decision to save the agreement and it is now time for the other parties to act similarly for the accord.

Abbas Araqchi, who is also Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, made the remarks in a Sunday interview with the Iranian Parliament's official news agency, ICANA, following a meeting with members of the Parliament's Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy on the latest situation of the ongoing talks in the Austrian capital to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has already made its tough decision. When the United States quit the JCPOA and Iran decided to stay in it, this was Iran's big and tough decision, which has kept the JCPOA alive up to the present," Araqchi said.

See Page 7

## Kenya's Bomet County Exports Tea to Iran

NAIROB (Dispatches) - The County Government of Bomet in Kenya in collaboration with local companies will export the region's tea produce directly to Iran to enable farmers earn more income.

While flagging off the first consignment of 84 tons of tea sourced from private companies, the area Governor Dr. Hillary Barchok said the county has received clearance from the Ministry of Agriculture to access the Iranian market.

Acknowledging challenges of streamlining the plans, Barchok said his administration was ready to facilitate sale of tea produced by firms within the county to improve prices for both farmers and local tea firms.

"We are going to facilitate willing local firms both private and public to access the market since we do not have a processing plant as a county," he said.

The Governor, who was accompanied by Iran Ambassador to Kenya Mr Jafar Barnaki said despite many obstacles he was here to launch the first consignment.

Citing the recently enacted Tea Act which restricts direct sale of tea, Barchok hailed the court for granting his petition to bar the new law from prohibiting direct sales.

"The reason we are here to launch the first consignment that is heading direct to Iran is because the court upheld our petition in our quest to pitch for better prices for small scale farmers," he stated.

See Page 7



Advertisement Department  
021-44253335-39

www.irannewsdaily.com  
info@irannewsdaily.com

@irannewsdaily @irannewsdaily



# Raisi Inauguration Set for August 5

TEHRAN (MNA) – According to the spokesperson of the presiding board of the parliament, the inauguration ceremony of the Iranian newly-elect president will be held on August 5.

Saying that the date of the inauguration ceremony of the president-elect Seyed Ebrahim Raisi has been erroneously announced, Seyyed Nezamuddin Mousavi, the spokesperson of the presidium of the parliament, said that ceremony will be held on August 5, 2021.

Due to the international importance of the inauguration ceremony of the President-elect, 11 committees will be in charge of organizing the ceremony, inviting foreign and domestic guests, as well as security and, health protocol affairs.

## Zarif Slams West for Targeting Survivors Twice

**TEHRAN (PressTV) - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has marked the 34th anniversary of a chemical attack on the city of Sardasht by Western-backed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, saying the survivors of the attack fell victim to the Western countries' inhumane policies twice.**

In a message on Monday, Zarif said Sardasht, a city in Iran's West Azarbaijan province, is a symbol of suffering under the use of chemical weapons against civilians and residential areas in the current era.

"Our beloved chemical attack survivors fell victim to some Western governments' inhumane policies twice – once when Western companies gave Saddam's regime chemical materials and technology for production of chemical weapons, with the representatives of their governments in the UN Security Council remaining silent, turning a blind eye to Saddam's chemical crimes, and letting him continue using chemical weapons against combatants and civilians," he said.

And again, the foreign minister continued, the same countries targeted the survivors during the era of former U.S. president Donald Trump, "when they imposed the most brutal, inhumane sanctions against Iran, preventing the delivery of medicine and medical equipment to Iran to alleviate the suffering of our beloved chemical attack survivors."

The chemical bombardment of Sardasht was conducted on June 28, 1987, almost seven years after the regime of Saddam Hussein waged a war on Iran.

During the war, which lasted eight years, the Iraqi army continuously employed chemical weapons against Iranian combatants and civilians, leaving tens of thousands dead on the spot and many more suffering for years to come.

Over 100 people were killed in the Sardasht attack and thousands more were exposed to chemical agents.



After three decades, many of the survivors of the chemical attack still have to live with the long-term respiratory and even psychological effects of inhaling mustard gas used in the attack.

Elsewhere in his message, the chief Iranian diplomat noted that what weapons of mass destruction and sanctions have in common is their inability to aim at their intended targets.

Zarif said in spite of Iran's endeavors and the cooperation of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the current U.S. administration has not given up on the failed policy of the previous administration against Iran and continues to impose illegal sanctions that prevent the country's chemical attack survivors from accessing medicine and medical equipment.

In 2018, the Trump administration began to impose sanctions on Iran after unilaterally leaving the Iran nuclear agreement. The sanctions have blocked Iran's access to the global banking system, hindering, in turn, its import of medicine and medical equipment from other countries.

## House Prices in Tehran Rise Again

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - A new report by the Central Bank of Iran shows that the price of one square meter of housing in Tehran reached 29 million and 673,000 tomans in June, up 56 percent from the previous month and 56 percent from last June.

The price of housing in March last year had broken a record 30 million tomans, but April and May this year faced a decline and increased again in June.

In a report published on its website on Sunday, the Central Bank said the number of housing transactions grew by about 30 percent in June compared to May. The increase in demand appears to have driven housing prices to grow again.

Almost one-fifth of the houses sold over the past month cost 15 to 20 million tomans per square meter, and only eight percent of the houses sold cost more than 50 million tomans per square meter.

Most of the houses sold were with an infrastructure of 60 to 70 square meters, with a 15 percent share in Tehran's total housing transactions.

Only 6.5% of homes sold last month had an infrastructure of more than 150 square meters.

## Iran Ranks World 10th Largest Steelmaker in January-May

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran was ranked the world's tenth-largest steel producer in the first five months of 2021, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced referring to the latest data released by the World Steel Association (WSA).

According to the WSA's data, Iran produced 12.5 million tons of crude steel in January-May 2021, registering a 9.2 percent growth compared to the same period in 2020.

The Islamic Republic's steel output stood at 2.6 million tons in May, indicating a 7.7 percent rise year on year.

Based on the mentioned data, the world's top 64 steel makers managed to produce 837.5 million tons of steel in the mentioned five months to register a 14.5-percent rise from the figure for the last year's same period.

Also, the production of world's major steel producers reached 174.4 million tons in the said month, with a 16.5 percent increase over the same period last year.

Producing 473.1 million and 48.6 million tons of the product, China and India stood at the first and second places in the said period, respectively, while Japan stood at third place producing 40 million tons of crude steel.

The U.S., Russia, South Korea, Germany, Turkey, and Brazil took fourth to ninth places, respectively.

The Iranian Steel industry has been constantly developing over the past years against all the pressures and obstacles created by outside forces like the U.S. sanctions and the coronavirus outbreak that has severely affected the performance of the world's top producers.

The country is expected to climb to seventh place among the world's top steel producers by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025).

## U.S. Return to JCPOA Possible If All Sanctions Lifted

TEHRAN (IP) - A member of the National Security and Foreign policy commission of Iran's Parliament said that if all sanctions against Iran were lifted, the U.S. could return to JCPOA.

Speaking on the sidelines of the open session of the parliament on Sunday, Abolfazl Amouei reacted to the U.S. representative's remarks about ongoing Vienna talks, in which he had said that all of Iran's sanctions would not be lifted.

Amouei stated that the ongoing talks in Vienna focused on the countries' rules for the return of the US to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA).

The MP emphasized that the clear issue for Iran was lifting all sanctions included in JCPOA, which had halted Iran's economic benefits.

He added: "Iran will accept no issue without the complete lifting of sanctions. The United States is trying to maintain some of the sanctions, which is unacceptable."

The viewpoints of the U.S. representative for Iran's affairs, Robert Malley, and the country's Secretary of State, Blinken, is the U.S.' internal issue, and Iran's terms are not affected by the U.S. internal changes, Amouei concluded.

### President Inaugurates National Knowledge-Based Projects



**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani virtually inaugurated five national knowledge-based projects implemented by Vice Presidency for Science and Technology Affairs worth 385 billion tomans.

During the 76th plan of 'Prudence and Hope for Surge in Production' campaign, National Observatory of Kashan Institute of Basic Sciences, Tehran University development plan for electric bus, and the permanent exhibition of exports of knowledge-based products in Tehran Permanent Fairground were inaugurated in Tehran, Isfahan and Kermanshah.

Innovative houses in Kashan, Isfahan, and Tehran; and science and technology park innovation factory in Kermanshah were opened upon president Rouhani's order.

Some 385 billion tomans was invested by private sector and the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology for these plans.

Iranian National Observatory (INO) was built by Iranian engineers and scientists. By opening this plan, Iran will be among the top 10 producers of telescope.

During the inauguration, President Rouhani said: "Today, conditions have been created for Creativity Centers to use and exploit a new path in the field of employment, as well as the art and abilities of young people, and educated ones in various fields."

