

**Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 84,127 With 142 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours**

# IRAN NEWS

**President of South Korea Moom Jae-in in a Message to the Iranian President-Elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi Congratulated Him on His Victory in Election and Wished Him Success**

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**Tehran Slams UN for Not Including Israel, Saudi Arabia In Child Killers Blacklist**

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has criticized the United Nations for failing to include Israel and Saudi Arabia in its blacklist of parties violating minors' rights during conflicts, calling on the world body to adopt a non-discriminatory approach in naming and shaming child-killer regimes.

Iran's UN Ambassador Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks in an address to the Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict on Monday, after UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres presented his annual report.

The report covers countries and organizations under the UN's Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, which are listed as grave violators in the report's annexes.

Recruitment of child soldiers, attacks on schools and hospitals, killing and maiming, sexual assault and abduction of children could trigger inclusion in the annex, which could result in Security Council sanctions.

The occupying regime in Tel Aviv has never been listed, while the Saudi-led military coalition waging bloody war on Yemen was removed from the list in 2020, several years after it was first named and shamed for killing and injuring Yemeni kids. **See Page 7**

**Arrangements Made For Supply of Basic Commodities**

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The outgoing president of Iran said activities by his administration have eased the burden on his successor in the provision of basic commodities.

President Hassan Rouhani said at an economic meeting on Tuesday that his administration has made all arrangements with realistic evaluations to ensure a steady supply of basic commodities despite the economic problems caused by the coronavirus restrictions, rise in the global prices, and reduced production in the wake of drought.

In spite of all troubles, especially the obstacles posed by the COVID outbreak and the economic war, the administration will not allow its successor to face any problem in the provision of basic commodities at the beginning of its tenure, he pledged. **See Page 7**

**Iran to Improve Its Chemical Defense Power**



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Head of Iran's Passive Defense Organization Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali called for affiliated Iranian organizations to do their best for improving the country's chemical defense power.

He made the remarks addressing the Fourth National Conference on Chemical Defense held simultaneous with the chemical attack on Sardasht and Halabja.

"If those involved in the chemical bombing of Sardasht and Halabja had been sentenced in courts, we would have not been witnessing the use of chemical weapons by countries today," he said.

He added that although human rights and respect for human life are discussed across the world, chemical weapons are unfortunately used to secure the interests of the arrogant power. "This proves that the international conventions have no deterrent power," Jalali underscored.

He criticized the westerners for their support for use of chemical weapons across the globe, despite the slogans for the protection of human rights.

"It is very important to produce equipment that protects us against chemical threats, and we need to have strong industries in this field," he said.

On June 28, 1987, when the Iraqi imposed war against Iran was its peak, the Saddam regime's launched chemical weapons on Sardasht, northwest Iran, which can be categorized as one of the most adverse humanitarian crimes after the First World War.

As a result of this war crime, some 130 out of 12,000 people residing in Sardasht lost their lives while more than 8,000 others suffered injuries. Although 33 years have passed since the attack, people are still suffering from its consequences.

Concurrent with the Day of Fight against Chemical and Microbial Weapons, the Fourth National Conference on Chemical Defense is underway at the initiative of Iranian Passive Defense Organization and in cooperation with Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences.

The Conference is hosting a group of university professors and researchers with a focus on country's achievements made in managing the treatment of chemical war veterans and with the slogan of "Chemical Defense, Today's Strategy, Tomorrow's Immunity". The event is being held under health protocols and guidelines due to the spread of coronavirus pandemic.

**All Iraqi Military Institutions to Support Resistance**

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq's Harakat al-Nujaba movement, which is part of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi, has called on all Iraqi institutions to throw their weight behind the resistance to restore the country's sovereignty.

Nujaba Secretary General Sheikh Akram al-Ka'abi issued the call on Tuesday, one day after U.S. warplanes targeted three locations belonging to Hashd al-Sha'abi in the border town of al-Qa'im in Iraq's western Anbar Province.

The U.S. strike killed four Iraqi fighters who were performing their duties of preventing the infiltration of Daesh terrorists from Syria into Iraq.

Ka'abi "invited all the military institutions to support the resistance in restoring the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and promised the evil occupiers that military resistance would have the final say on the battlefield and make Iraq proud."

He also noted that the U.S. targeting of the 14th Hashd al-Sha'abi Brigade "proved that the [current] foolish U.S. government is following in the footsteps of the former ignorant administration."

"The evil occupiers should know that martyrdom is our path and we have performed the ablation of martyrdom in our burial shrouds for the great battle," Ka'abi said, stressing that the political strategy seeking the expulsion of U.S. occupation forces has failed.

"Until the complete liberation of Iraq from your evil (presence), we will not retreat, we will not give up and we will respond twofold to any attack," he warned the Americans. The Nujaba chief further thanked the officials in charge of Iraqi checkpoints for facilitating the passage of the resistance fighters.

He also criticized the mercenaries who slander about pro-resistance individuals and institutions, saying, "Their prosecution will be near and heavy, and sooner or later they will be tried for their great crimes and treachery."

Meanwhile, the Iraqi News Agency quoted a spokesman for the presidency as saying that "the escalation is condemned and represents a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and national security and undermines the existing national efforts to achieve and strengthen security and stability." **See Page 7**

**ViewPoint**

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

**Sardasht, Symbol of West's Support of Crime Against Humanity**

On Monday, Iran marked the 34th anniversary of a chemical attack on the city of Sardasht by Western-backed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and once again it was proved to the world how the West and supporters of the so-called human rights are silent against crimes of any regime that they support.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a message marked the day in a message where he said the survivors of the attack fell victim to the Western countries' inhumane policies twice.

In the message, 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. **See Page 7**

**Bushehr Power Plant Issues Not to Affect Vienna Talks**

TEHRAN (MNA) - Russian Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna said that issues related to the financial resources of the Bushehr Power Plant have no effect on the process of Vienna talks to revive JCPOA.

Rejecting the recent report of the British newspaper 'The Independent', Mikhail Ulyanov in an interview with Russian Sputnik News Agency said that issues related to the financial resources of the Bushehr Power Plant have no effect on the process of Vienna negotiations to revive the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA).

'The Independent' recently quoted a Russian source as saying that disputes between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia over the payment of expenses of the Bushehr Power Plant would likely affect the Vienna negotiations.

In this regard, Ulyanov said that such speculations are not true, and if there is a problem in the relations between economic institutions, it cannot affect the process of the Vienna talks to revive the JCPOA. The Bushehr facility sits 17 kilometers southeast of the city of Bushehr along the Persian Gulf coast in southwestern Iran. The power plant started operating in 2011 and reached its full capacity the following year.

In 2014, Russia signed a cooperation contract with Iran to help build the second and third Bushehr reactors, which are scheduled for launch in 2024 and 2026, respectively.

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## Japan Extradites 3 Iranian Prisoners

TEHRAN (MNA) – Japan handed over three Iranian prisoners to the Islamic Republic on Tuesday.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tokyo informed in a tweet that the first group of Iranian prisoners have been handed over to the country to serve their sentences in Iran.

An agreement on the transfer of prisoners between Iran and Japan has been implemented, accordingly.

“Thanks to the cooperation of the Ministry of Justice and the Consular Deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice of Japan, also due to the efforts and follow-up measure taken by Iranian Embassy in Tokyo, this morning (Tuesday) three Iranian prisoner left Japan for Tehran.”

## Iran Relation With IAEA to Be Based Solely on Safeguards

**TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Government Spokesman said that Iran’s relation with the IAEA will be based solely on safeguards if this agreement is not renewed, and Iran will not make any further commitments.**

Enemies of Iran launched large-scale offensive to assassinate 3 fundamental values of nation “In the last four decades and after the Islamic Revolution, the enemies of Iran have launched a large-scale offensive to assassinate the three fundamental values of justice, security and freedom of our nation,” said Ali Rabiei in his weekly press conference on Tuesday.

“The assassination of Martyr Mohammad Beheshti [Iranian jurist, philosopher, cleric and politician who was assassinated on 28 June 1981] was a symbol of the assassination of justice. The chemical bombing of Sardasht [On June 28, 1987, when the Iraqi imposed war against Iran was its peak, the Saddam regime’s launched chemical weapons on Sardasht, northwest Iran] was a symbol of security assassination, which, of course, was not limited to it, and continued with the support of terrorist groups inside and outside Iran against the security of this border and region. Full-blown economic sanctions are a symbol of the assassination of freedom,” he added.

Referring to the anniversary of the chemical bombing of Sardasht by Saddam Hussein, he said, “The anniversary of the tragic incident of the chemical bombing of Sardasht, which has been named the day of the Combating Chemical and Biological Weapons, is an opportunity to emphasize Iran’s victimization in the use of weapons of mass destruction and to clarify the fact why the Islamic Republic of Iran resolutely opposed to the builds, stores and uses of this type of weapons.”

