

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 84,264 With 137 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

The Pro-Reform Candidate Abolnasser Hemmati in the Presidential Elections as Well as Other Candidates Met Iran's President-Elect Hojjatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi on Wednesday

VOL. XXVII, No. 7260 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

THURSDAY JULY 1, 2021 - TIR 10, 1400

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2nd Iranian-Made COVID Vaccine Approved for Emergency Use

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian health ministry has approved a second COVID-19 vaccine developed and manufactured inside the country for emergency use.

Health minister Saeid Namaki said on Tuesday that the vaccine developed by the Pasteur Institute of Iran had obtained the emergency use approval earlier in the day after successfully completing various trial stages.

"The third phase of the clinical trial for the Pasteur vaccine which is the second Iranian vaccine (against) coronavirus has been carried out and today we were able to obtain the permission for its emergency use from the legal committee," said Namaki.

Iran had approved its flagship Coviran Barekat vaccine for emergency use earlier this month. The Pasteur vaccine has been developed as part of a joint experiment with Cuban scientists.

The approvals come as the government seeks to accelerate its inoculation program against the coronavirus some six months after it began using supplies from other countries. The campaign has mostly relied on Russian and Chinese jabs and others provided by a World Health Organization project.

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Army Stages Naval Drill In Caspian Sea

TEHRAN (MNA) - The naval drill of the Iran Army dubbed 'Amaniyat-e Paydar 1400' (Sustainable Security) kicked off on Wednesday in the Caspian Sea.

By sending a message of peace and friendship, 'Amaniyat-e Paydar 1400' naval drill began Wednesday morning in the Caspian Sea with the participation of the Army Navy's surface and aerial units, including missile launchers, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, naval drones and electronic warfare systems, as well as Navy's ranger units.

This naval exercise will be carried out in an area of approximately 77,000 square kilometers in the 20% of the Islamic Republic of Iran's share in the Caspian Sea, during which offensive and defensive scenarios will be implemented to protect the country's territorial waters and maintain transportation lines. According to the report, the army air and air defense forces also provided the security of the training area in order to cover and provide close air support.

Meanwhile according to a statement by the Iranian Army's Navy, reconnaissance operations have been performed successfully using drones during the drills underway in the Caspian Sea.

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U.N. Chief Urges U.S. to Remove Iran Sanctions as Agreed in 2015



NEW YORK (Dispatches) - U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appealed to U.S. President Joe Biden's administration to lift or waive all sanctions on Iran as agreed under a 2015 deal aimed at stopping Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon.

In a report to the U.N. Security Council, Guterres also urged the United States to "extend the waivers with regard to the trade in oil with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and fully renew waivers for nuclear non-proliferation projects."

The 15-member council will on Tuesday discuss the secretary-general's biannual report on the implementation of a 2015 resolution that enshrines the nuclear deal between Iran, the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Russia and China.

Guterres' appeal to Washington comes amid talks to revive the deal - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - under which Iran accepted curbs on its nuclear programme in return for a lifting of many foreign sanctions against it.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the pact in 2018 and reimposed harsh sanctions, prompting Tehran to start violating some of the nuclear limits in 2019.

"I appeal to the United States to lift or waive its sanctions outlined in the plan," said Guterres, who also appealed to Iran to return to full implementation of the deal.

Iran has refined uranium up to a purity of roughly 60%, far above the deal's limit of 3.67% and much closer to the 90% suitable for atom bomb cores, though it maintains that it seeks only civilian nuclear power and could quickly reverse its moves if Washington rescinded sanctions and returned to the 2015 deal.

Guterres said: "I continue to believe that a full restoration of the Plan remains the best way to ensure that the nuclear program of the Islamic Republic of Iran remains exclusively peaceful."

OPEC Risks Forcing India to Tap Iran for Oil If Prices Stay High

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Ahead of a critical OPEC meeting on July 1, India's Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said he is persuading oil exporting countries to moderate surging oil prices and warned that high prices would push the country to tap alternative petroleum import sources such as Iran.

Stressing that inflation was a major challenge for the economy, Mr. Pradhan said that India had already exhausted strategic petroleum reserves it had built up last year by taking advantage of lower oil prices, over the last few months.

"India is a very price-sensitive market. With utmost politeness, I have got my own spending behaviour. If somebody's planning our Budget is 80\$(a barrel)-driven, then I am sorry. My affordability is the primary thing for me," the Minister said at the BloombergNEF Summit.

He also indicated that India would opt for whichever option provided competitive prices within its 'global diplomatic framework', including Iran if the economic sanctions imposed on it by the U.S. were lifted.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+) are expected to discuss a possible easing of supply cuts, amid a rebound in global demand, on July 1.

With retail prices for petrol crossing ₹100 per liter in several parts of the country, the Minister conceded that 'today's price is very challenging'. "I am persuading my friends in OPEC which is supposed to meet in the next few days. I hope the price will be a little bit sober. That's our expectation," he said.

The Minister exuded confidence that the demand for petroleum products would return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021.

"In a country and market like India, with the potential to influence the entire supply chain in the globe... Last time, the demand was destroyed in a big way, but by September-October, we came back to a near-normalcy situation. Again, in the second wave of COVID in India, around April, May we saw a demand disruption this year," he said.

"But over the last three weeks of June, there is again a sign of demand resurgence due to lifting of lockdowns and gradual economic movement picking up. If I compare from the April-May period, this is a very good recovery. Yes, there are still challenges such as inflation, but I am confident by the end of this calendar year, we will be in a robust position to restore our conventional behavior," said Mr. Pradhan.

Unilateral Coercive Actions Are Modern Genocide

GENEVA (Dispatches) - Iran's ambassador and Permanent Representative at the UN Office in Geneva said that unilateral acts of coercion are modern genocide.

Speaking at the 47th session of the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh, the Iranian Ambassador and Permanent Representative at the UN Office in Geneva, said that unilateral coercive measures and sanctions should be stopped due to the immediate and persistent adverse effects on the target population and they should also be considered a modern genocide.

"All countries have a responsibility to end the occupation to prevent genocide," said Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh, noting that the most heinous case of genocide is taking place in occupied Palestine today. Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative at the UN Office in Geneva referred to the discovery of mass graves belonging to native Canadian children, calling such crimes a systematic and brutal genocide that has taken place over centuries of silence.

Esmail Baghaei Hamaneh noted that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), in its report in 2015, described these crimes as "cultural genocide"; it was merely an attempt to downplay the issue and change the reality. Therefore, it is "genocide."

Tehran Ready to Assist UN Efforts to Regulate Cyberspace

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran has expressed its readiness to contribute to efforts by the United Nations General Assembly aimed at formulating the principles required to regulate cyberspace, saying the digital world and its related technologies should solely be used for peaceful purposes.

Iran's UN Ambassador Majid Takht-Ravanchi made the remarks on Tuesday in an address to the UN Security Council debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: Cyber security."

He said that cyberspace provides "golden opportunities" for human beings to continuously enhance all aspects of their lives.

"Such an outstanding enabler must therefore not only be promoted throughout the world particularly in developing countries but also be protected against all threats," Takht-Ravanchi said. The Iranian envoy also noted that in recent years, the world has witnessed "a worrying trend of systematic accusations" leveled by some states with political motives against one another regarding cyber-attacks or similar activities in cyberspace.