### IRGC Advises U.S. to Leave Region Immediately

TEHRAN (MNA) – Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) for Political Affairs advised the US to leave the region as soon as possible.

The threats of the enemy are not new and are a repetition of the previous threats, said Brigadier General Yadollah Javani on Monday.

He added the enemy knows that the IRGC is ready for any confrontation.

The U.S. should know that whatever they do in the region will be to its detriment, Javani said, adding that the IRGC advises the United States to leave the region as soon as possible.

## Tehran Ready to Pay 500m Euro Debt to Russia For Nuclear Reactor

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi said that the country's only nuclear power plant in Bushehr which shut down temporarily last week due to "technical issues" will soon restart operation.

In a meeting with the deputy speaker of the parliament Ali Nikzad and other parliamentarians to discuss nuclear power generation capacities, Salehi said the problem has almost been fixed and electricity generated by the power plant will enter the grid within two or three days.

The AEOI said in a statement on June 20 that the Bushehr nuclear power plant had been temporarily shut down over a "technical fault" and went off the grid after a one-day notice to the Energy Ministry.

When the news of the shutdown emerged, some wondered if it had something to do with Russia withholding fuel or crucial technical support for the reactor. This suspicion gained more traction when Salehi also announced on Saturday that Iran will pay 500 million euros it owes Russia.

This is the first time that an emergency shutdown of the plant located in the southern port city of Bushehr has been reported. The cause of the problem has not been specified.

Speaking to the parliament's news website, Khane-ye Mellat on Saturday, Salehi downplayed the seriousness of an emergency shutdown and said such problems in power plants was "natural".

## Iran Announces Deal With Russia on Exploitation of Outer Space

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran has announced an agreement it has reached with Russia on the exploitation of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The agreement was communicated to relevant bodies by Iranian First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri.

In a meeting on June 23, 2021, the Iranian Cabinet

authorized the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to hold negotiations and sign up on an agreement between Tehran and Moscow on mutual cooperation to exploit outer space for peaceful ends.

The Cabinet also gave the go-ahead to go through legal procedure until the deal received final approval.

## Lifting of Sanctions on Paper Not Enough

TEHRAN (MNA) – Stating that the verification of lifting sanctions is a time-consuming process, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said that lifting of sanctions on paper is not enough.

Mojtaba Zonnour said that over the past few years, the U.S. has repeatedly put pressure on European banks and companies and prevented them from communicating with Iran.

"The lifting of sanctions on paper is not enough and the sanctions should be lifted in such a way that if the state and private sectors of our country want to import and export, no country will tell them that Iran is under sanctions," he added.

In addition, Iran should not face any obstacle in the case of selling oil, he noted, adding, "On the other hand, we must be able to transfer the money from the sale of oil. For example, about \$7.5 billion of our oil sales in South Korea are blocked." Emphasizing that verification of lifting sanctions is a time-consuming process and not a two-day process, Zonnour said, "The U.S. only considers a maximum time of 48 hours to verify the lifting of sanctions."

"If you ask any businessman or individual who does business, they will say that it is not possible to verify the lifting of sanctions within 48 hours," the MP highlighted.

## Americans Flee Afghanistan "Irresponsibly"

TEHRAN (MNA) – Stating that Americans escaped from Afghanistan 'irresponsibly', the Director General of Foreign Ministry's West Asia Department said that Americans put the country of Afghanistan on the brink of civil war.

In a tweet on Monday, Seyyed Rasoul Mousavi pointed to the irresponsible flee of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and wrote that they put Afghanistan on the brink of civil war.

It is essential that the Afghan government, Taliban, Mujahideen and all Afghan National Forces save the country by taking a responsible approach to the future of Afghanistan and adopting courageous decisions in this regard.

Earlier, Assistant to Iranian Foreign Minister and Director General of West Asia at Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in another tweet wrote, "The reason for Iran's concern about the developments in Afghanistan is not the transfer of power, because it (Iran) is sure that Afghanistan has no military solution and the transfer of power through the military is impossible and will not maintain peace and stability in this country."

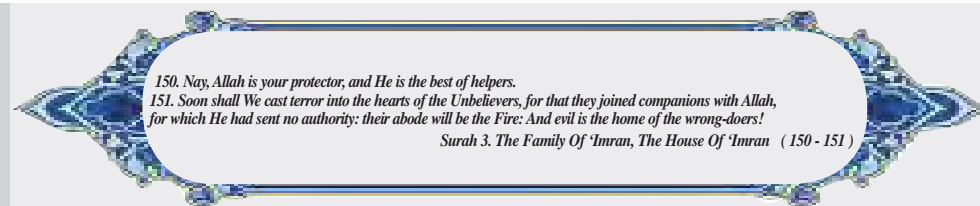
Several U.S. officials have previously told the Associated Press that about 650 U.S. troops will remain in Afghanistan after withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in July (next month) to ensure the safety of U.S. diplomats.





## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:08
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:06
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:52



# Iran Seeks Russia's Help to Boost Its Northern Ports

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

**TEHRAN - Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO)'s Deputy Head for Ports and Economic Affairs Farhad Montaser Kouhsari says there has been no growth in the northern ports of the country in the past eight years and the country will seek Russia's help to boost the northern ports.**

Touching upon the condition and capacity of northern ports and elaborating the woes and hurdles in the northern ports for load and unload, Kouhsari said that the capacity of northern ports for imports and exports of various goods is around 30m tons, and currently only 6m tons of its total capacity is used but it can be enhanced with developing the transit.

He also pointed to the ply of ro-ro ships in the northern ports of the country for increasing the shipment of goods, and said ro-ro train and ro-ro of trucks are active in the Caspian Sea and almost 70 percent of the ro-ro ships active there is of the truck type. He added that ro-ro ships can dock in all northern ports.

He went on to say that in the past, transiting trucks used to pass through Turkmenistan to get Kazakhstan and from there, they could reach Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Bishkek Port but currently, the trucks can get Kuryk Port of Kazakhstan via Anzali Port.



He reiterated that in case it is welcomed by the transportation companies, this line would be reinforced and the organization can use more ro-ro ships in this line.

He also announced negotiations with a Russian company to increase the number of ro-ro ships in this line, adding that the talks with Russians are underway and the second ship in the Anzali Port-Noshahr Port-Amirabad Port route to Astara Khan Port will be launched and this ship can also be active in the Olya-Anzali Ports or Olya-Amirabad Ports in order to transfer transiting trucks from Iran or Turkey to Russia or vice versa by the sea.

Kouhsar noted that the organization provides required infrastructures in order to prevent any problem on course to developing exports in the ports, adding that he had talks on transit with the head of free zone of Russia in Moscow. He added that the talks should continue with Russia and India to pick up transit en route of India and Chabahar Port and Shahid Rajaei Port as well as the northern ports and the ties with Russia should be stronger which can help the capacity of the national ports to increase.

He admitted that in the past eight years the northern ports have not experienced any growth and there has been no change in its 6-million-ton capacity.

## Japan to Host Iran Cultural Month

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian cultural months will be held on the occasion of the 2021 Summer Olympics and with cooperation of Iran cultural attaché office in Japan, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the office of cultural cooperation and Iranian expatriates of Islamic Culture and Communication Organization in Japan.

A gallery titled 'Beautiful Iran' will also be open. Visitors can also watch movies about Iran; enjoy Iranian music and three kinds of foods.

The event will start on June 28 and will be underway until July 29 in JICA office.

Over 50 pictures will also introduce Iran tourist attractions and nature.



## Bandar Abbas Refinery Repairs Furnace While Operating

TEHRAN (Shana) - For the first time in Iran, the specialists of Bandar Abbas Oil Refinery succeeded in breaking the record of repairing the roof of an operating furnace, a record which previously belonged to an American company.

According to the Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, with assistance from a knowledge-based company, part of the furnace roof of the distillation unit No. 2 of the company, which was damaged, was repaired in the shortest time by the engineers and specialists of Bandar Abbas Refinery.

In this regard, Reza Khavarsangari, maintenance and repair manager of Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company, said: "In these repairs, part of the roof of Unit 71 furnace, which was damaged due to high heat, and melting and damage to internal insulation was repaired with the participation of a local knowledge-based company by using a stand and fireproof foam injection and round-the-clock work."

He stated that due to the need for continuous production, it was not possible to deactivate the unit, adding: "Repairs were carried out in the conditions of furnace operating which took place for the first time in the country."

The maintenance manager of Bandar Abbas refinery stated: "Due to the need for repairs during the unit's operation, with the participation of a knowledge-based company active in the production of repair and insulation materials and due to the size of the damaged furnace, stands were placed on the roof and were stabilized outside the furnace and then injection of fireproof foam was carried out."