“Today, those Western nations that allowed the perpetrators of the assassination of Martyr Beheshti to take refuge in their countries and supported Saddam Hussein and equipped him with chemical weapons, and in recent years, imposed inhumane sanctions against Iranians, must apologize to the Iranian people and be held accountable for these crimes,” the Iranian official noted. “However, today we see that not only are they not remorseful, but they still insist on continuing economic sanctions and unjustly harassing our people.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the Vienna talks on reviving the JCPOA, saying, “Our views are very clear to all parties, and we are aware of their positions on disputes. We have made it clear to all parties that any sanctions that violate or impede the full implementation of the JCPOA should be lifted. We also know what steps we should take if the United States takes this step and all parties reaffirm their commitment to the JCPOA.”

“As for how the Vienna talks will continue, we will have to wait for the outcome of the meetings to become clearer,” the spokesperson added, saying, “The important thing is that the talks have reached a point where all parties have



to make their own decisions. We are waiting for the other parties, including the United States, to announce their political decisions so that we can talk more clearly about the next round of talks.”

During his press conference, Rabiei also pointed to the recent developments in Afghanistan, saying, “We assure the government and people of Afghanistan that the Islamic Republic of Iran will stand by them. In good faith, we call on all ethnic groups, parties and political forces in Afghanistan to remain united and to be committed to peaceful solutions for removing their differences by rejecting any foreign interference.”

“The preservation of the territorial integrity of Afghanistan, national unity and respect for the rights of minorities and the achievements that the Afghan people have made over the past two decades are important for Iran,” he noted, emphasizing that genuine intra-Afghan dialogue is the only lasting solution to the Afghan problem.

“The Taliban are part of Afghanistan and part of Afghanistan’s future solution; What is important for us is the formation of an inclusive government with the presence of all Afghan groups and the achievement of a peaceful and lasting solution in this country,” the Iranian official highlighted. “To achieve these goals, as well as the importance of cultural, historical and geographical ties between Afghanistan and Iran, we will continue our mission to communicate with the government of this country and provide any necessary assistance.”

Answering a question about Iran-IAEA relations if this agreement is not renewed, Rabiei said, “Previously, the agreement between Iran and the IAEA was renewed due to the positive atmosphere and promising prospects for reaching an agreement.”

“We are considering the need and possibility of extending the agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and we will consider all options in this regard. Iran’s relation with the IAEA will be based solely on safeguards if this agreement is not renewed, and the Islamic Republic of Iran will not make any further commitments,” he added.

“The law of the parliament regarding the obligations and duties of the government is quite clear and so far it has moved in the same direction. No decision has yet been made on the subject of the quarterly agreement with the Agency and how it will continue or not, and information will be provided as soon as a decision is made,” the spokesman said.

## Iran Calls on UN to Probe Into Genocide in Canada

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Monday that Iran and other world countries are calling on the United Nations to investigate a “historical crime and a genocide” which has recently been uncovered in Canada.

Khatibzadeh made the remarks speaking during his weekly press conference in reference to the discovering of the remains of 750 people, mainly indigenous children, at the site of a former boarding school in Canada.

Knowing its shameful record in violating the rights of the indigenous people, Canada is still trying to depict itself as a human rights advocate through sheer lies and deceptive shows, the spokesman said.

The call of Iran and other world countries on the UN to probe into the case is due to the fact that Canadian government has proved that it will not impartially deal with this tragic incident, he added.

He said that the Canadian government tries to put the blame on the church is that it has not yet accepted its responsibility and will not take an action to remove the concerns of the international community and the indigenous people in Canada.

## Iranian, French Navy Chiefs Meet on Reunion Island

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Navy commanders of Iran and France held talks on the sidelines of a meeting of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) on the Reunion Island, a French department in the Indian Ocean.

Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi, who has traveled to Reunion Island to take part in the 7th edition of IONS, received an official welcome from Chief of Staff of the French Navy Amiral Pierre Vandier upon arrival on the island, located in the Indian Ocean near Madagascar, southeast of Africa.

In a short conversation with the commander of Navy of France, which hosts the conference, the Iranian Navy chief

said the IONS provides an opportunity for consultations, synergy, and proposal of constructive ideas.

Rear Admiral Khanzadi also pointed to the compilation of the first ‘IONS tactical book’ by the Iranian Navy, describing it as a major and effective move in facilitating various naval operations for the navies of IONS members.

Iran is a permanent member of IONS and has held its 3-year presidency since 2018.

The IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime cooperation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues.

## Swiss Envoy Bid Farewell to Zarif

TEHRAN (MNA) – The outgoing ambassador of Switzerland in Iran, met with the Iranian Foreign Minister on Tuesday.

At the end of his mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Markus Leitner, ambassador of Switzerland met with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to bid farewell.

The Swiss envoy to Tehran had presented a copy of his credentials to Zarif in 2017.



## Tehran, Moscow Can Strengthen Economic Cooperation Through Regions

MOSCOW (IP)– Iran’s Ambassador to Moscow spoke about the prospects for building mutually beneficial economic ties between the regions of the Islamic Republic and Russia, the province of Mazandaran and the Volgograd region, on Monday.

According to Tass, Kazem Jalali discussed the development of relations in various spheres, particularly in industry, agriculture with the governor of the region Andrei Bocharov. “It seems to me that one of the best ways for economic development is interregional cooperation. Our regions are very close, and this can contribute to the development of economic interaction,” the Iranian ambassador told reporters on Monday.

According to him, the province of Mazandaran and the Volgograd region can become two major hubs for the two states in terms of exports and imports. The Volgograd region is geographically located in a vital place and can transit its goods through Iran to the Middle East.

Jalali stressed that, in general, constructive relations had been built between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia in various directions - in politics, military cooperation, security, defense, adding: “The will of our two leaders is that we must strengthen our economic cooperation.”

The first steps to develop bilateral cooperation between the Volgograd region and Iran were made in 2015. Relations reached a new level thanks to the subject’s participation in the permanent Russian-Iranian commission on trade and economic cooperation, the Russian-Iranian inter-parliamentary commission.

Now there is a bilateral memorandum between the Volgograd Region and the province of Mazandaran on the implementation of international and foreign economic relations.

## Iran, Cuba Stress Developing Parliamentary Ties

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian and Cuban lawmakers underlined reinforcing bilateral relations between Tehran and Havana.

Representatives of Iran and Cuba parliaments in an online meeting reviewed developing bilateral relations in international fields like fighting U.S. sanctions, boosting economic ties, fighting COVID19 and producing vaccine.

Both sides stressed continuation of parliamentary relations. They also criticized U.S. cruel sanctions against two nations and slammed 240 sanctions imposed by Washington against Havana.

## ISESCO Plays Key Role to Strengthen Friendship Among Islamic States

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - The Secretary-General of the National Commission for the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in Iran stated that the organization plays an integral role in strengthening friendship among Islamic countries.

Mitra Teymouri said that Iran acts under the supervision of the ISESCO National Commission.

Teymouri noted that every year, in cooperation with ISESCO and other national organizations, the ISESCO National Commission in Iran organizes excellent programs in education, science, and culture fields.

“The Secretary-General of the ISESCO National Commission in Iran stated that the ISESCO International Training Webinar is unique on its own, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the forerunner of it,” she said.

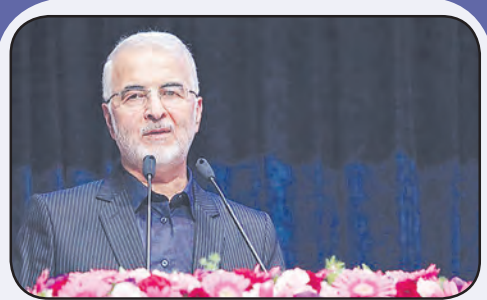
Emphasizing that the ISESCO National Commission in Iran organizes various scientific programs in multiple committees, she added that different Islamic countries participated in the ISESCO International Training Webinar to get benefits. ISESCO International Training Webinar was held for two days (June 28 and 29, 2021) by the ISESCO National Commission in Iran.

## Handwoven Carpet Exports Up 80% in Current Year

TEHRAN (MNA) – The Director of Iran National Carpet Center (INCC) said that country’s export of handwoven carpet in the first two months of the current year (from March 21 to May 21) registered an eighty percent hike in terms of value.

Iran’s export of handwoven carpets in the first two months of the current year (started March 21, 2021) recorded an 84.6 and 275 percent growth in terms of value and weight respectively as compared to the last year’s corresponding period, said Farahnaz Rafe on Tuesday.

### All Pillars of the Islamic Republic Unite For Fighting Narcotics



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Secretary of Iran Drug Control Headquarters Brigadier General Eskandar Momeni said on Tuesday that all pillars of the Islamic Republic have united for combating narcotics and drugs.