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Power Outage In Iraq Forces Electricity Minister to Resign

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Media in Iraq have reported that Electricity Minister Majid Mahdi Hantoush has resigned amid power shortages in the south of the country during hot summer days.

Almasalah and Al Mustakillah news agencies as well as the Anadolu Agency quoted informed sources in Iraq as saying that the Iraqi Minister of Electricity Majid Mahdi Hantoush has resigned, and that the Prime Minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, had also accepted his resignation and that the news would be officially announced later.

Informed sources say that Majid Mahdi Hantoush submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister yesterday June 28.

Meanwhile, according to Sputnik Arabic-language website, the resignation of the Iraqi Minister of Electricity comes as the Electricity Distribution Company in Southern Iraq announced today (Tuesday, June 29) that all power plants in the southern regions of Iraq will be shut down without giving any reasons for its announcement.

Moreover, Alsumaria News also reported that the Maysan Electricity Authority announced that the power outage would include the four provinces of Dhi Qar, Basra, Maysan and Al-Samawah.



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Ghana's President Felicitates Raisi for His Victory

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Ghanaian President Nana Addo Akufo-Addo in a message forwarded to Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi congratulated him for his victory in 13th Islamic Republic Presidential Elections as Iran's 8th president.

According to Ghana's Embassy in Tehran, President Addo said in his message that "the good people of Iran with their trust in your good self's leadership capabilities, have elected you for the most high ranking position as their president and I am sure your government will pursue the path towards development in favor of the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The President also wished success for the Iranian President-elect, emphasizing that his country will cooperate with the new Iranian government with the aim of further developing the existing relations to secure both nations' interests.

Trump's Crimes Against Iranians Being Continued by Successors

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – Until today, Trump's successors have continued his crimes and economic terrorism against Iranians, and they are the criminals of the same path that Trump founded, President Rouhani said.

Speaking in a cabinet session on Wednesday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani spoke about the bombing incident of the headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) on 28 June 1981 in which Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti and 72 leading Iranian officials martyred.

Saying that this terrorist move was a global conspiracy against Iran, President Rouhani said that the Western countries were involved in this plot, and the MEK terrorists acted as their mercenaries.

Through the assassination of Chief Justice Beheshti, they thought that the parliament and the government would fail and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran would disintegrate, Rouhani said.

He expressed hope that the Judiciary acts impartially and free from involvement of its political tendency. He said the judge should act fairly with observing justice.

However, with the intellectual power and influence of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Revolution, all conspiracies and plots against the country thwarted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, President Rouhani spoke about Trump's maximum pressure against the Iranian nation in recent years, saying, "Trump's successors have



continued his crimes until today, and they are the criminals of the same path that Trump founded."

He noted that inflation would be 11.5%, dollar exchange rate would be under 5,000 toman, investment growth would be 4.7%, and gross domestic product would increase 22%, Rouhani said.

He went on to say that the government has spared no efforts for solving issues and standing against the economic war and has not neglected implementing the JCPOA and lifting sanctions, and has also taken advantage of any opportunity and second for that purpose.

Reacting to the strikes of oil industry workers, he said the government is trying to work to settle this problem by adjusting the salaries and payments in the oil industry and reiterated that the current problem which have led to the strikes have nothing to do with the oil industry and the problems lie in other issues regarding the contractual workers and companies.

Sanctions to Have No Effect on Activity of Iranian Seafarers

TEHRAN (MNA) – CEO of Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said that sanctions imposed against the country did not affect the activity of Iranian seafarers and maritime industry of the country.

Speaking on the occasion of World Maritime Day, Mohammad Rastad said that maritime activities in all its sectors were not ceased even for a moment despite tough sanctions imposed against the country and also spread of the coronavirus, COVID-19, pandemic.

Seafarers, ranging from those working on trade tankers, commercial, fishing and exploratory-research fleets to Search and Rescue Fleet, worked round-the-clock in spite of oppressive and illegal sanctions imposed against the country, the Deputy Ministry of Roads and Urban Development said, and reiterated that sanctions could not affect maritime activities of the country anymore.

Iran to Open Maritime Security Coordination Center in Chabahar

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran's Navy commander unveiled plans for the inauguration of a center in the country's southeastern port city of Chabahar for international cooperation on maritime security.

Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi on Tuesday delivered an address to the 7th meeting of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), held on Reunion Island, a French department in the Indian Ocean near Madagascar.

The commander said the Iranian Navy will do its utmost to pave the way for regional interaction by opening the 'Coordination Center on International Cooperation for Maritime Security' in Chabahar, located in southeast Iran.

Highlighting the Iranian Navy's activities as the rotating president of the IONS, Rear Admiral Khanzadi said Iran has stepped up efforts for coordination among the IONS members, held meetings of the maritime security task force, and convened meetings on joint naval exercises.

He also noted that Iran's Navy has compiled the first 'IONS tactical book' focusing on plans for the fight against piracy, sharing of information, and addressing natural disasters.

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.

The IONS has 24 members, including Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, France, Australia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Seychelles, Thailand, Timor Leste, and the UK.

There are also 8 observers, namely China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, the Netherlands, Russia and Spain.

Operation on Launch of First Iranian Factory in Astrakhan Starts

MOSCOW (IRNA) - Ceremony of operation on construction of the first Iranian factory in Special Economic Zone of Lotus in Astrakhan, a city in south of Russia, began on Tuesday.

Representatives of Islamic Republic of Iran and local officials were present in the ceremony. Deputy Chairman of the Astrakhan Region Government, Kazbek Khadikov, said at the ceremony that 16 companies via 30 billion rubles have become members of Lotus.

The official further appreciated Iranian businesspersons for choosing Astrakhan Region for appreciating investment project.

He hoped the two would have fruitful cooperation.

In a related development, Nader Abbaszadeh, the director-general of Rosa Ltd and representative of Iranian holding company of Golrang in Russia, has said that Astrakhan plays a key role in development of relations between Iran and Russia.

Operational license for launching Iranian company "Rosa" in Astrakhan's Lotus was approved in September, 2019. Based on the project, the company will produce detergent products with high technology and different brands.

The capacity of its annual production will be over nine million liters.

After becoming operational, the project will created 120 job opportunities.



Global Responsibility Needed To Fight Against Narcotics



TEHRAN (IP) - Director general of International Affairs, Environment and Sustainable Development at Iran's Foreign Ministry says narcotics is a global problem, and fighting against it requires the shared responsibility of all world countries.

In a special meeting of foreign diplomats living in Tehran on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Mohsen Spari pointed out that the Islamic Republic of Iran has done the best of its ability to fight against narcotics.

Spari stated: "Drug markets are complex and full of hundreds of industrial narcotics, and in recent years, we have witnessed the spread of these dangerous drugs. The issue has been reflected in the recent UN report in 2020 and 2021."

The Islamic Republic of Iran which was adjacent to Afghanistan, the largest producer of opium, suffered significant material and spiritual costs, and faced harsh sanctions on buying and selling counter-narcotics equipment.

The Head of the State Welfare Organization of Iran, Vahid Ghobadi Dana, considered the use of narcotics and addiction as the most critical social illnesses in the world that challenged human life, stressing the need to a comprehensive public collaboration to confront the issue.

"According to the latest report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2018, about 269 million people in the world used an illegal addictive substance at least once in the last year, and it is likely that by 2030 this number will increase to 299 million people," he added.