## Iran-China Trade Stands at \$5.5b in 5 Months



**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN – According to China's Customs Office report, the trade exchange between Iran and China in the first five months of 2021 stood at \$5.5b which shows 14 percent decline comparing to the same period last year.

According to the report, Iran and China's trade exchange in the first five months of 2021 nose-dived from \$6.4b in the same period in 2020 to \$5.5b this year.

As per report, China's imports from China this year has stood at \$2.5b in five months which shows 7 percent decline comparing to the same period in 2020 which was around \$2.7b and crude oil has been the major good that China has imported from Iran.

Meanwhile China's exports to Iran between January and May of 2021 have faced 19 percent decline and fell from \$3.7b in the same period in 2020 to \$3b this year.

The trade balance between Iran and China is around \$500m in favor of China in the first five months.

The decline in Iran-China trade is mainly due to the outbreak of the new coronavirus and sanctions, but the two sides are taking measures to boost trade turnover back to its pre-coronavirus levels. China is Iran's major trade partner.

Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) plans to set up a business office in China, in collaboration with major Iranian trade companies which can boost the trade between the two countries.

Gholam-Hossein Jamili has recently announced during a meeting with representatives of some large state-owned companies, saying that the focus of the office will be on the activities of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce.

The official also mentioned the Iran Chamber's approach to expanding the country's export markets, providing services, exploiting existing capacities, and said: "Mobilizing facilities and creating a strong center for better trade and economic activities in China is what we are looking for."

## Sports Opportunity for Interaction Between Tehran, Budapest

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Hungarian Ambassador in Tehran Zoltan Varga-Haszonits said that sport games have always been an opportunity for interaction and cooperation between countries, expressing confidence that good things will happen between Iran and Hungary.

Varga-Haszonits made the remarks in an interview with IRNA on Monday, saying that in his two-year presence in Iran so far, he has seen that Iranians are interested in sports.

Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, the number of tourists who moved between the two countries showed a good relationship between Iran and Hungary, and no doubt, after the crisis, great cooperation and interaction would be seen between the two countries in tourism again, he added.

Hungarian Ambassador to Tehran said that another



event has recently taken place in the sports of Iran and Hungary, which has brought the two countries closer to each other; Teqball was founded in Hungary and we are proud that this field of sports was invented in our country and today it has many fans all over the world.

The Hungarian Ambassador said that currently, the Iranian Shooting National Team is in Hungary to prepare itself for the Olympics, and the national table tennis team is scheduled to leave for Hungary soon, and these are the fields of interaction and cooperation between the two countries and should be considered.

Teqball can be played with balls used in football, with size five being official and recommended, this game can be played by two players (singles game) or by four players (doubles game).

## Iran Customs Office Reports 523% Surge in Narcotics Seizure in Q1

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's customs office says narcotics seizure at borders surged by over five times in the quarter to May. Iran's customs office IRICA says seizure of narcotics grew by over five times in size in the quarter to late May as authorities blame the surge on a boom in narcotics production in neighboring Afghanistan.

IRICA spokesman Rouhollah Latifi said on Sunday that narcotics seizure at Iranian border crossings and airport gateways had increased by 523% in the quarter to May 21 against the same quarter in 2020.

Latifi did not elaborate on total seizure figures, but said that Iranian customs departments had confiscated a total of 120 metric tons of chemical substances that are used to manufacture various types of recreational drugs in Iran and in other countries. The official said the seizure of record hauls of narcotics at Iranian borders was partly due to an exponential increase in production of crystal methamphetamine in neighboring Afghanistan in recent years.

He said nearly 11 tons of red phosphorus had been seized in Dogharoon crossing in the eastern border with Afghanistan in one single operation that occurred between March and May.

"The seizure had a major impact to prevent the production of manufactured narcotics in Afghanistan. The haul had been planted inside sugar bags," said Latifi.

The spokesman said IRICA has intensified its narcotics seizure inspections at airport gateways, adding that a large haul of ketamine, an expensive anesthetic medication that is also used as a recreational drug, had been found in cargoes at Tehran's International Imam Khomeini Airport.

Iran spends huge resource each year to fight narcotics as the country is a main transit route for shipments of contraband substances from Asia to Europe. Latifi said IRICA has repeatedly been hailed by the World Customs Organization for its successful narcotics seizure processes.

## Foreign Direct Investment in Iran Slumps 11% in 2020

**IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK**

TEHRAN - Foreign direct investment into Iran declined almost 10% in 2020 compared to the year before, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

As per data published in the World Investment Report 2021, the UN agency put Iran's FDI inflow at \$1.34 billion in 2020, which was down 11% compared to \$1.508 billion in 2019.

UNCTAD, which was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body and as part of the UN secretariat dealing with trade, investment and

development issues, also records and discloses information on outward FDI flow.

FDI is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country in the form of a controlling ownership. Iran had seen FDI inflows of \$3.37 billion and \$5.01 billion in 2016 and 2017 after the landmark 2016 nuclear deal.

The nuclear agreement opened the way for a growing number of foreign companies flocking to the Iranian market untapped after years of pent-up demand as a result of years of international sanctions related to its nuclear energy program.



## Church Bomb Blast Wounds Two in Eastern DR Congo

BENI (Dispatches) - A makeshift bomb exploded inside a Catholic church in the city of Beni in DR Congo's conflict-plagued east on Sunday, injuring two women just an hour before a children's confirmation ceremony was due to be held.

The attack marks the first time a Catholic building has been targeted in the region, which has declared a "state of siege" due to rising violence from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militia accused of killing thousands.

The head of police in Beni's town hall Narcisse Muteba Kashale told AFP that the explosion occurred at 6:00 am (0400 GMT), and that the homemade bomb had been "set up for an ambush".



## Indonesia Hits Record of Over 21,000 Daily Virus Infections

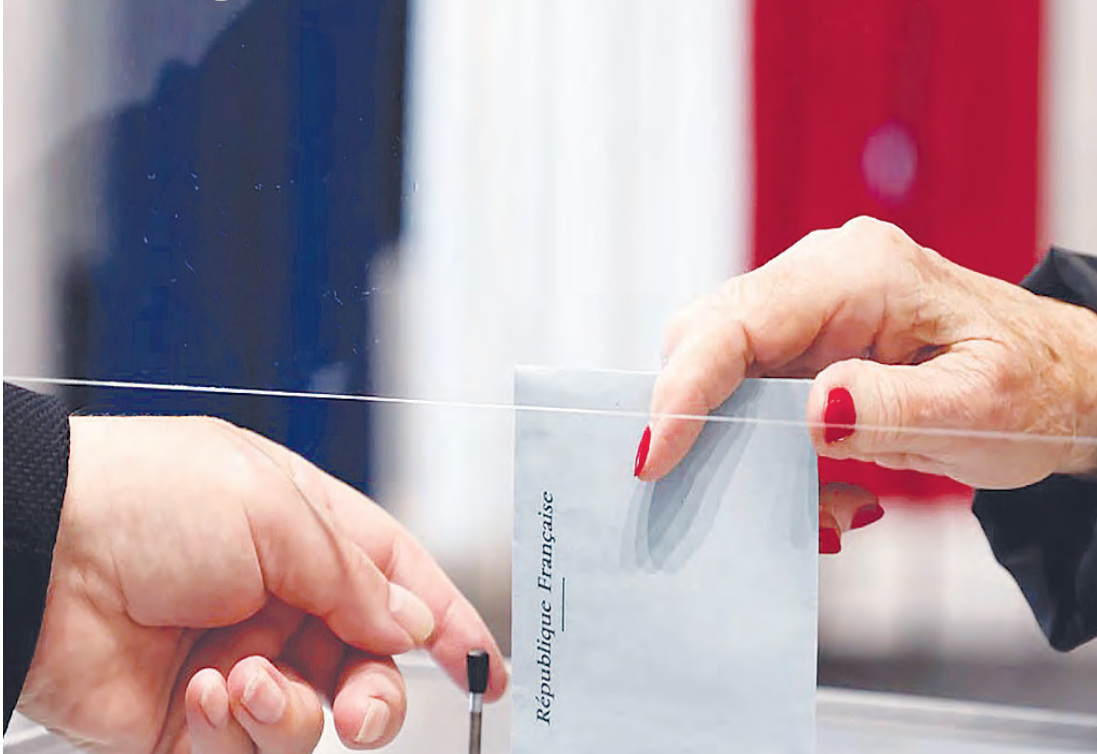
JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Indonesia set a new record for daily coronavirus cases on Sunday with more than 21,000, as hospitals are flooded with patients in Jakarta and other Covid-19 hotspots across Southeast Asia's hardest-hit nation.

The figure brings the country's tally for the pandemic to more than 2.1 million coronavirus cases with 57,138 deaths. But the real number is believed to be much higher due to low testing rates for the deadly respiratory illness.