General Momeni made the remarks in a meeting held on the occasion of the June 26, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, with participation of diplomats, envoys, and representatives from UN offices in Tehran.

In the meeting, General Momeni elaborated on Iran’s measures taken against the issue.

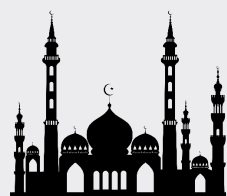
During the past Iranian year (ending on March 20), Iran could seize 1,200 tons of different types of drugs and narcotics; and this high volume of seizure indicates decrease in their entry to Europe, Momeni said.

In the last year, nine Iranian forces were killed and tens of others were wounded at anti-narcotic operations, he added.

The Islamic Republic strongly fights against drug-trafficking as from its eye, there is no difference between an Iranian youth and a Western one, he noted.

Although fight against drug trafficking activities has cost Iran a lot, the country has been strongly taking anti-narcotic measures over the past thirty years, according to police officials.





## PRAYER TIME

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

152. Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you when ye with His permission were about to annihilate your enemy, until ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the booty) which ye covet. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did He divert you from your foes in order to test you but He forgave you: For Allah is full of grace to those who believe.  
Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran (152)

## Foreign Hoteliers Reluctant to Invest in Iran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN – Head of Iran Hoteliers Association says foreign hoteliers mostly seek selling their brands in Iran rather than investment in Iran for construction of hotels.**

Mr. Jamshid Hamzehzadeh said that the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt the tourism sector and especially hotel business in the country, adding that with the start of the summer and summer travels, it seems the condition gets better for the hoteliers. He added that hotels in the northern and western parts of the country are now active and they have better condition nowadays in terms of occupancy rate comparing to hotels in other parts of the country, admitting that the number of domestic travels is increasing because there is few foreign tourists.

He reiterated that as long as the COVID-19 is not contained, the country will face decline or sometimes rise in the number of occupancy rate of the hotels.

Hamzehzadeh stated that if the occupancy rate was 100 percent months ago, it is currently around 15 percent and this rate is around 30 percent in the northern provinces and West and East Azarbaijan provinces.

He added that the condition of hotels in Mashhad is getting better but some of the hotels have decided voluntarily to shut down their businesses until the condition for their businesses improve.

He then pointed to the interest of Iranian investors for investment in construction of hotel, adding that these investors look to the future and they hope with the containment of COVID-19, the condition would get better and for this reason the number of domestic investors in this business is on the rise.

Hamzehzadeh went on to say that foreign hoteliers in Iran mostly tend to sell their



brands and are reluctant for investment, and Iranian hoteliers do not welcome this idea because they have to pay a whopping cost for using the brand. He reiterated that by the way foreign tourists in Iran do not pay attention to the brands of hotels and on the other hand, buying the foreign brands faces several problems in the country like transfer of money.

On the amount of damages inflicted on the hotels in the country due to the pandemic, he said that it is estimated hotel industry in the country has suffered some 18,200b tomans of loss.

He went on to say that from September 23, the rate of room of hotels will increase and this rise in the rate will be between 10 to 25 percent and each hotel based on the demand and supply will announce its rate and some hotels even may not hike the price.

He also criticized the government and said the tourism industry is in its worst condition and the government has not fulfilled its promises regarding this industry.

He expressed hope that president-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi would pick his tourism minister from the related body of this industry.

## Iran Must Retake Its Share of World Oil Market

TEHRAN (IP) - Iran's first vice president said the country should regain its share of the global oil market by increasing investment, using new technologies, and domestic capacity.

In a meeting of the Energy High Council, Eshaq Jahangiri said that Iran always had serious rivals in the region. Yet, it also had always influenced the regional equations through its capacities.

Pointing to Iran's military deterrence against the conspiracies, Jahangiri noted: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always managed to be influential in the region through the past decades and increased its power against rivals, but at the same time we have not been able to use Iran's capacity and geographical situation."

He said that Iran's share of the global oil production was 10 percent. Yet, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, it decreased to 4 percent due to some internal issues and, of course, enemies' conspiracies, so some countries took advantage of the opportunity and added to their oil production.

Regretting that today the global economy was no longer impacted by Iran's exit from the world's oil market, he emphasized: "It's our national duty to increase investment, use new technologies, and benefit domestic capacities to retake the share of Iran from the global markets."

## 70 Utility Projects Inaugurated in 4 Month

TEHRAN (IP) - Energy minister said that 70 utility projects valued at 15700 billion Toman were put into operation since the beginning of the Iranian year.



Speaking at the opening ceremony of five projects in three provinces of Iran, Reza Ardekanian added that 290 projects with the credit of 64000 billion Toman would be put in operation until the end of the year as planned.

"In the last 93 months, 93 sewage water treatments were inaugurated, which is a remarkable record worldwide," Ardekanian highlighted.

5 utility projects were put into operation in 3 provinces of Iran on Tuesday through video conferencing.

Five water and electricity projects with a credit of 432 billion were put into operation in the three provinces of Hamedan, Zanjan, and Golestan, in the presence of the minister of energy and the thirteenth week of the #every\_week\_of\_Iran\_A\_B.

Energy minister, Reza Ardekanian operated three out of five ready-to-open projects, three electric and water projects in Hamadan province, and two water projects in Zanjan and Golestan provinces. Also, the executive operation of two projects to develop with a credit of 300 billion tomans in Hamadan province began.

In Hamadan province, the sludge phase of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Ten Onion Wastewater Treatment Plant, and two projects to increase and optimize the electricity projects of Hamadan and Malayer are operating in a project with a credit of 407 billion Tomans were put into operation.

The wastewater treatment plant of Nasirabad village opened with a credit of 10 billion Tomans by covering 3,200 people in Khorramdareh city of Zanjan province.

Water supply to 10 villages of Golestan province put into operation, covering 2438 households and a population of 8,666 people with a credit of 15 billion Tomans.

## Second Iran-Armenia Business Meeting Kicks Off in Yerevan



TEHRAN (IFP) - The second business meeting of Iranian and Armenian high-tech companies started in Yerevan on Tuesday.

A delegation of 50 Iranian knowledge-based companies is attending the event with the aim of developing the global market of Iranian-made products and services.

The representatives of the Iranian companies will take part in business-to-business meetings with their Armenian counterparts in order to facilitate a shared business environment between the two countries, helping the export of Iranian knowledge-based products and services to the Eurasian market.

The Armenian market has a great capacity for accepting Iranian knowledge-based and creative companies, and business exchanges with the country can play an effective role in the development of bilateral relations.

Earlier this year, a delegation of Iranian high-tech companies attended the first B2B meeting of Iran and Armenia, and the ongoing event is the second of its kind which is held with the purpose of promoting Tehran-Yerevan collaborations.

The event includes an expert meeting between Iranian companies and 120 Armenian firms operating in different high-tech fields, an expert meeting between 15 Iranian companies and 40 Armenian firms working in the ICT field, and a visit to Armenia's technology centers and infrastructure.

Some eight million Armenian expatriates live in European countries, the U.S. and Canada, and that

provides an ample opportunity and capacity for the implementation of these countries' technology projects. However, Armenia is not able to do all these projects by itself, and thus tries to use the capacity of other countries in this regard.

A team of Iranian IT companies, especially those working in the field of computer programming, has been formed in the country to expedite the export of Iranian knowledge-based products and services to Armenia and increase the two countries' joint products.

The companies attending this event operate in the field of information and communication technologies, advanced materials, industrial machinery and equipment, medical equipment, etc.

In this event, 50 knowledge-based and creative companies will accompany Dr. Mahdi Eliasi, the deputy head for policy and development at the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

The Armenian parties participating in the meeting include Economy Minister Vahan Kerobyan, Deputy Economy Minister Narek Teryan, the Representative of the Industrial Organization of Armenia, and the Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry.

### Major Automakers Manufacture 203,500 Vehicles in a Quarter

TEHRAN (MNA) - Three major Iranian carmakers, namely Iran Khodro Company (IKCO), SAIPA Group, and Pars Khodro, manufactured 203,529 vehicles during the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- June 21), the data released by Codal website showed.

According to the data, the production by the mentioned companies was just one percent more than that of the last year's first quarter in which the output stood at 203,334.

During the said three months, IKCO manufactured 97,230 vehicles, registering a slight rise of just 0.57 percent compared to the same period last year.

SAIPA manufactured 81,669 vehicles in the mentioned period, 2.7 percent more than the output in the first quarter of the previous year.

Pars Khodro also manufactured 24,630 vehicles in the period under review, 9.23 percent lower than the figure for the same time span of the past year.

Three mentioned major Iranian carmakers, IKCO, SAIPA, and Pars Khodro, had manufactured 900,714 vehicles in the previous year (ended on March 20), which was 4.3 percent more than the figure of its preceding year.