Highlighting the adjacency of Iran to the drug and alcohol-producing countries and the young population of the country as a vulnerable population, Ghobadi Dana noted that despite Iran's high commitment to fight narcotics, the issue of drugs consumption remained one of the country's challenges.

Pro-Resistance Media to Keep Moving Forward Despite U.S. Attacks

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has slammed attempts by the US-led global arrogance and Zionism to throw a wrench in the work of media platforms promoting the cause of the resistance front, saying such pressure will not deter the pro-resistance media outlets from moving forward.

Addressing the 10th session of the General Assembly of the Islamic Radio and Television Union (IRTVU) via video conference on Tuesday, Abdol-Ali Ali-Askari said that enemies would not benefit from the recent seizure of dozens of website domains connected to Iranian and pro-resistance media outlets.

"Media outlets of the resistance front and Muslim world are growing with utmost power and we will soon witness their further progress in various fields," he added. He described the IRTVU as a "very strong and constructive" union that has succeeded in making great achievements to confront the Western media war and in the face of the US and West hegemonic system.

The IRIB chief criticized the US government's violation of freedom of speech and said Islamic media outlets, despite certain shortcomings, revealed the global arrogance's desperation and weakness and would not stop fighting for the right path, despite such attacks.

Referring to the U.S.'s failed domestic and foreign policies, particularly its presence in the West Asia region, Ali-Askari emphasized that Washington would definitely face defeat soon, while a bright future awaits the Muslim world.

The US Justice Department announced on Wednesday that it had seized 33 media websites used by the Iranian Islamic Radio and Television Union, as well as three of the Iraqi anti-terror Kata'ib Hezbollah group, which it said were hosted on US-owned domains in violation of sanctions.

The websites of Iran's Arabic-language Al Alam television news network, Yemen's al-Masirah TV channel, and Bahrain's Lualua television network were also among the targeted outlets.

U.S. Sanctions on Iran Never Been Halted

TEHRAN (MNA) – Stating that the U.S. sanctions on Iran have never been halted, Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps said that Iran and the Islamic Revolution have been invaded and sanctioned by the US from the beginning.



Referring to the commemoration of the passengers of Iran Air Flight 655, which was shot down by a guided-missile cruiser of the United States Navy, Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi on Wednesday said, "This week marks the anniversary of one of the most heinous crimes committed by Americans and that is the crash of a passenger plane."

"U.S. sanctions on Iran have never been halted," he added, saying that Iran and the Islamic Revolution have been invaded and sanctioned by the US from the beginning.

The U.S. and its allies imposed sanctions on Iran all these years, and their sanctions have not been halted, he noted.

Tehran's Mayor Hopes Japan Can Successfully Host Olympic Games

TEHRAN (IP) - Expressing hope that Japan could successfully host Olympic games, Tehran's mayor said: "I hope Iranian athletes would shine in the Tokyo Olympic games."



Speaking at the closing ceremony of the Tokyo Olympic Poetry and Song Festival, which was held at the Abbasabad Cultural and Tourism Complex in Tehran, Pirouz Hanachi added: "Iran's caravan will leave for the Tokyo Olympics with 66 quotas, which is good."

"We hope that Japan, as the host, would be able to successfully host the Tokyo Olympics in the coronavirus condition," Hanachi noted. Massoud Soltanifar, Minister of Sports and Youth, Ikawa Kazutoshi, Ambassador of Japan to Tehran, Reza Salehi-Amiri, Chairman of the National Olympic Committee, attended the ceremony.

Minister Gets Yellow Card From Malis

TEHRAN (IP) - Minister of Cooperation, Labor, and Social Welfare received the lawmakers' yellow card over his performance.



Mohammad Shariatmadari attended the open session of the Iranian parliament held on Wednesday to answer the lawmakers' questions over his performance.

The first question was over the shortcomings of the social security services for carpet weavers. To answer such a question, Shariatmadari pointed to some of the regulations of the social security organization, budget deficit, and the administration debts to the organization.

Yet the minister's answer did not satisfy the lawmakers, hence he received a yellow card as a result of 45 votes in favor, 158 votes against, and 14 abstention votes of the parliamentarians.

No Blind Areas for Iranian Military Radars

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran's Commander of Army Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard said there are no blind spots for the Iranian military radars and the country can observe hundreds of kilometers from its borders.

"Iran is highly capable of detecting and interception of various types of aircraft," he said, "There are no blind spots in the Iranian military radars and the country can observe hundreds of kilometers from its borders."

"Air defense is the pillar of ensuring Iran's security," he added, underscoring the significance of a comprehensive air defense system for protecting Iran's air territory.

Iran has the most precise radar and missile systems, adding that all military equipment is prepared to deal appropriately with threats. There has been good progress in producing reconnaissance, combat and operational and data collecting and electronic warfare equipment in accordance with the types of threats.

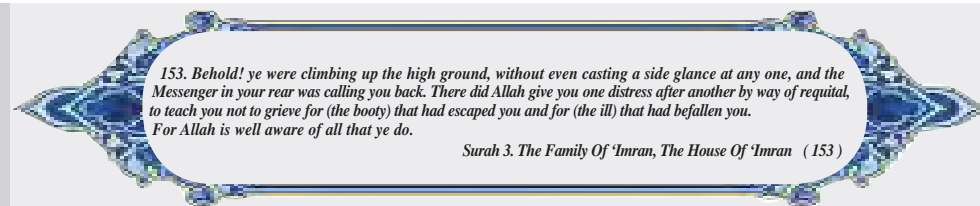
Air defense systems in Iran are interconnected in a network to ensure the security of the Iranian sky.

Air defense systems in Iran act in one single network and all commands are issued through the network through highly secure communication channels. It is worth noting that Iran recently unveiled the Dey-9 air defense system and the Quds radar system during a ceremony in the presence of high-ranking military officials.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:08
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:45
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:08
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:53



Tehran, Yerevan Urged to Focus on Joint Investment

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran and Armenia explored the ways for boosting economic cooperation and both sides emphasized to cooperate on the joint investment.

Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholamhossein Shafei on Tuesday met visiting Armenian Deputy Minister of Economy Varos Simonyan where the both sides on boosting bilateral cooperation in the field of joint investment.

During the meeting, Shafei pointed to the amicable ties between Iran and Armenia and said this relation is in good level as the two countries enjoy a good and long co-existence. He went on to say that Armenia enjoys excellent economic growth in the Central Asian and Caucasus region and private sector in Armenia has developed with considerable face and this country's economy has progressed fabulously in recent years.

Turning to the status and specifications of Armenian economy, Shafei said that economy in Armenia is based on free economy and this issue has caused the country to enjoy considerable economic growth.

Armenia has an influential presence in Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), he said, adding that Armenia is the only country in the Union that shares joint border with the Islamic Republic of Iran and therefore, economic relations with Armenia enjoy a unique opportunity.

Shafei noted that although Iran and Armenia have a close and long all-out relations but their economic relations have not progressed like their political ties and they should improve their economic relations along with their political ties.

Elsewhere in his remarks, chairman of ICCIMA pointed to the sanctions imposed against Iran and said that the volume of trade between Iran and Armenia will expand after sanctions imposed on Iran are lifted and consequently, trade and business relations between the two countries will be developed considerably.