Indonesia's Covid-19 case rates have soared in recent weeks after millions travelled at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in May, and as authorities identified the presence of highly infectious newer virus strains.



## French Presidential Hopefuls Seek Momentum In Regional Election Run-Offs



PARIS (Reuters) - France voted in run-offs for regional elections on Sunday that could give the far-right its first regional powerbase and shift the balance between political heavyweights vying for pole position in next year's presidential race.

Last Sunday's first round proved dire for President Emmanuel Macron, whose party is on course to win none of France's 13 regions, but was also disappointing for far-right leader Marine Le Pen. read more

A surprise factor of these elections has been the record abstention rate, which makes the contests particularly hard to predict for pollsters. On Sunday, only 27.89% of voters had turned out to vote by 5 pm (1500 GMT), down from 50.54% in 2015.

"I have no intention whatsoever to go and vote today, simply because I've lost faith in our politicians," Parisian Jean-Jacques told Reuters TV while strolling on one of the River Seine's bridges.

But others were galvanised by news of last Sunday's low turnout. "I didn't vote last week, but the abstention rate was a bit of a wake-up call, and so I decided to come and vote today instead of staying at home or going for a walk, because it is important," said 38-year old lawyer Masing Coulibaly. In the first round, Le Pen's party fell short of poll predictions, coming top in just one region, Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur in the southeast. Meanwhile, the traditional centre-right, decimated by Macron in the 2017 presidential and legislative elections, staged a surprise comeback.

A trio of its top members, all former ministers and currently at the helm of some of France's most populous regions, are running for re-election this Sunday, which they hope will give them a springboard for the 2022 presidential race.

In particular, Xavier Bertrand of the northern Hauts-de-France region around Calais has emerged as the conservatives' favourite in opinion polls to represent the party in the presidential election. read more

Macron's aides see the former health minister as a threat who could eat away at the president's centre-right voter base in the first round of the presidential vote in April.

Valerie Pécresse in the greater Paris region and Laurent Wauquiez in the greater Lyon area are the other conservatives whose fate on Sunday could decide whether they challenge Bertrand in 2022 for the centre-right ticket.

Le Pen's National Rally still hopes to win its first ever region in the southeast around Marseille and Nice. Her candidate, Thierry Mariani, a former conservative minister, beat the incumbent from the centre-right last Sunday, but by a lower margin than expected.

Victory would give Le Pen momentum and a platform to challenge Macron in 2022, a repeat of the 2017 duel that polls show would be won by Macron again, though by a slimmer margin.

Elsewhere, the Greens and leftwing allies are hoping to capture the Loire valley region, while a four-way contest in Burgundy gives an outside chance to the far-right to win power.

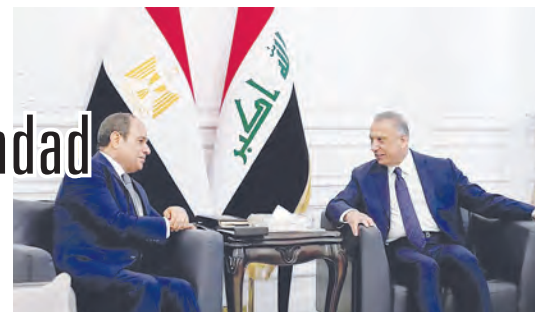
## Iraq, Egypt, Jordan Hold Tripartite Summit in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah II held a tripartite summit with Iraq's president Sunday, in the first visit by an Egyptian head of state to Baghdad in three decades.

Iraqi President Barham Saleh and Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi received the Egyptian and Jordanian leaders, with Saleh saying the meeting was "an eloquent message amid enormous regional challenges". "Iraq's recovery paves the way to an integrated system for our region built on the fight against extremism, respect for sovereignty and economic partnership," Saleh said on Twitter.

Kadhemi's office said the summit would address topics including political and economic cooperation, in particular strengthening investment, and "joint efforts in the fight against terrorism".

Iraq is seeking to move closer to Arab allies of the United States in the Middle East including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan.



## North Koreans Worry Over "Emaciated" Kim Jong Un

SEOUL (Reuters) - Everyone in North Korea is heartbroken over leader Kim Jong Un's apparent weight loss, said an unidentified resident of Pyongyang quoted on the country's tightly controlled state media, after watching recent video footage of Kim.

The rare public comment on Kim's health come after foreign analysts noted in early June that the autocratic leader, who is believed to be 37, appeared to have lost a noticeable amount of weight.

"Seeing respected general secretary (Kim Jong Un) looking emaciated breaks our people's heart so much," the man said in an interview aired by state broadcaster KRT on Friday.

"Everyone is saying that their tears welled up," he said.

In the clip, which Reuters could not independently verify, Pyongyang residents were seen watching a big screen on the street showing a concert attended by Kim and party officials after a plenary meeting of their Workers' Party of Korea (WPK).

The broadcast did not provide any details on what had led to the weight loss. When Kim reappeared in state media in June after not being seen in public for almost a month, analysts at NK News, a Seoul-based website that monitors North Korea, noted that his watch appeared to be fastened more tightly than before around an apparently slimmer wrist.

Given Kim's tight grip on power in North Korea - and the uncertainty over any plans for a successor - international media, spy agencies, and specialists closely watch his health. Early last year speculation about Kim's health exploded after he missed the birth anniversary celebrations of state founder Kim Il Sung on April 15, only to reappear in public in early May.

In 2014, state media reported that Kim was suffering from "discomfort", after a prolonged period out of the public eye.



## Thousands Flee Fighting Between Gov't, Taliban

KABUL (Dispatches) - About 5,000 Afghan families have fled their homes in the northern city of Kunduz after days of fighting between Taliban fighters and government forces, officials said, as the deadline looms for U.S.-led troops to withdraw.

Heavy fighting has also been reported in the provinces of Kandahar and Baghlan, where the Afghan forces claimed to have retaken areas from Taliban control but the armed group still held on to parts of Pul-e-Khumri area in central Baghlan, according to local media.

The Taliban has taken control of dozens of districts since U.S.-led NATO foreign forces started their final withdrawal in May. The Afghan group, which has been waging an armed rebellion since it was toppled from power in a 2001 U.S.-led invasion, continues to surround Kunduz city.

The Taliban briefly seized the city twice in recent years but has now captured the surrounding districts and a nearby border crossing with Tajikistan.

Ghulam Sakhi Rasouli, director of the Kunduz Refugees and Repatriation Department, told AFP news agency about 5,000 families had been displaced by the fighting, up to 2,000 of which had fled to Kabul and other provinces.

Rahmatullah Hamnawa, a journalist based in Kunduz, told Al Jazeera he was forced to move his family from one area of the city to another amid the conflict.

"We hear gunfire and fighting all night," he said, adding that it has been at least a week since the fighting flared in parts of the city and the nearby areas.

"People fleeing Kunduz have been forced to take a circuitous route through Samangan province to Mazar-e-Sharif, about 110km (68 miles) away to the southwest. The shorter road is unsafe and dotted with checkpoints and mines," Hamnawa said.

"But even the Samangan province, which used to be one of the safest in the country, is no longer free from violence. Hence a three-hour journey via Samangan can take up to seven now, if not more."

Many people took refuge in a school in the city and had been provided with food and other relief items, Kunduz provincial council member Ghulam Rabbani said.

Video footage taken by AFP showed dozens of people, many of them women and children, sitting inside tents set up in a school compound.

"We are six families living together here for three days ... you can see my children are sitting on the ground," Juma Khan, who fled with his family, said.



## Peruvians Take to Streets as Election Result Hold-Up Stokes Tensions

LIMA (Reuters) - Thousands of Peruvians supporting socialist Pedro Castillo and right-wing rival Keiko Fujimori took to the streets amid uncertainty over the result of a tight June 6 presidential election that has been held up by legal challenges.

Castillo supporters marched in downtown Lima toward Plaza San Martín, a block from the headquarters of the electoral jury that will decide the outcome, with giant banners and photos of the socialist candidate, calling for his apparent election win to be confirmed.

A few blocks away, thousands of others supporting Fujimori paraded with Peruvian flags and banners that read "no to fraud," arriving at the Plaza Bolognesi, where a stage had been erected ahead of the expected arrival of the conservative.

Castillo holds a slender 44,000-vote lead over Fujimori with all ballots counted. But his right-wing rival has sought to disqualify votes, largely in rural areas that backed the leftist, making claims of fraud with little evidence.

Castillo's Free Peru party has denied the allegations of fraud while international election observers have said the vote was carried out cleanly. The U.S. State Department described the process as a "model of democracy."

In Fujimori's march were members of various right and center-right parties, as well as retired military personnel who have backed her fraud claims. Many had banners saying "no to communism," a criticism they often aim at Castillo.