According to Codal data, during the past year, IKCO manufactured 480,338 vehicles, which was 21.9 percent more than the output in its preceding year, which were 393,812 vehicles.

SAIPA manufactured 317,321 vehicles, with a 12.6-percent fall from 363,379 vehicles manufactured in 1398. And Pars Khodro manufactured 103,055 vehicles in the past year, showing a 2.8-percent drop from the output of its previous year, which was 106,072 vehicles.

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's programs for the current Iranian calendar year show that the manufacturing of 1.2 million cars has been put on the agenda. According to the Industry Ministry data, since Iranian automakers had produced 984,200 such vehicles in the previous calendar year, the country's car output is planned to increase by over 21 percent in the current year.

### In the name of God SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT

**ESCO** Brief Notice of International Tender No. 9904016  
Esfahan Steel Company

It is hereby respectfully notified that Esfahan Steel Co.

intends to purchase 1125 Items Bearing through international two-stage Tender. Prospective bidders specialized and experienced in the said area may visit Esfahan Steel Co.'s Website at [www.esfahansteel.ir](http://www.esfahansteel.ir) – Tenders & Bids – Suppliers Comprehensive System to get the tender documents and participate in the tender no later than 17.07.2021 and submit their offer not later than 18.07.2021.

Public Relation of Esfahan Steel Co.

## Gol-e Narges Gallery Hosting "Color and Life" Exhibition

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The visual arts exhibition of "Color and Life" in the field of painting in various styles and techniques was inaugurated on Tuesday by deputy governor of Tehran Dr. Sorouri with the Head of art Section of Tehran Province's Department of the Islamic Guidance and Culture in presence.

This exhibition alphabetically covers painting works from artists like Saeedeh Arian, Banafsheh Ahmadzadeh, Parvin Hosseinzadeh Tabrizi, Hamid Jaafari Shakib, Negar Jahangiri Morafah, Farhang Atefi, Behdad Najafi and Hassan Norouznia.

The curator of the exhibition Behdad Najafi Asadollahi who is also one of the participant artists in the exhibition said the goal behind holding the exhibition is to promote art and art activities in the society, and also gathering various styles, thoughts and art contents under a roof with an eye on exchange of ideas and growth of idea-manufacturing and creativity among the artists and art-lovers.

Meanwhile the communication official of the exhibition Ms. Maryam Vahidnia expressed her satisfaction for the good turnout of artists and their active participations in the exhibition with their selected works and called on enthusiasts to visit the exhibition at the gallery with observing sanitary protocols.

The exhibition is open to the public visit from 12 to 20 hrs from June 29 till July 2 at the Gol-e Narges Gallery of Tehran's Department of the Islamic Guidance and Culture at Ostad Motahhari St.





## Death Toll Rises to 10 in Florida Building Collapse

MIAMI (Reuters) - Rescue workers pulled a 10th body from the rubble of a collapsed Florida condominium on Monday, as officials vowed to keep searching for any possible survivors five days after the 12-story building fell without warning as residents slept.

Crews were using cranes, dogs and infrared scans as they looked for any signs of life amid the ruins, hoping air pockets may have formed underneath the concrete that could be keeping some people alive.

"We're going to continue and work ceaselessly to exhaust every possible options in our search," Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava told a news briefing. "The search-and-rescue operation continues."



## Malaysia PM Announces \$36b Aid Package

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) - Malaysia Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Monday announced a 150 billion ringgit (\$36.22 billion) aid package, including cash aid and wage subsidies, a day after extending a nationwide lockdown indefinitely to tackle a stubborn COVID-19 outbreak.

Lockdown measures originally set to end on Monday would not be eased until daily reported cases fell below 4,000, the state news agency reported on Sunday, citing Muhyiddin.

On Monday, Malaysia reported 5,218 new infections, bringing total cases to 739,266, including 5,001 deaths. The latest aid package includes a fiscal injection of 10 billion ringgit from the government, Muhyiddin said in a televised address on Monday.



## U.S. Presses Allies to Repatriate IS Fighters



RPME (Dispatches) - Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday pressed US allies to bring back citizens arrested overseas for joining the Islamic State group, warning they could not be held indefinitely in Syria.

Blinken made the appeal in Rome at a meeting of an 83-member coalition on defeating the extremist network, where he and the Italian hosts called for greater attention to the jihadist threat in Africa.

About 10,000 suspected Islamic State fighters are being held in northern Syria by Western-allied Kurdish fighters, according to U.S. estimates.

"This situation is simply untenable. It just can't persist indefinitely," Blinken said.

"The United States continues to urge countries -- including coalition partners -- to repatriate, rehabilitate and, where applicable, prosecute their citizens," he said.

France and Britain, two of the closest US allies, have been holdouts against such calls which were also made by former president Donald Trump's administration. Both nations have traumatic experiences with attacks and see little incentive and plenty of political cost to bringing back radicalized citizens who are already jailed overseas.

Blinken praised Italy as one of the few Western European nations to repatriate its citizens and also hailed efforts by Central Asian nations such as Kazakhstan, which he said had brought back 600 fighters and their family members and put them in rehabilitation programs.

According to a Human Rights Watch report in March, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces are holding more than 63,000 women and children of suspected Islamic State fighters from more than 60 countries in two camps surrounded by barbed wire.

In a joint statement, the coalition voiced "grave concern" over the plight of prisoners in Syria and said it was important to find "a comprehensive and long-term solution".

Blinken said the United States was offering another \$436 million, mostly through international organizations, to care for Syrians displaced in the brutal decade-old war including by supporting Covid vaccination.

The Islamic State group has lost almost all of its territory in Syria and Iraq, where it once ran a vast self-styled caliphate marked by an extraordinary campaign of brutality against religious minorities and women.

But the extremists are exerting growing force in Africa including in the Sahel, where France is winding down a military campaign, and in Mozambique.

There was little talk of new military actions but Blinken said the coalition would put a new emphasis on Africa in efforts to cutting off financing.

"We fear that ISIS can regain strength and that is why we must not lower our guard," Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio told reporters.

## Swedish PM Resigns Following No-Confidence Vote

STOCKHOLM (Dispatches) - Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven resigned on Monday, one week after he lost a vote of no confidence, leaving it up to the speaker of parliament to begin the search for a replacement.

Lofven could have either called a snap election or resigned following the no-confidence vote last week.

He told a press conference that a snap election was "not what is best for Sweden", pointing to the difficult situation the Covid-19 pandemic posed, coupled with the fact that the next general election -- which would go ahead regardless -- is a year away.

"With that starting point, I have requested the speaker to relieve me as prime minister," Lofven said.

The Social Democrat leader -- a master of consensus for some, a dull and visionless party man for others -- had seven days after the confidence vote to contemplate his options and try and secure a parliamentary majority for a potential reforming of his government. 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.

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.

The confidence motion was filed by the far-right Sweden Democrats, after the Left Party said it was planning such a motion itself in protest against a plan to ease rent controls.

On the left, the proposal for "market rents" -- which would potentially allow landlords to freely set rents for new apartments -- is seen as being at odds with the Swedish social model and a threat to tenants' rights.

The conservative Moderate Party and the Christian Democrats were quick to back the motion, which was passed by 181 MPs in the 349-seat parliament.

Last-ditch efforts to appease the Left Party, which holds 27 seats, failed. Critics have described the constellation that joined forces against Lofven as an "unholy alliance" of parties at opposite ends of the political spectrum.

After 11 unsuccessful no confidence votes in modern Swedish political history, Lofven, who has previously distinguished himself by his ability to survive political crises, thus ended up setting an unwanted precedent.



## S. Korea to Develop Iron Dome-Style Defense System

SEOUL (Reuters) - South Korea approved plans on Monday to pursue a \$2.6-billion artillery interception system, similar to Israel's "Iron Dome", designed to protect against North Korea's arsenal of long-range guns and rockets, the defense acquisition agency said.

A large part of the area surrounding Seoul, the capital, is home to about half the population of 52 million, and lies within range of the neighbor's long-range guns and multiple rocket launchers.

Late last year the government's defense blueprint called for the development of a "Korean-style Iron Dome" that can defend Seoul and key facilities.

On Monday a committee presided over by Defense Minister Suh Wook approved the project, expected to be completed around 2035 at a cost of 2.89 trillion won (\$2.6 billion), the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) said in a statement.

"Through this project, it is expected that the ability to respond to the threat of enemy long-range artillery will be strengthened, as well as securing domestic technology and creating domestic jobs," it said.

The Ministry of National Defense has said while existing weapons such as the Patriot and THAAD missile defense systems are designed to target the North's increasingly capable short-range ballistic missiles, the new system aims to protect against long-range artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

Pyongyang does not comment on its military deployment, but experts believe most of North Korea's 13,600 guns and multiple rocket launchers are positioned near the border, about 40 km (25 miles) distant from Seoul.