Cooperating in the bartering method can be a proper strategy for overcoming oppressive U.S. sanctions, he added.

Shafei noted that there are various capacities for bilateral cooperation like in the mining sector, husbandry and agro sectors. He added that the both sides can work



together in the copper and gold sectors as well as in the fields of textile, apparel, construction, technical and engineering sectors.

He reiterated that Armenian government's policy of giving incentives for investment is considerable and it helps bilateral cooperation. He went on to say that the Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce is one of the most active chambers and it can help the grounds to be prepared for bilateral cooperation, adding that he welcomes expansion of economic cooperation with Armenia.

Armenia's Deputy Minister of Economy, for his turn, said that Armenia attaches great importance to its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in all fields and its positive stand in the region and considers Iran a friendly country in bilateral cooperation.

Simonyan went on to say that Armenia has nowadays tried to identify and resolve the problems in way of cooperation, adding that before any cooperation, the infrastructures should be improved, adding that Armenia after gaining its independence joined the WTO although it was not so easy.

Armenia is the only country in EAEU which shares joint land border with the Islamic Republic of Iran in a way that Armenia can pave suitable ways for the Islamic Republic of Iran to get access to lucrative market of Eurasian Economic Union, he added.

He reiterated that Armenia have repeatedly said that it is ready to cooperate with Iran for this country's arrival into the 200-million-people EAEU market.

He noted that likely the sanctions is the major hurdle in way of Iran-Armenia trade ties and by its removal, major part of woes in trade between the two countries will be resolved and they can develop their trade exchange.

He added that dispatch of trade delegation is on the agenda of Armenia's Chamber of Commerce and the delegation will also confer on the cooperation in the field of economy.

Simonyan blasted the economic sanctions which makes competition unfair and Armenia loses its chance of competition for ties with its neighbors and it suffers. Then Shafei said that bartering trade is the proper solution and way for overcoming the cruel sanctions.

Iranians Investing in Mining Sector of Turkey, Australia

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Mine and Industry Commission of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) believes Iran has not been successful in attracting investment in its mining sector and even some of Iranians are busy with investing in the mining sector of Turkey and Australia.

Bahram Shakouri said that unfortunately Iran does not usually have joint cooperation with other countries in the mining sector, adding that in some periods that there were no U.S. sanctions, Iran had some ties with foreign companies in some mines in the country but they were also forced to leave the country because of the sanctions.

On the condition of cooperation in the mining sector with other countries, he said that because of the problems resulted by the sanctions, Iran's major economic exchanges in all sectors have been with the neighboring states like Iraq as well as China. He added that figures and statistics are announced two years later but the unofficial statistics show that Iran's annual non-oil exports stand at around \$50b as the mineral products account for 30 percent of Iran's total exports.

Shakouri went on to say that some of Iranian here and there have invested in other countries like Turkey and even Australia and they have bought mines, otherwise there has



been no broad mining relations with other countries, and if it had happened, the country could not have faced problems in the sanctions era.

Touching upon the reason for lack of joint investment in the mining sector, he said that investment is done based on some indexes like business climate or domestic regulations which are effective

in joint investment and when we lack such indexes, there will be no attraction for foreign investors to invest in the country.

He admitted that sanctions have doubled the woes and most of companies which are active in different European countries or other continents have a close and interwoven ties with the U.S. and it is natural to ignore investment in Iran because of their ties with the U.S.

On the possibility of using the resources of the neighboring states, Shakouri said that we can use the resources of the neighboring states, and for example resources of Sangan in Afghanistan is one of them whose mining route is safer for Iran but due to the insecurity and violence in Afghanistan, this cooperation can be affected and private sector has no appetite to invest in places which are involved in war and insecurity.

He said foreign companies are eager to invest in Iran and even they express this interest but they cannot start investment practically due to the sanctions otherwise they would flood into the country because some of them have experience of cooperation with Iran in the past.

Gov't to Finish Digitalizing Records For Public, State Lands by September

TEHRAN (PressTV) – The government authorities say they will finish digitalizing records for public and state lands within the next few months, a project which has cost over \$35 billion in government spending over a period of seven years.

A report on the website of the Iranian agriculture ministry said on Tuesday that cadastral maps will be available by late September for 40 million hectares of lands that are being surveyed.

Iran embarked on a massive project in 2013 to define boundaries for all plots of lands designated as public or those directly owned by the government. The project is meant to assign digitalized cadastre maps to those lands to prevent misuses or legal disputes. Iran's Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization (FRW), a subsidiary of the agriculture ministry, has prepared cadastre maps for 55 million hectares of public and state lands this calendar year beginning March, according to FRW deputy chief Reza Aflatouni. Aflatouni said surveys accelerated in recent months with more government spending as he added that records on some 38 million hectares of lands had been digitalized as part of the cadastre project before March 2021.

The official described digitalizing records for public and state lands as a costly project, adding that the government currently spends an average of 40-90 million rials (\$160-\$360) on cadastre maps for each hectare of land.

Iran has been grappling with high levels of corruption and legal disputes related to ownership of public and state lands in recent decades. Experts believe assigning digital codes to those lands can eliminate such problems while enabling the government to better earmark the lands to manufacturing and agriculture activities.



Iran to Open Soil Mechanics Lab in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Technical and Soil Mechanics Laboratory Company of Iran, affiliated with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, is cooperating with Afghanistan to establish



a soil mechanics institute in the neighboring country that would offer help in dam construction projects.

CEO of Iran's Technical and Soil Mechanics Lab. Co. unveiled plans for the promotion of cooperation with six neighboring and regional countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Qatar.

Programs have been devised to tap into the Iranian elites' technical know-how to provide services for various organizations and export the exclusive technical and engineering services for the other countries, Majid Kianpoor told Tasnim.

He also unveiled plans to open a soil mechanics institute in Afghanistan, like the specialized laboratory operating in Iran.

"At present, many of the technical tests in the dam construction projects in Afghanistan are conducted in the Technical and Soil Mechanics Lab (of Iran), such as the (tests for the construction of) Shah wa Arus Dam," he noted.

Iran and Afghanistan have ramped up efforts in recent years to enhance academic cooperation and scientific collaboration in various fields.

Iran to Add 22 Items To Petchem Output Mix

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The Director of Planning and Development at the National Petrochemical Company said 33 petrochemical projects are under way in the country by whose development 22 new



items will be added to the country's production portfolio.

Hassan Abbaszadeh told reporters: "In the value chain of the oil industry from upstream to downstream, the most important link to prevent crude sales is the petrochemical industry."

He said there are currently 67 active petrochemical complexes in the country, of which three are utility companies, adding: "These complexes last year received about 40 million tons, equivalent to 992,000 barrels of crude oil per day as feedstock from the upstream sector, and supplied about 35 million tons of final product, of which 25 million tons were exported and about 10 million tons were supplied domestically."

The Planning and Development Director of the National Petrochemical Company continued: "330 polymer grades and 40 types of chemicals from this industry are supplied to domestic industries and about 15,000 small and large enterprises are active in this industry in Iran."

He pointed out that 48 development projects are being implemented in the form of the second and third leaps in the petrochemical industry, adding that these projects will increase the industry's capacity by 45 million tons, and require \$30 billion in investment, of which \$8 billion has been spent so far and the rest will be financed and absorbed in the coming years.