"We are not Chavistas, we are not communists, we are not going to take away property from anyone, that is false... we are democratic," Castillo told supporters on Saturday night. "The differences, the inequalities, are over."

Many of his followers wore the same wide-brimmed hats Castillo has used in the campaign. Some wore outfits from the country's Andean regions and danced, while others carried whips like those used by rural "ronderos," or civil police.

Fujimori told her supporters on Saturday evening that she simply wanted electoral justice. "What we want is for all these irregularities to be analyzed," she said.







**Velenjak Apt (\$2400)**  
250sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/p, Sauna  
J, balcony  
marble fl  
Fully Furn

**Shanon (adviser)**

**Vanak Villa (\$4000)**  
1000sq.m  
4bdrs, S/p  
S, J, balcony  
green yard  
Fully Furn

**Parsian**

Farmanieh (\$2200) 180sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, balcony, F.F  
Zaferanieh (\$1800) 160sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, balcony, F.F  
Gheitarieh (\$2400) 220sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p, balcony, F.F

**Darrous (\$1800) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, balcony, pkg, F.F**

**Jordan (\$1500) 2bdrs, F.F**  
**Jordan (\$2000) 3bdrs, F.F**  
**Jordan (\$2500) 4bdrs, F.F**

**Cell: +989121907875**  
**Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com**  
**Tel : 88510081**  
**Fax : 88506474**

**Commercial office**  
**Farmanieh (\$30 per sq.m)**  
**4storey, each fl 90sq.m, pkgs**



**IRAN NEWS**  
**ADVERTISING**  
**44253401**

**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

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

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



**IRAN NEWS**  
PUBLISHER OF NEWSPAPERS  
**ADVERTISING**

**TEL: 44253448-50**  
**FAX: 44253234**  
**ADIRANNEWS@GMAIL.COM**



# Daimler Set to Spin Off Truck Unit by Year End

BERLIN (Reuters) - German carmaker Daimler is on track to spin off Daimler Truck, the world's largest truck and bus maker, by the end of the year, its finance chief was quoted as saying on Sunday. "We are right on schedule with the detailed preparations for this complex project and want to float Daimler Truck on the stock exchange as an independent company by the end of this year," CFO Harald Wilhelm told the Automobilwoche weekly. "We are convinced of the industrial logic and benefits of the planned realignment of Daimler and the spin-off of Daimler Truck."



## Erdogan Takes First Step In Istanbul Canal Project

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has taken the first step in the construction of a canal on the western edge of Istanbul, amid concerns over the environmental and economic effects of the project.

"Today we are opening a new page in the history of Turkey's development," Erdogan said on Saturday at a ground-breaking ceremony of Sazlidere Bridge over the planned route.

"We see Canal Istanbul as a project to save the future of Istanbul ... to ensure the safety of life and property of Istanbul's Bosphorus and the citizens around it," he said.

The government has said that the project will ease ship traffic and reduce the risk of accidents in the Bosphorus Strait – one of the world's busiest shipping lanes – which links the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea.

Dubbed by Erdogan as his "crazy project" when he first suggested building the canal in 2011, the 45km (28-mile)-long project linking the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea to the west of the Bosphorus includes the construction of new seaports, bridges, businesses, housing districts and artificial lakes.

The canal, estimated to cost \$15bn, is expected to be completed within six years, Erdogan said.

"Look, this is not a fountain opening ceremony," he said at the event. "Today we are laying the foundations of one of the exemplary canals in the world."

Mustafa Ilicali, a professor on transportation and former member of parliament, told Al Jazeera that marine traffic has risen 72 percent in the Bosphorus since 2005.

"Tankers pose accidents in the narrow strait. Pending vessels pollute the sea and cause emission," he said.

Muzaffer Bayram, a citizen living in Istanbul, sees the canal as being beneficial for Turkey.

"See these ships waiting? When we have the canal, they will not wait here. Besides they will pay more [to pass through Turkey]. It is for my country's interest," he told Al Jazeera.

However, opponents say the canal will cause profound ecological damage in Istanbul, exacerbate the dangers posed by earthquakes, and put the already ailing Turkish economy under the burden of even greater debt.

"Through this new canal, the Black Sea and the Marmara waters will get mixed. This will have ecological consequences and imperil an already tenuous water supply and marine life," Pinar Giritlioglu, vice president of the Chamber of Urban Planners said. Ercument Gulemek, a farmer and stockbreeder in Baklali, said that the project will claim some of his village.

"We want to expand the business, build an indoor barn, but we can't. It's forbidden. What I do is the only job I know. I can only become a night watchman after these places become settlements," he told Al Jazeera.

The project's first structure, the eight-lane, 840-metre (about a half-mile) road bridge, will link to the North Marmara highway that also connects other recent infrastructure projects – a new airport and a third Bosphorus bridge.

This has led Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, who represents Turkey's main opposition Republican Peoples' Party, to call Saturday's ceremony an "illusion" that is related to plans for the highway rather than the canal.

"The construction of a bridge here has nothing to do with the canal project. It's something to do with the road hub," he told a news conference in Sazlidere on Thursday.

## UAE to Enter 25 New Markets for Foreign Trade

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The UAE will enter 25 new international markets for foreign trade under plans set out by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai.

The goal is to boost exports by 50 per cent in the next few years.

The Prime Minister spoke after a meeting of the Cabinet on Sunday.

"Today, I chaired a cabinet meeting at Al Watan Palace in Abu Dhabi," Sheikh Mohammed said.

"We adopted the state's agenda to enter 25 new international markets in our foreign trade.

"Our non-oil trade annually exceeds Dh1.5 trillion and our logistics network is in 400 international cities.

"Our country ranks among the top 20 in foreign trade competitiveness indicators.

"Our non-oil economy represents more than 70 per cent of our GDP. Our goal is to increase our national exports by 50 per cent in the coming years.

"We work as one team, federally and locally, to bring our national economy to new heights [levels]. God willing, the UAE will remain an international hub for the economy in the coming decades."

He said new measures were adopted to fund the growing research and development sector.

"We also adopted in the Cabinet a national scale for research and development funds," he said.

"The UAE spends 1.3 per cent of its GDP on research and development. It is the first Arab country in this field.

"Our goal is to compete globally in the future. It is the research and development which lead the economy of the knowledge we seek to consolidate."

## Indian Economy Poised for Recovery in FY22

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Although the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic again brought businesses and economic activities to a standstill, Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI), Dinesh Kumar Khara has expressed hope that the country's economy would recover in the ongoing financial year.

The Chairman noted that the global economy contracted by 3.3 per cent in 2020 with the pandemic causing significant loss of lives and livelihood.

The GDP in India contracted by 7.3 per cent in FY2021 and the country experienced a second wave of infections with cases rising rapidly since March 2021, he said while addressing the 66th Annual General Meeting of the bank.

He, however, said that policy measures and the coordinated efforts of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Centre were directed towards enabling growth on a more durable basis during these difficult times.

"Notwithstanding the second wave of Covid-19, Indian economy, through its resilience, is poised for a recovery in FY2022," the SBI chief told the shareholders of the bank.

Speaking on the performance of the bank in FY21, he said that although the last fiscal was an exceptionally challenging year for the entire world, the state-run bank was able to function against all odds with minimal disruption for the customers.

"The business continuity plans that were chalked out have worked well for the Bank and this is reflected in various parameters of the Bank's performance in FY 2021."

Notably the bank has achieved high level of digitization with share of Alternate Channels in total transactions increasing to 93 per cent in FY2021, thereby converting a challenging situation into an opportunity, the Chairman said.

He said that in the current financial year, SBI will continue to accelerate its digital agenda, adding that the scope and reach of YONO will be expanded further.

"With the rollout of pre-package insolvency for resolution, resumption of courts and formation of National Asset Reconstruction Company, efforts will be in full force to keep the momentum in stressed asset recovery in the current financial year."

The bank is comfortably placed in terms of growth capital. Opportunities for lending in promising sectors will be explored to diversify the portfolio and contain risk.

"In conclusion, the bank adjusted to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and is better positioned to tackle any subsequent wave. I am cautiously optimistic that the performance trajectory of FY2021 will continue in FY2022 as well."

## World Bank to Consider Pakistan's Request for \$800m Budget Support Loans

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - The World Bank is going to consider approving two budget support loans of \$800 million for Pakistan during the next week.

The Board of Directors of the World Bank would take up Pakistan's request for two budget support loans totalling \$800 million in the upcoming week, said an official of the ministry of Economic Affairs. Pakistan had recently met the conditions of the World Bank of enhancing monthly cash stipend of the Benazir Income Support Programme. According to the reports, the WB would consider two support loans including Human Investments to Foster Transformation (SHIFT-II) programme and the Programme for Affordable and Clean Energy (PACE).