## Ukraine, U.S. Launch Black Sea Drills Despite Russian Protest

KIEV (Dispatches) - Ukraine and the United States have launched a military exercise involving more than 30 countries in the Black Sea and southern Ukraine, despite Russian calls to cancel the drills.

The Sea Breeze 2021 maneuvers that began on Monday and will last for two weeks are set to involve about 30 warships and 40 aircraft from US and its NATO allies and Ukraine. US destroyer Ross has arrived in the Ukrainian port of Odessa for the drills.

U.S. Navy Capt. Kyle Gantt said that the large number of participants in the exercise reflects a shared commitment to ensuring free access to international waters.

The drills follow a rise in tensions between NATO and Moscow, which said last week it had fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of a British warship to chase it out of Black Sea waters off the coast of Crimea. The United Kingdom rejected Russia's account of the incident.

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and says it is Russian territory, but the peninsula is internationally recognized as part of Ukraine.

Britain insisted its HMS Defender had been making a routine journey through an internationally recognized travel lane and remained in Ukrainian waters near Crimea.

Russia's embassy in Washington called last week for the latest exercises to be cancelled, and the Russian defense ministry said it would react if necessary to protect its own national security. Ukraine says the main goal is to gain experience in joint actions during multinational peacekeeping and security operations.

Relations between Kyiv and Moscow plummeted after Russia seized Crimea and over Russia's support for a separatist rebellion in eastern Ukraine.

Discord rose again this year when Russia massed troops on the border with Ukraine, where some of them remain along with their equipment.



## Belarus Tells EU Envoy to Go

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Belarus on Monday told the European Union's representative in Minsk to return to Brussels for consultations and said it would stop helping the 27-nation bloc combat illegal migration as retaliation against EU sanctions.

The EU last week imposed wide-ranging economic sanctions on Belarus targeting its main export industries and access to finance over its interception of a Ryanair flight last month.

Belarusian authorities intercepted the flight, from Athens to Vilnius, on May 23 and arrested dissident journalist Roman Protasevich and his girlfriend Sofia Sapega who were on board, sparking international outrage.

The Belarusian foreign ministry set out its response to the EU sanctions on Monday and said it was recalling its own permanent representative to Brussels for consultations.

It announced an entry ban on EU officials responsible for the sanctions and said it was working on economic retaliatory measures against the bloc.

"We hope that EU officials and those from its member states are aware of the damage and futility of using a forceful approach in their relations with Belarus," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The ministry added that Belarus was suspending its participation in the EU's Eastern Partnership, a policy initiative that aims to deepen the EU's ties with neighbouring former communist countries.

Belarus said it would also suspend a readmission agreement with the European Union, which defines the procedures to readmit people who illegally cross the joint border.

"(This will)...negatively affect cooperation with the European Union in the illegal migration and organised crimes spheres," the statement said.





**Shanon**  
(adviser)

**Parsian**

**Mahmoodieh Apt (\$1800)**  
150sq.m, 2bdrs, S/p  
balcony, Sauna, J  
marble floor  
F.F

**(\$2300)**  
**Fereshteh**  
300sq.m, 3bdrs  
S/p, S, J, pkg  
Large balcony  
marble fl, pkg, F.F

**Sa'adat abad Apt (\$1300)**  
180sq.m, 3bdrs, pkg, F.F

**Farmanieh (\$1800)**  
200sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p  
S, J, pkg, Fully Furn

**Kamranieh Villa (\$3500)**  
1400sq.m, 5bdrs, S/p  
green garden, pkg  
marble fl  
F.F

**(\$5000)**  
**Darrous Villa**  
3storey bldg  
10bdrs, yard  
S/p, terrace, pkg  
renovated, & F.F

**Mountain View**  
**Velenjak (\$3000)**  
300sq.m, 4bdrs, S/pool  
S, J, balcony, pkg, & F.F

**Niavaran bldg**  
**5storey, 30bdrs**  
nice yard, S/pool  
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# Trade Curbs Related to Pandemic Are Falling

GENEVA (Reuters) - G20 countries have repealed nearly half of the trade restrictions they introduced in response to the pandemic, a World Trade Organization report said on Monday. "While the report's findings indicate trade-restrictive measures are coming down, G20 economies have more work to do to ensure the free flow of the medical inputs and supplies critical to saving lives," said director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. Around 49 percent of restrictive trade measures had been terminated by the middle of May, the report said.



## Sri Lanka Eyes Tougher Import Controls to Halt Forex Crisis

COLOMBO (AFP) - Sri Lanka's central bank on Monday called for further import restrictions to address a crippling foreign exchange crisis, following a string of loans from Asian neighbors including impoverished Bangladesh. The island nation's foreign exchange reserves were badly hit last year as the Covid-19 pandemic hit and the local currency came under intense pressure and fell to a record low. International rating agencies have since expressed fears that Colombo would not be able to service its huge foreign debt.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka last week tightened its controls on dollar sales, leading commercial financial institutions to impose quotas on importers of essential commodities.

But central bank governor W. D. Lakshman said more restrictions were needed.

"What the central bank is doing now with the participation of all commercial banks, is judicious management of imports and foreign reserves," Lakshman said in a statement.

The bank was "of the view that there is further space to curtail non-essential and non-urgent imports," he added.

Sri Lanka had already banned luxury goods and car imports since last year to combat the outflow of foreign currency.

The ban first imposed in March last year applied to tumeric -- a staple in local curries, tiles, toilets, tyres, cosmetics, vehicle spare parts, electronic and electrical appliances.

The country's foreign reserves are currently at \$4 billion, down from \$7.8 billion in late 2019 when the government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa came to power promising robust growth.

The economy shrank by a record 3.6 percent last year -- the worst downturn since independence from Britain in 1948 -- as the pandemic wiped out the island's lucrative tourism sector. Lakshman said Sri Lanka would continue to meet its debt service obligations amounting to \$3.6 billion in the next six months.

Sri Lanka has loaned \$250 million from neighbouring Bangladesh, which is expected to come through next month.

It also expects to borrow another \$400 million from India in August.

The country also hopes to get \$800 million from the International Monetary Fund in August, the governor said.

In May, Sri Lanka secured a \$500 million loan from South Korea.

China's central bank also granted a \$1.5 billion currency swap to finance imports from the Asian giant in February.

Sri Lanka has borrowed heavily over the years. Some of the debt was used to finance vanity projects like massive convention centres and other infrastructure that have become white elephants.

## France Hails Chinese Battery Factory for Renault in Electric Push

PARIS (Dispatches) - President Emmanuel Macron visited northern France on Monday to applaud plans for a Chinese-owned battery factory that will supply the automaker Renault as Europe steps up its shift toward electric vehicles.

The two-billion-euro (\$2.4 billion) project by China's Envision is being saluted as an example of Macron's efforts to encourage foreign firms to "Choose France" for investment, in particular in cutting-edge technologies.

"With this project, we're going to invest more than 200 million euros alongside the companies, investors and local governments," Macron told executives and local officials at the site.

"It's this united France, that knows how to work together... that will allow us to advance and win back our industry, win back our strength, and be both productive and fair," he said.

It will be the second so-called battery "gigafactory" in France, after the plant planned by rival automaker Stellantis and energy giant TotalEnergies.

Around 1,000 jobs will be created over the next three years by a project that aims to revive three Renault factories that have struggled for years.

The company hopes to build 500,000 vehicles annually at the sites by 2025.

"We see this as a win-win relationship between Renault, Envision and the French government," Envision's chief Lei Zhang told AFP on Sunday.

"This wouldn't have been possible two years ago. It's the right time now thanks to the French recovery plan," he said. Europe has been ramping up efforts to build gigafactories, with a report by Transport & Environment, a nongovernment organisation, showing there are some 40 projects so far.

## Greek Economy Expected to Expand by 4.2%

ATHENS (Dispatches) - Greece's economy is expected to expand by 4.2 percent this year, the Bank of Greece said in a monetary policy report on Monday, maintaining its previous forecast.

The central bank said it expects economic activity to have rebounded in the second quarter and to accelerate in the second half of the year.

Its growth forecast tops the government's 3.6 percent growth projection and the International Monetary Fund's 3.3 percent forecast.

"The recovery is expected to gain momentum in the second half, driven by pent-up domestic demand, the launch of projects under the National Recovery Plan and an expected increase in tourism receipts relative to 2020," the central bank said.

It projected the country's economic growth to pick up next year to 5.3 percent but then ease to 3.9 percent in 2023.

"The increase in savings during the pandemic, either precautionary or forced due to the containment measures, and the release of pent-up demand are expected to support an increase in private consumption expenditure this year," it said.

The Bank of Greece expects the general government's primary balance to turn out a deficit of 7.1 percent of economic output this year, calculated under an enhanced surveillance methodology.