Iranian, Armenian Businessmen Reach Agreements

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Armenian and Iranian businessmen put a beginning for talks aimed at boosting the commercial ties during the Armenia-Iran business forum launched in Yerevan on June 29.

A delegation of Iranian high-tech companies have visited Yerevan on the sidelines of the forum.

Rhyton Solutions company director Masoud Hassani told reporters that they are in Armenia for the first time, but noted that there has already been cooperation.

"IT cooperation has already been in Armenia, they have ordered programs in us, and we have implemented them. We can implement bigger programs after this forum in different formats", he said, adding that they will have a number of meetings with the IT companies in Armenia.

Another representative of the Iranian delegation Emade Askaria said they plan to further raise the cooperation between Iran and Armenia.

"We want to start a production in Armenia, and then to enter into the global market together with the Armenian companies. This forum is attended by 10 Iranian and 40 Armenian companies, I hope we will reach beneficial agreements today", the Iranian delegation member said.

Iran, Georgia Gateway to Persian Gulf-Black Sea corridor



TEHRAN (MNA) – The Chairman of Iran and Georgia Parliamentary Friendship Group said that Islamic Republic of Iran and Georgia are the entry and exit gateway of the Persian Gulf-Black Sea transit corridor.

Speaking in a meeting with the Ambassador of Georgia to the Islamic Republic of Iran Ioseb Chakhvashvili, the Chairman of Iran-Georgia Parliamentary Friendship Group Adel Najafzadeh said that the two countries of Iran and Georgia must take maximum advantage of the opportunity created in this regard.

During the meeting, Najafzadeh pointed to the popular bonds and historical backgrounds as well as deep cultural commonalities between Iran and Georgia and emphasized the need for strengthening all-out cooperation between the two countries of Iran and Georgia.

Given the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran for strengthening relations with neighboring countries in the Caucasus region, Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance for its relations with the Republic of Georgia.

The two countries of Iran and Georgia do not have conflicts of interest in any area, so there are many actual and potential areas for the development of bilateral, regional and international relations between the two countries, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19, pandemic and said, "It is hoped that bilateral parliamentary friendship delegations will be promoted with the normalization of coronavirus, COVID-19, conditions."

For his part, Georgian envoy to the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed his satisfaction with the establishment of Iran-Georgia Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Iranian Parliament and expressed hope that the bilateral talks will lead to evermore strengthening of parliamentary relations between Iran and Georgia.

Turkish Reporters Demand Protection After Violent Arrest

ISTANBUL (AFP) - Dozens of reporters in Istanbul and Ankara rallied on Tuesday demanding protection from the police following the violent arrest of an AFP photographer during a banned Istanbul Pride event.

Award-winning photographer Bulent Kilic filed a "violent arrest" complaint against police officers who pinned him to the ground with their legs against his neck and back while he was covering the march on Saturday.

He was released without charges after being taken to a police station for questioning. Dozens of Pride event protesters were also briefly detained.



Ukrainian Parliament Approves Judicial Reforms

KYIV (Reuters) - The Ukrainian parliament approved a draft law on Tuesday that would re-establish a special commission on appointing judges, and lawmakers said the wording of the law was in line with the suggestions of Western donors.

The commission vets prospective judges to make sure they are respectable citizens and qualified to do their jobs, but its work was suspended by a Constitutional Court ruling in 2019.

The U.S. embassy in Ukraine, which had expressed concerns over the original version of the bill, welcomed the approval as "an important step forward toward comprehensive judicial reform", adding it looked forward to the final text of the law.



Moderate Kristersson Asked To Form New Swedish Gov't



STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - Sweden's parliamentary speaker asked Moderate Party leader Ulf Kristersson on Tuesday to try to garner enough support to form a government.

Social Democrat Prime Minister Stefan Lofven resigned on Monday after losing a no-confidence vote last week, handing the speaker the job of finding a candidate for prime minister who could for a government that would pass a vote in parliament.

The Moderate Party is the biggest opposition party in parliament.

"Ulf Kristersson has the task of looking into the options," parliament speaker Andreas Norlen told a news conference. "He is leader of the biggest party in the group that ousted Lofven. It is reasonable that he is given a chance to see if he can form a government."

Kristersson is also supported by the Christian Democrats, Liberals and Sweden Democrats, but together, the parties can count on only 174 votes in the 349-seat parliament.

"This means that in the coming days I will focus completely on the important talks that will now be held with the other parties in Sweden who also want a change of power, parties that put the political issues before the political game," Kristersson wrote on Instagram.

If no one from Lofven's Social Democrats, the Greens - the junior party in Lofven's minority coalition - the Centre and the Left Party is willing to support Kristersson, he will not be able to secure parliament's backing as a majority would be against him.

Kristersson and his allies will hope to persuade at least one member of parliament to break ranks so that he can be elected.

The center-right split over whether to seek a political accord with them after the last election in 2018, when the Centre and Liberals choosing to support their former rivals rather than give the Sweden Democrats a chance to influence policy.

The Sweden Democrats were once shunned by other parties because of their roots in the white-supremacist fringe and hard-line anti-immigration policies but its leader, Jimmie Akesson, has dragged it into the mainstream.

The Liberals have switched sides again and the center-left and center-right blocs are now evenly balanced in parliament.

The speaker said Kristersson would have to report his progress at the latest on Friday and that, if he says he can form a government the speaker aimed to hold a vote in parliament next week.

Russia Tests S-400 Missiles in Crimea



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has reportedly tested the readiness of its air defence systems in Crimea, an apparent show of force as Ukraine and NATO countries hold military drills in the Black Sea as part of their Sea Breeze 2021 exercise.

Russia deployed about 20 warplanes and helicopters, including Su-24M bombers, as well as S-400 and Pantsir surface-to-air missile systems in the tests, Interfax reported on Tuesday, citing Russia's Black Sea fleet.

It was not clear when the tests took place.

"The Black Sea Fleet is doing a number of things to monitor the actions of ships from NATO and other countries taking part in Sea Breeze 2021," the National Defense Management Centre said in a statement.

Russia had called for the military exercises, which have taken place 21 times since 1997, to be cancelled and the Russian defense ministry has said it will react if necessary to ensure national security.

Sea Breeze 2021, which began on Monday, will last two weeks and involve about 5,000 military personnel from NATO member states and other allies of the transatlantic security alliance. The United States Marine Corps will take part, as will about 30 US ships and 40 aircraft, including the missile destroyer USS Ross.

Ukrainian navy commander Oleksiy Neizhpapa said during an opening ceremony in the Ukrainian port city of Odessa that the exercises would send a "powerful message to maintain stability and peace in our region."

Ukraine is an ally of NATO, but not a member.

Russia on Monday denounced "the scale and aggressiveness" of the drills which "hardly contribute to security in the Black Sea region".

The military exercises and Russian tests come amid soaring tensions between Moscow and Western powers.

The situation deteriorated further last week over a disputed Black Sea incident on June 23 between Russia and the United Kingdom.

Moscow said it had fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of a British warship, HMS Defender, to chase it out of Black Sea waters off the coast of Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Moscow considers Crimea Russian territory, but the peninsula is internationally recognised as part of Ukraine which wants it back.