In July to May of the current fiscal year, Pakistan had received loan worth of \$1.224 billion from the World Bank, according to the data of ministry of Economic Affairs. The government had projected to receive \$2.257 billion from the WB in entire outgoing financial year. Earlier, in last week, the WB had approved \$442 million on Friday in financing to support Pakistan in improving access to water and sanitation services for the most vulnerable rural communities in Punjab province.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan and the World Bank on Saturday signed the financing agreement of "Punjab Rural Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Project" worth US\$ 442.4 million in Islamabad. Noor Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs signed the financing agreement on behalf of the Government of Pakistan while Mr. Najy Benhassine, Country Director, World Bank signed the agreement on behalf of the World Bank.

This project aims to provide equitable and sustainable access to clean drinking water; improve sanitation; and reduce child stunting in Punjab Province. The project interventions will cover 2,000 villages including 2,000 main settlements and 8,000 small settlements in sixteen (16) Districts of Punjab Province that are the poorest and have the worst social infrastructure and stunting issue. In line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to ensure equitable and inclusive socioeconomic opportunities, eight (8) districts from South Punjab i.e. Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, DG Khan, Lodhran, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Rahim Yar Khan & Rajanpur are included in the project. Furthermore, eight (8) other districts from Central and North Punjab i.e. Bhakkar, Chakwal, Chiniot, Jhang, Khushab, Mianwali, Pakpattan & Sargodha are also included after due diligence. The project will directly impact the life of common man and create employment opportunities in the rural areas.

## BOK Chief Says Rate Hike to Come This Year



SEOUL (Dispatches) - The chief of South Korea's central bank said on June 24 that its "interest rate normalization" will come at an "appropriate time" by the end of the year, setting a solid time frame for a policy shift for the first time.

"The current pandemic-era monetary easing is extremely dovish compared with the state of the economy," Bank of Korea Gov. Lee Ju-yeol said in a press briefing.

Asia's fourth-largest economy has been recovering at a faster-than-expected pace, boosted by its rebound in exports. Its vaccination rate has been gaining traction as well. The central bank raised its growth outlook for this year by 1 percentage point to 4 percent, taking such factors into account.

"Normalization of monetary policy in sync with economic recovery is a natural step," Lee explained, while expressing concerns of the nation's snowballing household debt due to record-low interest rates and imbalance in financial markets. "An excessive flow of money into the asset market has been observed and there are issues with household debt – there is a need to manage the monetary policy in regards to the financial imbalance," the central bank chief said.

The BOK has kept its benchmark interest rate frozen at a record low of 0.5 percent since May last year to pump liquidity into the market in a bid to minimize financial risks stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The nation's household debt has been snowballing at an unprecedented pace since last year, as retail investors rushed to stock and real estate markets to take advantage of the low-interest borrowing.

As of end-March, the outstanding debt of South Korean households reached 1,765 trillion won (\$1.55 trillion), up 9.5 percent from a year prior. It had grown 4.6 percent in the first quarter of last year, 5.2 percent in the second quarter, 7 percent in the third quarter and 7.9 percent in the fourth quarter, according to an earlier report by BOK.

The BOK's next rate hike would mark the first such move since November 2018.

## Airbus Offers to Assemble Eurofighter in Switzerland to Win \$6.5b Deal

ZURICH (Reuters) - Airbus has offered to assemble Eurofighter aircraft in Switzerland if Bern picks it for a 6 billion Swiss franc (\$6.5 billion) defense contract, a top salesman at the consortium told a Swiss Sunday newspaper.

Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain, who make the Eurofighter, have also offered Bern sweeping political cooperation should it win the Swiss contest between two U.S. and two European fighter jets, which are to be delivered by 2025.

The Swiss cabinet is set to decide on Wednesday among the Eurofighter, the Rafale from France's Dassault, Boeing's F/A-18 Super Hornet and Lockheed Martin's F35-A Lightning II to replace ageing F/A-18 Hornets.

Swiss television reported last week that the F-35 provided the best technical and financial features in a Swiss evaluation, but the final decision was still open.

The SonntagsZeitung paper quoted Bernhard Brenner, head of sales at Airbus Defence and Space, as saying neutral Switzerland should not go by that evaluation alone.

"The economic and political elements are just as important," he said. The paper said Airbus has submitted a 700-page dossier on economic "offsets" alone, referring to side deals that funnel contract costs back to local suppliers.

The government is split among those who favor the F-35 and those who would prefer a European deal to help smooth relations with the European Union after Switzerland ditched a draft bilateral treaty after years of talks.

The defence ministers of Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain wrote to Bern last year offering not just military cooperation such as training, but also partnerships in economics, energy, science, the environment, transport, cybersecurity and infrastructure, Brenner told the paper.

France has been pushing Bern to pick the Rafale, while U.S. President Joe Biden discussed the deal with Swiss leaders while in Geneva this month to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin. The defense ministry has declined to comment on the process.





## Skocic to Continue Managing National Soccer Team

TEHRAN (MNA) – According to the president of the Iranian Football Federation, Dragan Skocic will remain at the helm of the national soccer team in the upcoming World Cup qualifiers. “The Football Federation has arrived at an agreement with Team Melli head coach till the end of next round of World Cup qualifiers,” said Shahaboddin Azizi Khadem on Monday, putting

end to rumors around appointing a new coach for the team. Showing a promising performance, the Iranian team secured four consecutive wins in Manama to advance to the next stage as Group C leader. The victories came as the team had lost to Iraq and Bahrain under the tutelage of Marc Wilmots in the first leg of qualifiers.



# European Bank Chief Eyes Transition as World Recovers



The 2015 Paris climate agreement aims to limit global temperature rises to less than two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to go down to 1.5 degrees. Experts believe this can be achieved only by the world reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Renaud-Basso is keen also to address the impact that Covid-19 has had on women and young workers. “One of the big themes coming out of the crisis is equality of opportunities and gender equalities. She pointed to how women have been “particularly affected” by lockdowns because of their increased role in the services and hospitality sectors. “One of the objectives of an institution like the EBRD is to help countries who address this challenge.” When lending to other banks, the EBRD will have “a strategy to focus the financing on women entrepreneurs or young entrepreneurs”, said Renaud-Basso. She added that the pandemic’s “impact on young people has also been very dramatic... that is something which needs to be taken into account”. The EBRD chief also wants the bank to “better support” countries’ digital transformations brought on by the pandemic. “The Covid crisis has accelerated dramatically the digitalisation of the economies and we see that everywhere,” she said. As for the bank itself, Renaud-Basso is looking at a hybrid working arrangement, whereby staff would work in the office for three days a week and two at home. But while the “remote world... has a lot of benefits, it’s not a panacea. There are also some drawbacks in terms of collective work, capacity to brainstorm”.

LONDON (Dispatches) - Odile Renaud-Basso, the first female president at Europe’s development bank, hopes to restore the EBRD’s green investment targets while addressing workplace equality as Covid-hit economies recover. Before presiding over her first EBRD annual meeting this week, in an interview with AFP, Renaud-Basso also highlighted the rapid workplace digitalisation that is affecting the bank’s regions of investment as well as her own institution. A former head of the French Treasury, in November Renaud-Basso took the helm at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development -- founded in 1991 to help former Soviet bloc countries switch to free-market economies. The lender, whose shareholders comprise almost 70 countries, has grown to invest in 38 emerging economies spanning central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. “On average, 2020 was less negative than expected” in the EBRD’s countries of investment, Renaud-Basso told AFP. This year the EBRD foresees “much better than expected” economic growth across its countries of investment, after most economies contracted last year owing to pandemic turmoil, she said. The bank is to publish its latest forecasts today. Renaud-Basso pointed to rebounds in manufacturing and industrial production, as well as the positive impact of higher commodity prices for the better-than-expected outlook. But “big uncertainties remain”, with countries reliant on tourism, notably Tunisia, hit hard by Covid-19 travel restrictions. Elsewhere, “Lebanon remains very difficult after minus 25 percent GDP in 2020, so this has a huge impact on the average”. A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since the last one resigned after a huge explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in August 2020. The EBRD last year invested a record 11 billion euros (\$13.4 billion) across emerging economies meanwhile, to help counter fallout from the coronavirus crisis. That marked a 10-percent increase from 2019. No stranger to transition projects, the EBRD is targeting 2025 as the year when more than half its investments will be in green projects. “We were very close to this objective in 2019 but with the crisis the figure has dropped” to under 30 percent last year, the bank chief said. “The objective is to increase again... (to) 40 percent in 2021.” Renaud-Basso noted that “it is quite challenging to have this level of private sector investment” in green projects compared with large public infrastructure schemes bankrolled by governments. But the EBRD is pushing ahead and is looking at being fully aligned with the goals of the Paris accord by the end of next year. “It means screening all our projects, all our activities, including (that) our investments are consistent with the Paris agreement. “This is a big step forward... This will have huge implications for our activities and the way we interact with the countries,” she insisted.