Expansionary fiscal measures have weighed on the public debt-to-GDP ratio and the government's gross financing needs, it said. Still, the long-term sustainability of Greece's public debt "is not at risk".

The central bank said financing needs for the coming decade remain marginally at the reference level of 15 percent of GDP, provided that the government's cash buffers remain high.

"This leaves no room for a relaxation of the longer-term primary surplus targets, while there are increasing risks in the event of negative shocks," it said.

Although Covid-19 vaccinations are on track, the bank added, the spread of coronavirus mutations are a source of uncertainty and a worsening of the pandemic could result in a weak tourism season, delaying the return to normality.

## China's Economy Grew by 189 Times In 70 Years

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economy has grown by 189 times over the past 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a Chinese official said Monday at a press conference in honor of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

China's total economic volume has exceeded 100 trillion yuan (about \$15.5 trillion), making it the world's second largest economy and accounting for over 17 percent of the global economy, said Han Wenxiu, an official with the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs.

The country could not even build a tractor at the beginning of the PRC's founding, but it is now the only country in the world that has all the industrial categories classified by the United Nations, according to Han.

More than 220 kinds of industrial products, including automobiles and computers, rank first in the world in terms of output, the official said.

Upon its founding, China's GDP per capita was only a few dozen U.S. dollars, but it now exceeds \$10,000, Han said.

Since the reform and opening-up that started in 1978, 770 million people have been lifted out of poverty, accounting for over 70 percent of the global poverty reduction in the same period, he added.

According to Han, the central government has made a long-term plan for Hainan Free Trade Port: China will basically establish a free trade port system focusing on trade and investment liberalization and facilitation in Hainan by 2025, which will become more mature by 2035.

The country will then build the southern island province into a globally influential high-level free trade port by the middle of this century.

China established the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in 1980, since which time it has continued opening its coastal, riverside and inland areas. In 2020, it announced the establishment of Hainan Free Trade Port, which showed how it is opening up further.

Hainan has become a hot spot for investment and business. In the first five months of this year, Hainan's actual use of foreign capital has increased by about four times, and imports and exports of goods have increased by 38.5 percent.

## Spain's PM Says Economic Output Rose 18% in Q2



MADRID (Reuters) - Spanish economic output rose a record 18 percent in the second quarter of 2021 compared with the same period in the previous year, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Monday.

"We have a budding economic recovery," Sanchez told Cadena SER radio.

"In the quarter that is about to end, we will have gross domestic product 18 percent higher year-on-year compared with the second quarter of the previous year," he said.

The comparison is with a period in which widespread lockdowns to contain the spread of the coronavirus strangled the euro zone's fourth-largest economy, sending output down 21.6 percent.

In the last few days, the government has been saying that quarter-on-quarter growth could be between 1.6 percent and 1.7 percent. The second-quarter data will be released in late July.

Restrictions on movement devastated Spain's tourism industry, which had accounted for around 12 percent of the economy before the pandemic, and dragged down factory activity and private consumption.

The economy recovered in the third quarter on a quarter-on-quarter basis but still contracted 8.6 percent annually. Overall, there was a record GDP contraction of 10.8 percent in 2020.

The recovery cooled again at the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 due to new restrictions to tackle the second and third waves of COVID-19. Bad weather also contributed to the GDP slowdown.

Data since the end of March has indicated a robust economic recovery underway, which has led to upward revisions of growth. The Bank of Spain now estimates that GDP will grow 6.2 percent this year.

The government's official growth forecast for the year is 6.5 percent, which is tied to the progress of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign and the arrival of European recovery funds.

## Turkish-Uzbek Bilateral Trade Up 93% in 5 Months

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey and Uzbekistan increased their bilateral trade volume by 93 percent year-on-year to \$1.5 billion (TL 13 billion) in the first five months of 2021 despite the pandemic conditions, the Turkish vice president said Monday.

Fuat Oktay was speaking at the Uzbekistan-Turkey Business Forum organized by Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) as part of the 6th Meeting of Turkey-Uzbekistan Joint Economic Commission at a hotel in Uzbekistan.

Speaking at the forum, Oktay said: "Our goal is to maintain this momentum until the end of the year to reach our 2023 target as soon as possible and to go beyond our target of \$5 billion trade volume."

Oktay expressed hope that the meeting, which brought together businesspeople from both Turkey and Uzbekistan, would be a turning point in bilateral relations.

"Despite the negative atmosphere the world is going through, the increase in our bilateral trade with Uzbekistan is the clearest indicator that we will exceed our targets and reach new records," Oktay noted.

Turkey, the first country to officially recognize Uzbekistan after its independence, sincerely supports its achievements and development, Oktay stressed.

"Mechanisms such as the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council and the Joint Economic Commission, established under the leadership of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, further strengthen our cooperation," he said.

"In the coming period, we can strengthen bilateral cooperation with joint investments in the fields of automotive, defense industry, construction machinery, white goods, agricultural product processing, food industry and pharmaceutical industry," Oktay added.

Earlier in the day, Oktay held a meeting with Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Serdar Umurzakov. Delegations from Uzbekistan's trade and foreign ministries and Turkey's Ambassador to Tashkent Olgan Bekar also attended the meeting.

Oktay and Umurzakov also attended a coordination meeting aimed at expanding the multilateral cooperation between the public and private sectors of the two countries.

The two sides discussed Turkish investments in Uzbekistan and new job opportunities at the meeting. During the meeting, Oktay also met with Turkish businesspeople in Uzbekistan.





## Tehran Hosts General Assembly of Islamic Radio and Television Union Meeting

TEHRAN (IP) - The 10th session of the General Assembly of the Islamic Radio and Television Union entitled 'Media Justice and Freedom of Expression' was held in Tehran.

The meeting was held on Tuesday at IRIB Int'l Conference Center, in full compliance with hygienic protocols with the attendance of the Chief of Islamic Republic of Iran

Broadcasting (IRIB) Abdolali Ali-Asgari, head of IRIB world service Peyman Jebeli, and other media members, political experts, and cultural officials.

The 10th session of General Assembly of the Islamic Radio and Television is also simultaneously being held in Baghdad, Beirut, Gaza, Kabul, Istanbul, and Sanaa.



## EU Revives Bloc-Wide Travel With Covid Pass

BRUSSELS (AFP) - An EU-wide Covid certificate for easier travel comes into force on Thursday, just in time for Europe's busy summer vacation period, but the more-infectious Delta variant is already threatening to curtail its use.

The EU document -- sporting a QR code and available in digital form on smartphones or hard copy -- shows whether the bearer is vaccinated with one of the EU's approved jabs (from BioNTech/Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson), has recovered from an infection, or has a recent negative Covid test.

Under an EU law adopted this month, the certificate does away with the need for quarantines or further testing when travelling between the EU's 27 countries or four associated European nations (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).

Twenty EU countries have already started issuing and accepting it, with the others expected to follow suit shortly.

But a surge in the Delta variant, first detected in India and now rampant in former EU member Britain, could trigger an "emergency brake" provision suspending its acceptance.

With Delta becoming dominant in Portugal, Germany has announced a ban on incoming travellers from there except for its own citizens or residents.

Even they are required to quarantine for two weeks, regardless of vaccination or test status.

Portugal and Spain on Monday abruptly announced entry restrictions for travellers from Britain, with Lisbon requiring them to be fully vaccinated and Madrid demanding proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test.

A European Commission spokesman said on Monday that Britain "is now working with us" on aligning international Covid travel requirements with the aim of having mutually accepted documents.

But Britain's rise in Delta infections -- giving it an infection rate more than four times that of the EU -- is generating deep concern on the continent.

At an EU summit last week, German Chancellor Angela Merkel criticised southern EU countries for allowing in Britons with few, if any, Covid checks.

The move gives Brits access to the entire passport-free Schengen zone and has brought them in proximity to vacationing Europeans.

Under non-binding EU guidelines, all member states were urged to allow in only fully vaccinated travellers from outside the bloc, or those with urgent reasons to visit.

But Portugal, Spain and Greece initially opted for a laissez-faire attitude, hoping to revive their vital tourist sectors.

That calculation is now changing under pressure from Germany's decisions and realisation that Delta infection rates in the EU could match current British levels within weeks.

A second European Commission spokesman said that an EU panel composed of representatives of member states and the Brussels executive was meeting on Monday to discuss "the possible application of the emergency brake".



Evidence on whether vaccinations keep down infections, hospitalisations and deaths even from the Delta variant will be decisive for its impact on the EU Covid certificate, from scuppering the programme altogether to simply adding a note of caution to the summer rollout.

Britain, which registered its sudden rise in Delta infections in April, still has relatively low case numbers.

Some MPs in the governing Conservative party argue that vaccinations have "broken the link" between infection and deaths and the country should drop all Covid restrictions on July 19.