Romania's PM Gov't Survives No-Confidence Vote

BUCHAREST (Reuters) - Romania's centrist coalition government of Prime Minister Florin Citu easily survived a vote of no-confidence by the opposition Social Democrats on Tuesday, confirming its stable majority six months after coming to power at the height of pandemic.

The motion to topple Citu, headlined "A failed Romania - The fantastic record of Citu government", was rejected by legislators, with only 201 MPs supporting it. It needed 234 minimum votes to pass.

The PSD slammed Citu for what they call plunging living standards stemming from a drive to freeze state pensions and wages throughout the year in the aftermath of the pandemic, and because of ballooning household energy bills.

In response, the government said it expected the economy to grow by almost 7.0% this year as investment picks up and businesses and domestic consumption rebound from the damage inflicted by the coronavirus lockdowns. "Food is cheap, purchasing power is increasing, and consumption is increasing," Citu told parliament. "Romanians are happier."

The European Union member state saw its economy shrink less than expected last year, but its budget and current account deficits widened while the recovery has fuelled a spike in consumer price inflation.

Ruling Liberal Party head Ludovic Orban, who hailed the outcome of the vote, told reporters: "Our governing coalition works further ... The (censure) motion was a soap bubble, today this soap bubble burst."

Taliban Fighters Launch Attack on Ghazni

KABUL (Dispatches) - Taliban fighters have launched an attack on Ghazni, clashing with Afghan forces and using explosives in an attempt to seize the central Afghan city, local officials have said.

Tuesday's assault on Ghazni, on the highway linking the capital Kabul with the southern province of Kandahar, ramps up the Taliban's offensive against the government and comes as foreign troops prepare to exit from the war-torn country in less than three months. While senior Afghan officials confirmed the Taliban's offensive, they also said that Afghan forces were trying to regain control of lost ground.

The Taliban have had a strong presence in the province of Ghazni for years, but provincial police officials said the overnight attack from several directions was the fiercest launched by the armed group.

Clashes intensified near security checkpoints in the Shaikh Ajal and Ganj area of Ghazni city, forcing shopkeepers to shut the main market. "The situation in Ghazni is changing, most of the lost areas in the outskirts are being taken back by the Afghan forces," said Abdul Jami, a provincial council member in Ghazni.

Roads into the area were closed and telecoms interrupted making it hard for aid groups and officials to assess the number of casualties. As Afghan forces battled the Taliban in Ghazni and other parts of the country, officials said some civilians were actively joining the battle against the group.

Ajmal Omar Shinwari, a spokesman for the Afghan

defence and security forces, said Afghans keen to take up arms against the Taliban are being absorbed in the structure of territorial army forces.

"First they will be trained then they will be deployed to the battlefield along with other Afghan security forces," said Shinwari in capital city Kabul.

Violence surged after the United States and NATO military began the withdrawal of their last remaining troops to meet a September 11 deadline announced by President Joe Biden to end the US's longest war.

Since early May, the Taliban has launched several bloody offensives against government forces across the rugged countryside and says it has seized nearly 90 of the country's more than 400 districts. However, many of the armed group's claims are disputed by the government and have not been independently verified.

On Saturday officials said about 5,000 Afghan families fled their homes in the northern city of Kunduz after days of fighting between Taliban fighters and government forces. Heavy fighting was also reported this week in the provinces of Kandahar and Baghlan, where the Afghan forces claimed to have retaken areas from Taliban control but the group still held on to parts of Pul-e-Khumri area in central Baghlan, according to local media.

The Taliban has been waging an armed campaign against the Western-backed government since it was toppled from power in a 2001 U.S.-led invasion.



Bertrand Emerges as Right's Challenger for Macron



PARIS (Reuters) - Xavier Bertrand, a one-time insurance salesman from the French provinces, established himself as a leading contender for next year's presidential election, after his center-right bloc out-performed rivals in regional votes at the weekend.

The results shook up the political landscape, turning the 2022 election from what had been seen by many observers as a two-horse race between President Emmanuel Macron and far-right leader Marine Le Pen into a three way contest.

Voters in closely watched bellwether regions on Sunday handed victory to center-right conservative candidates like Bertrand, while rejecting contenders from Macron's party and Le Pen's Rassemblement National party.

The center right's come-back reflects the fading of voter distaste at the last conservative administration of Nicolas Sarkozy, Macron's difficulties rejuvenating French politics, and the far right's failure to broaden its appeal after tacking from the fringes towards the mainstream. "Now the presidential contest is a three-horse race," Bertrand told the business daily Les Echos as he doubled down on his pitch to lead the conservative's challenge next year.

Bertrand, who is derided by some foes as an overweight provincial politician, on Sunday handsomely defeated the far right in the north, a Le Pen stronghold where crime and the decline of local industry top voter concerns, to be re-elected leader of the region.

He said his party provided the strongest bulwark against the far right, earlier proclaiming to have "smashed the jaws of the Front National", referring to the old name of Le Pen's party often associated with its anti-Semitic, xenophobic past. An IPSOS/Sopra Steria poll late on Sunday showed Bertrand's popularity climbing nationwide. It projected he would win 18% of the first round presidential vote, up several points on previous polls and narrowing the gap on Macron and Le Pen.

"Of course there is no certainty of a duel between Macron and Le Pen (in 2022)," one government source said.

France's mainstream parties struggled to recover after Macron dynamited the traditional left-right divide in 2017. Sunday's votes showed the old system making a tentative return.



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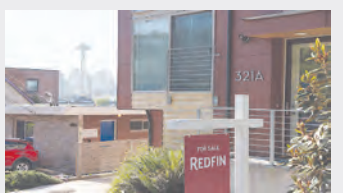
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U.S. Home Prices Rose in April at Fastest Pace in 15 Years

NEW YORK (Reuters) - U.S. single-family home prices in 20 key urban markets rose in April from a year earlier by the most in over 15 years, a closely watched survey said on Tuesday.

The S&P/Case Shiller composite index of 20 metropolitan areas gained 14.9% through the 12 months ended in April, the largest annual price increase since December 2005. A Reuters poll of economists had forecast a 14.5% increase.

On month-to-month basis, the 20-city composite index rose 1.6% from March. Economists polled by Reuters had been expecting a 1.7% increase.



Uneven Global Recovery Creates Daunting Challenges for Policymakers

LONDON (Reuters) - An uneven global recovery from the COVID-19 crisis will make recalibrating the fiscal and monetary stimulus a “daunting” challenge for policymakers, the Bank for International Settlement’s annual report said on Tuesday.

Dubbed the central bank to world’s central banks, the Swiss-based BIS said its main scenario was one of a solid global pick-up, albeit at varying speeds across countries.

The bank set out two alternative scenarios. One where large fiscal stimulus and a drawdown of accumulated savings results in stronger growth but also higher inflation and a substantial tightening in global financial conditions. In the other, growth disappoints as the virus proves harder to control. “While the recovery is under way and the central scenario is relatively benign, we are not out of the woods yet,” BIS head Agustin Carstens said.

The uneven recovery could leave emerging market countries at the sharp end of any difficulties, especially in the higher inflation scenario, where major central banks like the U.S. Federal Reserve start looking to raise interest rates.

Carstens, who headed Mexico’s central bank before joining the BIS, said it was healthy that some emerging markets were already raising rates in response to rising inflation, but stressed he expected advanced economies to wait.