## Sri Lanka Has Little Tax Money Left After Paying State Workers



COLOMBO (Dispatches) - Sri Lanka is in the biggest economic crisis after independence from British rule and there was hardly any tax money left for other expenses after paying state workers, Trade Minister Bandula Gunewardene said. “In 2020 the revenue of the government was 1,373 billion rupees,” he told parliament. “To pay the salaries of state workers 794 billion rupees are used. To pay pensions another 258 billion rupees are spent. “To pay salaries and pensions only 1,052 billion rupees have been spent. To government’s total revenue is 1,373. It is with these taxes that state workers and paid salaries. “So to pay interest on loans interest was 980 billion rupees, subsidies and transfers were 717 billion. “When 1,052 billion rupees out of the 1,373 billion in revenues go to pay salaries and pensions of state workers only 321 billion rupees is left.” The elected ruling class gets lifetime pensions after five years in office and so do a few personal staff. Members of parliament usually appoint their wives or family members as personal secretary and similar position to get the pension. Sri Lanka started expanding the state worker cadre after the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna led a counter-revolution against privatization and spending controls, brought by two administrations from 1995 to 2004 and wanted unemployed graduates to be given jobs and lifetime pensions. JVP lambasted spending cuts as ‘rajya sevaya kappadu kireemer’ and privatization of state enterprises as ‘selling national assets’ Then opposition legislator Mangala Samaraweera, advocated the ‘mixed economy’ the favoured strategy of Eastern European fascists, and joined the JVP bandwagon. The policies, along with protectionism and import substitution became the cornerstones of Sri Lanka’s economic strategies since then.

## Iraqi Resistance...

FROM PAGE 1

The group stressed that the US bases in Iraq are “within the range of our missiles and we would avenge the blood of our martyrs”. Ahmed al-Maksousi, the commander of the 14th Brigade of Hashd al-Sha’abi, has stressed that the brigade is “fully prepared” to respond to the U.S. airstrikes. Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said the “precision airstrikes” had hit two locations in Syria and another in Iraq near the border. He said the attacks had taken place “at President Biden’s direction,” alleging that they hit “facilities” used by “multiple” groups. The spokesman specified two of the groups as “Kata’ib Hezbollah and Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada.” The targets had been selected because the alleged facilities were used by groups “that are engaged in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks against US personnel and facilities in Iraq,” he said. Anti-American sentiments have been running high in Iraq since the US assassinated Iran’s anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, and the deputy head of Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. Just two days later, Iraqi lawmakers unanimously passed a bill mandating the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq. Iraqi resistance groups have pledged to take up arms against US forces if Washington fails to comply with the parliamentary order. Ahmed al-Assadi, the spokesman of the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance at the Iraqi parliament, said in a tweet on Monday the airstrikes indicate that the US has failed to “isolate the Hashd from the government and public” after they proved that they are “an official force that defend Iraq and its people against the enemies”.

## Kenya’s Bomet...

FROM PAGE 1

The governor said Bomet being home to more than 100, 000 small scale tea growers, the direct market will help in boosting earnings, adding that due to frequent outcry over low prices there was need to look beyond Kenya Tea Development Agency and the Mombasa Auction. “The deal that we have signed and started working on from today will see farmers earn better prices and benefit from their tea,” he said. Barchok said it was encouraging to see how the trade deal has received a clean bill of health from the relevant authorities, thus enabling clearing and dispatch of the first consignment. He said after starting with 84 tons of tea, they hope to increase the sale in future, possibly to more than 100 tons by close of the year. On his part, the Iran Ambassador said concerted efforts by the county government had finally paid off. Dr. Barmaki said the deal will open other avenues for the county, noting that with production cost being the biggest headache on tea farming, the partnership will open ways on how Iran can help in reducing the cost. “This is the beginning of good things for the people of Bomet and in future we can partner to do value addition to other products and create alternatives for tea,” he said. Farmer representatives led by Mr John Terer said the direct sale of tea from Bomet will open a new avenue for local tea. Terer said the monopoly of tea by KTDA and other players should be checked. At the same time, Dr. Barchok urged KTDA to quickly iron out their wrangles and settle down for business. He said the ongoing trend was not healthy for business, adding that there was a risk of foreign buyers shying away due to the raging squabbles.

## Iran GDP...

FROM PAGE 1

The report elaborated that an expanded nuclear deal between Iran and world powers would lead to a larger economic growth for Iran as it would cause the US to lift sanctions that are not related to the JCPOA. It said under such scenario, Iran’s GDP would grow by 4.3% this year, and then by 5.9% and 5.8% in 2022 and 2023 respectively. Estimates in the report showed that a broader deal between Iran and the U.S. and other parties to the JCPOA could allow Tehran to double its foreign currency reserves to over \$140 billion by the end of 2023 so that the government would be able to shift to a fiscal surplus. That comes as Iran has categorically rejected offers for negotiating a broader deal on its nuclear and missile activities. Authorities in Tehran insist the U.S. has been responsible for the unraveling of the JCPOA, saying lifting of sanctions imposed since mid-2018 would allow Tehran to resume compliance with the deal. Iran’s central bank (the CBI) has reported back-to-back quarters of economic growth for the year to March, meaning that the country is gradually emerging from the impacts of the U.S. sanctions and the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the Middle East.

## Victims of...

FROM PAGE 1

The 28th of June is a solemn day of commemoration for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as we pause to remember the victims of that brutal attack. “I have been with the victims in Tehran and in The Hague and I share with them their pain and their feelings. On behalf of the OPCW, I wish to extend my deepest sympathies to and express my solidarity with the people of Sardasht,” he said in hisstatement. “This tragic anniversary is a momentous occasion for the international community to reunify in our shared condemnation of chemical weapons. Indeed, the universal revulsion of such attacks contributed in a very important way for an outstanding majority of countries in the world to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993,” he added. “Today, there are 193 States Parties to the Convention and over 98% of the world’s population lives under its protections. Nonetheless, in recent years the ban against chemical weapons has come under threat as we have witnessed their use in several countries,” he noted. “It is vital for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the Convention and its noble goal to rid the world of chemical weapons. The victims of Sardasht, and all others who have experienced the torment and pain caused by chemical weapons, deserve all our respect and solidarity,” he concluded.

## No Decision...

FROM PAGE 1

The February agreement was made during a visit by IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi to Tehran. According to a joint statement issued by the IAEA and the AEOI at the time, the two sides “agreed: 1. That Iran continues to implement fully and without limitation its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA as before. 2. To a temporary bilateral technical understanding, compatible with the Law, whereby the IAEA will continue with its necessary verification and monitoring activities for up to 3 months (as per technical annex). 3. To keep the technical understanding under regular review to ensure it continues to achieve its purposes.”

## Time for...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran’s top negotiator added, “It is now the other parties’ turn, and they must decide in view of the negotiations that we held thus far to reach a final conclusion on how to revive the JCPOA, so that the two sides could reach an agreement.” He noted that Iran and the remaining signatories to the JCPOA have so far held six rounds of negotiations in Vienna to that end and have “almost reached final stages.” There are still outstanding issues Iran and the P4+1 group of countries have held adequate discussions about and now the time is ripe for the other side to act.



## Ogier Wins Safari Rally

NAIROBI (Dispatches) - Sebastien Ogier extended his lead at the head of the World Rally Championship title race with victory in the Safari Rally in Kenya on Sunday.

Ogier benefitted from the early retirement of overnight leader Thierry Neuville who broke his right rear shock absorber during the day's first special stage.

Frenchman Ogier came home 21.8 seconds ahead of his Toyota teammate Takamoto Katsuta with the Estonian Ott Tanak third in his Hyundai.

LICENCE HOLDER: SOKHAN GOSTAR INSTITUTE

### Switchboard:

(+98) (21) 44253448

### Public Relations Tel:

(+98)(21) 44253450

Editorial Board: 44253449

### Public Relations Fax:

(+98)(21) 44253395

### Advertising Department:

Tel/Fax:(+98) (21) 44253335-9/44253234

### Website:

http://www.irannewsdaily.com

### E-Mail Address:

info@irannewsdaily.com

### ISSN 1024-6053

P.O. Box: 15875-8551

Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St, Golestan St.Marzdaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz

### Distributed by:

Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute

Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

## Farah Not Ending Track Career

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's multiple world and Olympic long distance champion Mo Farah will not end his stellar track career after failing to make the Olympic qualifying time for the 10,000-metre race at the Tokyo Games, his coach Gary Lough said.