But many EU leaders are more cautious, hoping to slow the spread of the Delta variant to give time for more jabs.

Governments recall how surges in past variants saw lags of many weeks between spikes in infections and death rates.

AFP statistics collating official health data from across the EU show that 49.6 percent of the bloc's population has now received at least one vaccine dose (compared with 65.3 percent in Britain).

So far, 31.5 percent in the EU are considered completely vaccinated.

Covid experts had initially believed "herd immunity" could be reached with 70 percent of a population fully vaccinated, but now judge it would need 80 percent or more immunized, given Delta's infectiousness and the fact vaccines are less effective against it.

## Belarus, Russia Expected to Create Common Markets of Oil, Natural Gas, Transport



MOSCOW (BelTA) - Belarus and Russia have to create common markets of oil, oil products, natural gas, electricity, and transport by 1 January 2022 in addition to unifying tax and customs regulations. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Russia Vladimir Semashko made the statement after wreaths were laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow on 28 June in anticipation of Belarus' Independence Day and the 77th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from the Nazi invaders, BelTA has learned.

According to Vladimir Semashko, Belarus and Russia have reached a totally new stage. A lot has already been done in the social sphere, economy, defense, and so on. "Today we have really reached the time when we have to bolster the economic foundation of the union of Belarus and Russia," he said.

The official reminded that the sides are about to finish work on 28 integration maps. It is necessary to promptly create a common market of oil, oil products, a common market of natural gas, a common market of electricity, a common transportation market, enforce a unified industrial and agricultural policy, and unify the tax and customs regulations literally by 1 January 2022, the ambassador stressed. "In other words, we have to create an economic base that will be necessary and important for Belarus and Russia," he said.

According to the source, Belarus is a small country but it is a significant economic partner of Russia and is ranked fourth among Russia's trading partners. The official said that in January-May 2021 Belarus-Russia trade rose by 30% in comparison with the same period of last year, with Belarus' export to Russia up by 20.8%.

## Delayed Doses of AstraZeneca Jab Boost Immunity

LONDON (AFP) - Delayed second and third doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine boost immunity against Covid-19, a study by Oxford University, which developed the jab with the British-Swedish firm, said on Monday.

An interval of up to 45 weeks between the first and second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine led to an enhanced immune response, rather than compromising immunity, the study said.

Giving a third dose of the jab more than six months after the second dose also leads to a "substantial increase" in antibodies and induces a "strong boost" to subjects' immune response, said the pre-print study, meaning that it has yet to be peer-reviewed. "This should come as reassuring news to countries with lower supplies of the vaccine, who may be concerned about delays in providing second doses to their populations," said lead investigator of the Oxford trial Andrew Pollard.

"There is an excellent response to a second dose, even after a 10-month delay from the first."

The researchers said the results for a delayed AstraZeneca third dose were positive, particularly as nations with advanced vaccination programs consider whether third booster shots will be required to prolong immunity.

"It is not known if booster jabs will be needed due to waning immunity or to augment immunity against variants of concern," said the study's lead senior author, Teresa Lambe.

She explained the research showed the AstraZeneca jab "is well tolerated and significantly boosts the antibody response."

Lambe added results were encouraging "if we find that a third dose is needed".

The development of the jab, which is being administered in 160 countries, has been hailed as a milestone in efforts against the pandemic because of its relatively low cost and ease of transportation. However, confidence in the jab, as with the vaccine developed by the US firm Johnson & Johnson, has been hampered by concerns over links to very rare but serious blood clots in a handful of cases. A number of nations have suspended the use of the vaccine as a result or restricted its use by younger groups who are less at risk from Covid.

The Oxford study indicated that side effects from the vaccine in general were "well tolerated" with "lower incidents of side effects after second and third doses than after first doses". A separate Oxford-led study released on Monday found that alternating doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine with that developed by Pfizer/BioNTech also boosted immune response.

It found subjects responded differently depending on the order in which the shots were given, but vaccination schedules involving both the AstraZeneca and Pfizer/BioNTech jabs could potentially be used to give more flexibility in tackling the virus. Matthew Snape, the chief investigator for the trial, said when the mixed vaccines were given at a four-week interval they induced "an immune response that is above the threshold set by the standard schedule of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine".

### Arrangements...

FROM PAGE 1

Pointing to the promising signs of defeat of the enemy in its economic war and the removal of cruel sanctions against the Iranian nation, Rouhani said the release of Iran's blocked resources that have been unjustly and illegally frozen in other countries will mark the fruitfulness of the Iranian nation's resistance against the economic war.

Last week, the president highlighted his administration's success in dealing with the foreign sanctions in an unequal battle, urging that his successor should be informed of the economic conditions and the measures taken during his tenure to settle the problems.

### All Iraqi Military...

FROM PAGE 1

Through diplomatic efforts, Iraq strongly supports dialogue with various parties in order to ensure its security, stability, and full sovereignty and to ease tensions and crises in the region, the spokesman added in a statement.

"We condemn the U.S. air attack that targeted a site ... on the Iraqi-Syrian border, which represents a blatant and unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty," Prime Minister Kadhemi said. Ahmaf al-Maksumi, commander of the 14th Hashd al-Sha'abi Brigade, said the US targeted resistance fighters with a 1,250-kilogram bomb during the attack that involved several drones and a fighter jet, the Telegram channel of Iraq's al-Maloumah news agency reported.

He also called on the United Nations and human rights organizations to condemn the crime, which Washington has itself confessed to. In early 2003, the U.S. invaded Iraq under the later debunked pretext that the regime of Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

### Sardasht, Symbol of...

FROM PAGE 1

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.

The Western and especially the U.S.'s by supporting of such crimes also commit different version of crimes like imposing sanctions on the nations to bring them down no matter the people suffer.

The Westerners talk of human rights and humanitarian aids but in practice, they deprive the nations of their rights by imposing cruel sanctions to make the people suffer or give in.

The crime in Sardasht is one of so many examples of the crimes committed by a regime backed by the West. Sanctions on Iran, Yemen, Syria and other countries which resist against the West are of the other examples for West's crimes which unfortunately go unnoticed and international bodies are forced to remain silent because they are managed by the West's elements.

If the world community does not stand against such crimes and not punish the criminals, this sort of crime will continue by the support of the West and it even may encourage the offenders commit more offences.

Since 1987 that Sardasht was attacked by the Iraqi forces with chemical weapon, Iran has been waiting for a proper response by the international bodies regarding this crime and punishment of the culprits and especially those who provided Iraq with such deadly weapons but it has been in vain because there is a proverb which says "hawks will not pick out hawks' eyes." So we should not expect the Western-backed international bodies to have any proper response to the real culprits of this crime and we should ourselves find a way to make the world public well aware of such crimes.

As the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution says, Iran should become strong enough to get its right instead of begging it from the West and this can be materialized through being self-sufficient, independent and a strong country in defensive and even aggressive military power, and God willing it is happening gradually and Iran is becoming a regional power that no one can dare to have ill-intention against it.

### Tehran Slams UN for...

FROM PAGE 1

Takht Ravanchi urged the imposition of criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of names in the blacklist so as to ensure the impartiality and validity of the UN mechanism.

"Protection of children, particularly girls, in armed conflicts is a fundamental moral and humanitarian principle and every effort must be made to ensure that it is fully respected by all parties in all conflicts," he said.

"The mechanism to list the parties violating the rights of children in armed conflicts must also be used effectively and without discrimination and selectivity. It is a source of grave concern that the Israeli forces have never been blacklisted as violators of children's rights in relevant reports of the secretary-general and also the name of the so-called Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen has been deleted from the top of that list," he added.

The Iranian envoy also said that the UN confirmed the killing and wounding of 194 people in Yemen in 2020 by the Saudi-led coalition.

On June 22, 2021, Yemeni children marched across the country to protest the killing of more than 3,500 counterparts and the injuring of over 4,000 over the past six years in Saudi strikes, which have also orphaned thousands of Yemeni kids and displaced millions of them.

Additionally, Takht Ravanchi said Israel keeps committing the most systematic and gross violations of children's rights in the Middle East.

The UN secretary general's report confirmed 1031 cases of severe violence against 340 Palestinian children, including 11 killings, 324 maimings, 361 arrests and 30 attacks on schools and hospitals by Israeli forces, he added, noting that 66 children were among the 253 Palestinians who lost their lives in the 11-day Israeli war on Gaza in May 2021.

"These barbaric acts are clear manifestations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, materially breach fundamental norms and principles of international law, and entail international responsibility of the Israeli regime, whose officials must therefore be brought to justice for committing such heinous crimes," Takht-Ravanchi said.