“It would not be appropriate to tighten monetary policy today just to reduce measured inflation and sacrifice a recovery of the economy,” Carstens told Reuters. “Is that something (major) central banks would want to do today? I don’t think so.”

Instead he predicted more periods of “noisiness” for financial markets after volatility in bond and equity prices between January and March, when vaccination programmes prompted investors to try to pre-empt a tapering of Fed support.

“The main challenge (for the rest of the year) is how to co-ordinate market expectations with the conduct of policy,” Carstens said. “I think one of the hiccups we saw in the last months was the market going ahead of the Fed.”

The key question is whether recent strong increases in inflation will be temporary or more persistent. “As of today, we at the BIS consider that it will most likely be temporary,” Carstens said, citing base effects and that supply bottlenecks that have also pushed up prices should dissipate.

In the longer-run, many challenges lie ahead and normalising fiscal and monetary policies will not be easy. Public debt is at a post-World War II peak. Likewise, central bank balance sheets have only rarely reached similar heights, and then only during wars. “The uneven recovery creates daunting challenges for policymakers,” the BIS report said.

“The sustainability of debt can change if interest rates start increasing, Carstens added, “you don’t want to be surprised.”

The BIS also threw its full weight behind central bank digital currencies and stepped up criticism of cryptocurrencies like bitcoin, warning that they were “speculative assets rather than money.” read more

The report also looked at how COVID’s disproportional damage to lower-paid workers and the leap in stock markets driven by trillions of dollars of stimulus was intensifying concerns about inequality.

Lebanon Hikes Fuel Prices by More Than a Third as Consumers Reel

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Lebanon’s energy ministry dealt a serious blow to the already besieged pocketbooks of the country’s struggling consumers on Tuesday by raising fuel prices by more than 35 percent.

The move was widely expected after the government effectively slashed fuel subsidies last week as it struggles to deal with a surge in global commodity prices and an ever-deepening economic and financial crisis.

The energy ministry said the average price of 20 liters (roughly 5.5 gallons) of 95-octane gasoline has gone up by 35 percent to 61,100 Lebanese pounds (\$4 at parallel market exchange rates), while diesel prices have shot up by 38 percent to about \$2.7.

The price hikes will pile even more pressure on Lebanese consumers both at the pumps and elsewhere because fuel price inflation feeds through the broader economy, triggering price spikes for other goods and services.

Experts have warned that cutting subsidies is risky while Lebanese households are wrestling with decimated purchasing power and growing poverty. The country’s currency, the lira, has lost some 90 percent of its value on the parallel market since October 2019, when protests over political sclerosis and economic hardships first swept the nation.

The World Bank warned earlier this month that Lebanon’s economic crisis could rank as one of the top three worst the world has seen over the past 150 years. The country’s gross domestic product (GDP) – which measures the total output of goods and services – nosedived from close to \$55bn in 2018 to an estimated \$33bn last year, with GDP per capita plummeting by about 40 percent.



World Bank Raises China’s Economic Growth Outlook to 8.5%

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The World Bank raised its forecast of China’s economic growth this year to 8.5 per cent from 8.1 per cent and said Tuesday that a full recovery requires progress in vaccinations against the coronavirus.

The report adds to positive signs for China, the first major economy to rebound from the pandemic. Factory and consumer activity are back above pre-outbreak levels, though authorities have re-imposed travel controls in some areas to counter outbreaks of new variants of the virus.

Chinese economic growth is likely to decline to 5.4 per cent next year as the rebound from last year’s history-making global slump fades and activity returns to normal, the World Bank said.

Its forecast was an increase over a report in April that said China and Vietnam were the only East Asian economies to achieve a v-shaped recovery in 2020 with output back above pre-coronavirus levels.

China is on track to vaccinate 40 per cent of its population by early summer, but “a full recovery will also require continued progress toward achieving wide-spread immunization, the World Bank said.

Jordan Witnesses Modest Economic Contraction

AMMAN (Dispatches) - Jordan’s economy has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic amid already low growth and high unemployment rates. The crisis has had particularly profound impacts on the service sector, travel receipts, and tourism and, with those, the economy in the Kingdom contracted by 1.6 per cent in 2020, according to the latest issue of the Jordan Economic Monitor (JEM).

The Spring 2021 edition of the JEM, titled Uncertain and Long Trail Ahead, was launched during a virtual event hosted by the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation cultural forum, according to a statement posted on the World Bank website.

This is the first contraction of the

economy in three decades but, while historic for Jordan, it is among the lowest economic contraction in the world in 2020. Part of this reduced impact can be attributed to the government’s large fiscal and monetary stimulus packages and targeted cash support to poor and vulnerable households, totalling about 10.5 per cent of GDP. The sharp drop in the cost of oil imports also significantly offset losses to Jordan’s economy.

Continuing uncertainty about the path of the COVID pandemic, despite vaccines, and an uneven global recovery are likely to slow the return of contact-intensive sectors, such as services and tourism, with Jordan’s economy expected to recover only gradually, registering growth of 1.4 per cent in 2021.

“The Government of Jordan has been able to mitigate some impacts of the crisis through timely and ambitious support programs for affected sectors and vulnerable workers, but challenges remain,” Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director, was quoted in the statement as saying.

“The World Bank is supporting Jordan to help it stimulate sustainable job creation and pursue a green and climate-resilient recovery,” he said.

Moving forward, the JEM emphasizes a range of investment-enabling reforms is needed to support strong recovery, given that Jordan was experiencing weakening economic growth and stagnating productivity prior to the COVID crisis. Structural impediments in the labor market had contributed to a steady rise in unemployment — Jordan has one of the world’s lowest levels of female participation in the labor force and high informal employment.

“The current crisis provides a window of opportunity to build back better,” said Saadia Refaqt, World Bank senior economist and author of the report.

“Jordan needs to focus on reforms that can be felt by Jordanians and the private sector by improving its investment climate to contribute to growth and job creation,” Refaqt said.

The Spring 2021 JEM contains two special themes: A snapshot of the private sector and a review of inequality in Jordan and the wider MENA region.

World Passes 3b Vaccine Mark in Race To Contain Covid

PARIS (Dispatches) - More than three billion Covid-19 vaccines have been administered around the world, an AFP tally found Tuesday, as countries race to contain the virulent Delta variant that is fuelling outbreaks all over the globe.

The highly infectious strain of coronavirus has caught many nations off guard, with Russia reporting its highest daily death toll yet, Australia shutting down city after city and fears growing over major sporting events like Euro 2020 and the Olympic Games.

At least 3.9 million people have died from Covid-19, and while some wealthy countries are succeeding in bringing infections down thanks to strong vaccination drives, others where shots are not as readily available are struggling.

According to the tally, high-income countries as defined by the World Bank have administered an average of 79 doses per 100 inhabitants, with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel taking the lead.

In low-income nations, the figure is just one shot per 100 people.

On Tuesday, foreign ministers from the Group of 20 major economies stressed the need for greater global cooperation in the face of the pandemic.

“Multilateral cooperation will be key to our collective ability to stop this global health crisis,” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the ministers in the ancient Italian city of Matera.

Western leaders have pledged to donate one billion doses to poorer countries, but have been widely criticized for being too slow to help.

Vaccine hesitancy has also played a part in slow uptake.