Farah, 38, who won gold in 5,000m and 10,000m at the 2012 and 2016 Games, needed to clock 27 minutes, 28 seconds to be available for selection but was nearly 20 seconds too slow at the British Athletics Championships.

# Verstappen Dominates Styrian F1 GP, Hamilton

VIENNA (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen won the Styrian Grand Prix, with a dominant run from pole position for Red Bull. He beat Lewis Hamilton into second with the British driver unable to match his pace and mount a real challenge. Hamilton's Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas was in third, with Red Bull's Sergio Pérez in fourth and McLaren's Lando Norris in fifth.

Verstappen was in control throughout and did not surrender his lead at any point. His Red Bull enjoyed a clear pace advantage at the Red Bull Ring. He displayed the control and discipline Hamilton has displayed on so many occasions to execute flawlessly over the laps. In what was a fairly humdrum affair out front the two were effectively in a race of their own and once Verstappen had it in his grasp he was relentless in closing it out.

This is Verstappen's third win at the Red Bull Ring, his fourth victory this season and his second in a row, delivering another blow to Hamilton in the title fight. The Dutchman had gone into the race 12 points clear and he leaves with an 18-point advantage.

Worse still for the world champion another race follows at the same venue next week with the Austrian GP. There is little to no chance of Mercedes radically improving their form before then and if that is the case Verstappen will have gathered even more momentum for his title challenge. Red Bull have also further increased their advantage in the constructors' championship, now leading Mercedes by 40 points.

Verstappen's 14th win is further consolidation of what is by far the most successful season of his career. He has three second places to match the four wins and was on for another victory in Baku until a tyre blowout snuffed his chances. He now has one more victory than Hamilton who has not taken a win since the Spanish GP and has finished seventh, 15th, second and now second again in the last four meetings. He has not been under pressure this intense since Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari opened 2017 and 2018 with similar vigour.

Verstappen held his lead from Hamilton on the short run uphill into turn one as Norris and Pérez vied for third with Norris losing then regaining his place. Hamilton reported



his front right tyre had been hit by debris, which he believed had come off Verstappen's car.

There appeared to be no damage however and Verstappen and Hamilton were swiftly in a race of their own. Pérez made the pass stick on Norris on lap 10, while almost three seconds separated the two leaders with 11 seconds back to Pérez, whom Bottas had followed through into fourth.

Peter Bonnington, his race engineer, had admitted by lap 55 that they were helpless against the Red Bull. "What should I do?" asked Hamilton on closing the eight-second gap. "Options are just battling it out on the tyre degradation," conceded Bono of their only hope that Verstappen's rubber would fade. Hamilton was left enquiring as to the possibility of rain but there were no crumbs of comfort from the clouds ringing the Styrian mountains.

Mercedes pitted Hamilton late to go for the fastest lap, which he duly took, the best they could manage before Verstappen's rubber showed no weakness and he took the flag after an exemplary run to win, describing the car as "on fire today". Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc were sixth and seventh for Ferrari. Lance Stroll finished in eighth for Aston Martin, Fernando Alonso in ninth for Alpine and Yuki Tsunoda in 10th for AlphaTauri.

## Suns Hold on To Edge Clippers, Take 3-1 Series Lead

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Devin Booker scored 25 points and Chris Paul made several clutch free throws in the waning moments as the Phoenix Suns held for a 84-80 win over Los Angeles, putting the Clippers on the brink of elimination from the NBA playoffs.

The Suns led wire-to-wire but it was far from easy as they led by as many as 14 points in the third but saw that dwindle to just one point in the fourth when both teams struggled to score combining for just 29 points in the quarter.

But Paul vowed to be better in game four and he was, scoring 18 points, dishing out seven assists and making five free throws in the final 10 seconds at Staples Center as the Suns seized a commanding 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals.

"We still got a ways to go but it felt good to get one here," Paul said. "This was a tough environment. We are going home."

Deandre Ayton finished with 19 points and 22 rebounds and Mikal Bridges chipped in six points and 13 rebounds for the Suns who are trying to reach their first NBA finals since 1993.

Game five is today in Phoenix.

Paul George led the Clippers with 23 points and 16 rebounds while Reggie Jackson had 20 points and Ivica Zubac finished with 13 points and 14 rebounds.

Booker was eight of 22 from the field and zero of five from three point range as he had to adjust to playing with a plastic face guard to protect a broken nose he suffered in a collision with Clippers guard Patrick Beverley in game two.

"I believe in this team," Booker said. "It was a close one but we came out with the win."

"We rely on our defense. To hold a team like that to 80 points on their home court is impressive."

## Williams Joins Nadal in Missing Tokyo Olympics



LONDON (AFP) - Serena Williams said Sunday that she will not compete at the Tokyo Olympics next month, joining fellow Grand Slam legend Rafael Nadal in withdrawing from the Games.

The 39-year-old American revealed her decision at her pre-Wimbledon press conference. "I'm actually not on the Olympic list, so... Not that I'm aware of. If so, then I shouldn't be on it," she said.

She refused to divulge the reasons for her decision.

However, a ban on foreign fans as well as family members at the Olympics would have meant Williams being separated from her daughter Alexis Olympia.

The Olympics have already been delayed by a year and organisers have been forced to introduce strict measures to fight Covid-19.

"There's a lot of reasons that I made my Olympic decision," she said.

"I don't feel like going into them today. Maybe another day. Sorry."

Williams is the joint most successful Olympian in tennis history in terms of gold medals alongside sister Venus having won one gold medal each in singles and three in doubles.

Venus edges the medal count slightly as she also won a silver in mixed doubles in 2016 in Rio.

## Belgium Oust Portugal, Ronaldo From Euro 2020

SEVILLA (Dispatches) - A rocket from Thorgan Hazard knocked reigning champions Portugal out of Euro 2020 on Sunday and earned Belgium a blockbuster quarter-final with Italy.

Hazard's swerving shot before half-time sealed a 1-0 win for Belgium and settled a scrappy contest in Seville that never really lived up to its billing as the stand-out tie of the last 16.

But it could prove a statement victory for Belgium, whose chief concern now will be the fitness of Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard, who both hobbled off injured and will undergo scans on Monday. De Bruyne suffered an ankle injury while coach Roberto Martinez said Hazard's problem was "more of a muscle feeling".

Cristiano Ronaldo tested Thibaut Courtois with a dipping free-kick in the first half but the 36-year-old neither broke the international goals record nor added to his five for the tournament.

Raphael Guerreiro went closest to a late equaliser when his shot came back off the post, one of 29 shots Portugal had, six of them on target.

But before the late rally, Belgium were the braver, more fluid team and Martinez hailed his side's fighting spirit to hold on.

"We showed our talent in the first half and in the second half we showed an aspect that wasn't there two or three years ago," said Martinez. "This is what a winning team needs."

For all the superstar names on the pitch, it was Eden Hazard's less heralded brother Thorgan who proved decisive, the Borussia Dortmund winger who Eden once said had even more talent than him.

"In these games if you have a chance you have to have a go," Thorgan said. "It went in, with a bit of luck and it was the goal that got us through. It's a dream for me."



## Tsitsipas Hails Djokovic as One of the Greatest

LONDON (Dispatches) - Stefanos Tsitsipas hailed Novak Djokovic as "one of the greatest players tennis has seen" ahead of the Serb's assault on a sixth Wimbledon title and record-equalling 20th Grand Slam crown.

World number four Tsitsipas enjoyed and then endured a close-up view of Djokovic's powers when he gave up a two sets lead to lose the final of the French Open two weeks ago.

Victory in Paris allowed Djokovic to become the first man in over half a century to win all four majors twice.

Now, with the 2021 Australian and French Open titles under his belt, he is halfway to becoming only the third man, and first since Rod Laver in 1969, to complete a calendar Grand Slam.

"He's a complete player. He has the potential to do it," said Tsitsipas on Sunday.

"Obviously we're there to try and kind of put a stop to that dream of his. It's going to be difficult. "Me personally, I find it very challenging playing against him. I think he's one of the greatest players tennis has seen."

Tsitsipas is seen as a Wimbledon champion-in-waiting should Djokovic and eight-time winner Roger Federer falter. However, his record on grass remains mediocre although that can be attributed to lack of exposure more than any particular weaknesses in his game.

So far the 22-year-old has played just 15 matches on grass with a win-loss record of 8-7.

By comparison, Djokovic is 95-18 and fellow veteran Federer is 188-28.

Tsitsipas, the first Greek player ever to reach a Grand Slam final, made the last 16 at Wimbledon in 2018 but lost to Italy's Thomas Fabbiano in the first round 12 months later. Wimbledon was cancelled last year due to the pandemic.