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## Thomas Dislocates Shoulder In Tour de France Fall

PARIS (Dispatches) - Ineos leader Geraint Thomas dislocated his left shoulder in a hard fall on the third stage of the Tour de France on Monday, kicking his legs out in pain as doctors put it back in before gingerly retaking his saddle to resume racing. Welshman Thomas was at first left to his own fate by teammates clearly fearful he would have to pull out. He was trailing the main pack by three minutes when he set off again and fellow Welshman Luke Rowe then dropped back in an attempt to help Thomas reel in the peloton.

## Back Injury Rules Olympic Javelin Champion out of Tokyo

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Defending men's javelin champion Thomas Roehler has pulled out of competing at the Tokyo Olympics due to a back injury, he confirmed Monday. "It was incredibly difficult for me to turn down Tokyo. Together with my coach I have weighed things up carefully, but in the end my health has priority," said the 29-year-old, who injured his back while training. "I have to listen to my body now, because I want to compete at the top level for a few more years."

# Djokovic Avoids Shock At Wimbledon

LONDON (Dispatches) - Defending champion Novak Djokovic overcame an early fright to fend off British teenager Jack Draper 4-6 6-1 6-2 6-2 and launch his quest for a sixth title as Wimbledon returned after a two-year absence on Monday.

The first match on Centre Court since Djokovic's nailbiting victory over Roger Federer in the 2019 final -- 716 days ago -- was classic David versus Goliath material.

And while there was to be no fairytale Grand Slam debut for 19-year-old Draper, the match proved the perfect way to bring Centre Court back to life after the enforced silence due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Only 7,500 fans were permitted on Centre Court in line with the 50% cap on attendance, but they let out a mighty roar as Draper won his first point.

Djokovic has never lost a Grand Slam match to a player ranked as low as world number 253 Draper, but looked a little stunned as he struggled to find his footing on the greasy turf and contain the fearless hitting of the Briton.

Grand Slam main draw debutant Draper broke serve in the third game and made a mockery of his inexperience as he saved all the break points he faced on his way to taking the opening set off the Serb contesting his 65th major.

Twice Djokovic found himself on his backside in the first set and with the roof closed because of the rain that delayed play on the outside courts, the stage looked perfect for a Wimbledon shock of monumental proportions.

But Djokovic is not a 19-times Grand Slam champion for nothing and the Serb quickly snuffed out the danger, levelling the match by dominating a 26-minute second set.

Any hopes Draper had of handing Djokovic his first opening-round defeat at a Grand Slam since 2006, began to evaporate when he completely missed an



overhead to drop serve early in the second set, Djokovic roaring in relief.

From that point on it was straightforward enough for Djokovic who looked immaculate as he quickly got back into the old routine in his first competitive singles match on grass since saving match points to defeat Federer in two years ago.

"It feels great seeing everyone and being back on the most sacred tennis court in the world," Djokovic, who is bidding to land a record-equalling 20th Grand Slam title having won the Australian and French Opens this year, said on court.

"It was very sad last year that Wimbledon was cancelled but really glad the sport is back."

He also had kind words to say about Draper who had vowed to cause his illustrious opponent problems and remained true to his word in one scintillating set.

"He definitely deserves a round of applause," Djokovic said. "He was walking on to Centre Court for the first time and carried himself very well and backed himself."

Meanwhile sixteen of the scheduled 64 first round matches at Wimbledon were cancelled on Monday as the tournament's return after two years suffered a soggy start.

Play on the All England Club's outside courts had been due to get under way at 11:00am (1000 GMT). However, that start time was constantly revised by organizers.

Wimbledon in 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## T20 World Cup To Be Moved From India to UAE

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - The Twenty20 World Cup will be moved to the United Arab Emirates from India due to the coronavirus pandemic, the country's cricket chief Sourav Ganguly told local media Monday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said it had told the world body of its decision to host the event in the UAE in October and November.

"We have officially intimated the ICC (International Cricket Council) that the T20 World Cup can be shifted to the United Arab Emirates," Ganguly, president of the BCCI, told the Press Trust of India news agency.

He added that "the details are being chalked out". BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla said the qualifiers may take place in Oman while the rest of the matches will be at three UAE venues including Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

The ICC had given the BCCI a deadline of the end of June to decide the host country for T20's showpiece event due to the Covid situation in India. India, the world's second most populous nation, has eased some lockdown restrictions in recent weeks as it emerges from a brutal surge in infections and deaths in April and May.

The BCCI had already moved the suspended Indian Premier League to the UAE in September-October after the T20 tournament was halted on May 4 following a number of players and team officials getting infected with Covid.

## Durant to Lead Team USA At Tokyo Olympics

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - Two-time gold medalist Kevin Durant anchors the 12-member U.S. men's basketball team announced Monday for next month's Tokyo Olympics.

The Brooklyn Nets forward is joined by Bam Adebayo (Miami Heat), Bradley Beal (Washington Wizards), Devin Booker (Phoenix Suns), Jerami Grant (Detroit Pistons), Draymond Green (Golden State Warriors), Jrue Holiday (Milwaukee Bucks), Zach LaVine (Chicago Bulls), Damian Lillard (Portland Trail Blazers), Kevin Love (Cleveland Cavaliers), Khris Middleton (Bucks) and Jayson Tatum (Boston Celtics).

# Konta Out of Wimbledon Over Covid-19 Contact



The 30-year-old's place in the draw will be taken by 123rd-ranked lucky loser Wang Yafan of China.

"The Referee's Office has advised that Johanna Konta has been withdrawn from the

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's Johanna Konta was forced to withdraw from Wimbledon after being identified as a close contact of a positive coronavirus case, the All England Club announced.

The world number 31, a semi-finalist at the tournament in 2017, had been drawn to face Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic in her opener.

Ladies' Singles Draw, having been classified as a close contact of a positive test for COVID-19," said a statement from the All England Club.

"In line with government legislation, Konta is required to spend 10 days in self isolation."

A year after Wimbledon was cancelled due to the pandemic, all players are confined to a central London hotel 'bubble' rather than their own homes or in rented accommodation closer to the All England Club.

"In terms of the bubble life, it is very odd," Konta said Saturday.

"It's odd to drive past kind of my home every day on the way to Wimbledon, kind of half an hour into the journey I'm like, Oh, okay. That is odd."

"It's a small price to pay to be able to be back and playing again here at Wimbledon."

On Saturday, former men's doubles champion Frederik Nielsen was also forced to withdraw after being identified as a close contact.

## Switzerland Knock out France Via Penalty

LONDON (Dispatches) - Hours after Croatia scored twice late to force extra time against Spain, Switzerland did the same thing to France.

Switzerland scored twice in 10 minutes late in the second half to take the reigning World Cup champions to an extra 30 minutes tied at 3-3. Unlike in Spain's 5-3 win over Croatia, no one scored in the final 30 minutes. And unlike Croatia's comeback, Switzerland's was fruitful as it beat France 5-4 on penalty kicks to advance to the quarterfinals against Spain.

Switzerland made all five of its penalty kicks and France star Kylian Mbappe missed the fifth and final kick for France. Mbappe didn't score a goal in any of France's four Euro 2020 games and wasted numerous chances in front of goal during Monday's game.

The Swiss comeback happened after France appeared to have snuffed out any hopes of an upset in a five-minute span early in the second half. Hugo Lloris saved Ricardo Rodriguez's penalty in the 55th minute as Rodriguez attempted to put Switzerland up 2-0.

Karim Benzema tied the game at 1-1 two minutes after Lloris' save in a goal that featured a preposterously good touch to gather the ball before the goal. And then less than two minutes later, Benzema tied the game he put France in front with a header after France ran rampant in Switzerland's penalty area. Paul Pogba's incredible strike in the 75th minute made it seem that France was well on the way to a win.

But Switzerland scored late as Haris Seferovic scored his second goal of the game in the 81st minute and Mario Gavronovic tied it in the 90th minute.



## Police Investigate Banner Near Benitez Home

LONDON (Dispatches) - Merseyside Police said on Monday they are investigating a threatening banner hung near former Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez's family home on the Wirral, as media speculation intensifies over his appointment as Everton boss.

Images on social media showed a banner reading "We know where you live, don't sign" near Benitez's home. The Spaniard and his family have lived in the area since the time he took charge of Liverpool in 2004.

"This message has understandably caused some distress and worry for residents in the area," detective inspector Darren Taylor said in a statement.

"Due to the football language used, we suspect that it was aimed at Rafa Benitez - but whoever placed the message left it outside the wrong house."

"If anyone has information about who produced the banner or helped to put it up, please let us know as soon as possible." British media reported Everton are hopeful of confirming Benitez as Carlo Ancelotti's successor this week after the Spaniard held several rounds of negotiations with owner Farhad Moshiri.

William Edward Barclay, who was in charge of the original foundation of Everton in the 1890s and later the breakaway Liverpool club, is the only person to have managed both Merseyside clubs.

Everton are on the hunt for their fifth manager in as many years after Ancelotti resigned earlier this month to return to Real Madrid.