In Russia, which recorded its highest daily death toll on Tuesday since the outbreak of the pandemic, officials have introduced mandatory shots for some groups of citizens to counter scepticism.

The country reported 652 coronavirus fatalities over the past 24 hours, with a record-high number of daily deaths -- 119 -- in Saint Petersburg, which is due to host a Euro 2020 quarter final on Friday.

Meanwhile Australian public anger is growing at the slow pace of vaccinations in a country that had been broadly successful in eliminating local transmission and leading an almost-normal life.

The Delta variant has pushed Sydney, Perth, Darwin and Brisbane into lockdown, meaning a total of more than 10 million Australians are having to stay home.

But so far, less than five percent of adults are believed to have received both vaccine doses.

Brisbane resident Nicola Hungerford, 57, said she expected lockdowns to keep happening “until the government gets their bloody act together” on the vaccine rollout. “It’s gobsmacking and they’re just irresponsible. It shows how little respect they have for people,” she told AFP.

Vietnam’s Economy Picks Up



HANOI (Dispatches) - Vietnam’s economic growth accelerated in the second quarter on resurgent global demand, even as the country’s worst outbreak of the pandemic temporarily shuttered key manufacturing hubs.

Gross domestic product rose 6.61% in the second quarter compared to a year earlier, up from a revised 4.65% in the first quarter, the General Statistics Office said Tuesday. That compared to the median estimate of 7.2% in a Bloomberg survey of six economists.

Growth picked up on increases in industrial output as demand recovered in global markets, and as favorable weather boosted agricultural products, Nguyen Thi Huong, head of the General Statistics Office, said in a briefing in Hanoi. Increased government spending also helped drive the expansion, she said.

The country’s benchmark stock index was up 0.4% at the noon break. The dong currency was stable, trading at 23,023 per dollar as of 12:29 p.m. local time, according to prices from banks in Hanoi compiled by Bloomberg.

Vietnam was successful at limiting infections during the early months of the pandemic, but an outbreak that began in late-April forced the temporary closure of industrial parks housing key electronics manufacturing hubs. Tenants included units of Foxconn Technology Group and suppliers of Samsung Electronics Co. and Apple Inc.

“Looking past the jump in year-on-year growth due to a weak base for comparison, GDP data suggest that Vietnam is facing a heavy economic toll from its efforts to control the virus,” Gareth Leather, senior Asia economist at Capital Economics Ltd., wrote in a research note. “With sporadic outbreaks continuing, the economy is likely to suffer further in the months ahead.”

New CBI Governor Appointed

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iran's Presidential Office Mahmoud Vaezi announced on Wednesday that Akbar Komijani has been appointed as the governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Speaking to reporters, Vaezi said that the appointment was made after approval of members of the cabinet. Abdolnasser Hemmati, one of hopefuls for June 18 presidential election in Iran, was the former CBI governor. According to Vaezi, the CBI should not be managed by a caretaker, but a governor should be appointed when an ex-chief resigns or is not able to continue its work.



S. Korea Ups 2021 Growth Outlook to 4.2%

SEOUL (Yonhap) -- South Korea's finance ministry sharply raised its 2021 growth outlook for the country's economy amid robust exports and reviving consumption.

The government forecast Asia's fourth-largest economy to expand 4.2 percent this year, up from its December estimate of 3.2 percent. The Korean economy is projected to grow 3 percent next year. If realized, it would mark the fastest growth since 2010 when the Korean economy expanded 6.8 percent.

The ministry's forecast is higher than the Bank of Korea's projection of 4 percent and the 3.6 percent growth estimate by the International Monetary Fund.

The Korean economy contracted 0.9 percent last year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the first yearly retreat since the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis.

The upward revision was widely expected as Asia's fourth-largest economy has been on a recovery track, supported by solid exports of chips and autos, and reviving domestic demand. The government said it will focus on making a "complete" economic recovery in the second half, with policy measures to boost domestic demand and narrow social inequality driven by the pandemic.

"Domestic demand is expected to improve, led by pent-up demand for in-person services, but it will not likely recover to pre-pandemic levels amid uncertainty over COVID-19 and restraints on foreign travel," the ministry said in a statement.

Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki told a press briefing that reinvigorating domestic demand is key to creating jobs and accelerating the economic recovery.

Private spending is expected to grow 2.8 percent this year, following a 5 percent contraction last year, according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

As part of key measures to boost domestic demand, the government will provide cash back rewards for credit card spending to prompt more people to open their wallets.

People will be able to receive back 10 percent of the amount they spend with credit cards in the August-October period than the second quarter. The government will run the program for three months.

The ministry also plans to newly launch a discount coupon program for six areas that have suffered severe setbacks due to the pandemic, such as sports, movies and travel.

The country earlier introduced discount coupon programs aimed at boost spending on travel, dining, arts and leisure activities but halted them amid a flare-up in coronavirus cases. The timing of coupon use will depend on COVID-19 situations and the speed of the vaccine rollout.

The measures to boost consumption will be funded by another round of an extra budget currently under review.

The government is planning this year's second extra budget, estimated at some 30 trillion won (US\$26.6 billion) as it seeks to support vulnerable people



hit hard by the prolonged pandemic.

The country, meanwhile, will make all-out policy efforts to achieve the export goal of \$600 billion this year.

Exports, which account for half of the economy, are set to extend their gains to the eighth straight month in June. Overseas shipments jumped 45.6 percent on-year to \$50.7 billion in May and exports amounted to \$248.3 billion in the January-May period.

The ministry forecast exports to grow 18.5 percent this year, sharply up from its earlier estimate of an 8.6 percent gain.

The country will also designate semiconductors, batteries and vaccines as three key sectors dealing with national strategic technologies. It will spend more than 2 trillion won supporting their facility investment, and provide tax incentives and other support.

The job market is expected to be on a recovery track this year. The government forecast the number of the employed people will increase 250,000, higher than its earlier estimate of a rise of 150,000.

The government will focus on creating more than 150,000 jobs for the remainder of the year.

South Korea shed 218,000 jobs last year, the largest in 22 years, mainly because

in-person service segments, such as hospitality and retailers, suffered job slumps. Meanwhile, the government raised its 2021 outlook for consumer prices to

1.8 percent from its earlier projection of 1.1 percent.

South Korea's inflationary pressure remained muted last year due to the pandemic, but the growth of consumer prices picked up amid a rise in prices of farm and oil products and an accelerating economic recovery.

Consumer prices grew 2.6 percent on-year in May, the fastest on-year gain in more than nine years. The BOK aims to keep annual inflation at 2 percent over the medium term.

2nd Iranian-Made...

FROM PAGE 1

Nearly six million shots have been delivered to the elderly and the frontline health workers in Iran of which nearly one million have gone to people receiving a second dose for better protection against the disease.

Government authorities expect the number of vaccinations would reach 13 million in mid-August.

Iran has three other coronavirus vaccine candidates, including two being developed by scientists in the country's armed forces and one by the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, an established pharmaceutical company run by the government.

Facing a series of inhumane sanctions imposed by the United States, the Iranian government has mostly relied on home-grown capacities to tackle one of the harshest outbreaks of the coronavirus in the Middle East.

Health ministry figures published on Tuesday put the daily death toll from the disease and the number of confirmed cases at 142 and 12,717, respectively.

Army Stages...

FROM PAGE 1

Dubbed 'Amaniyat-e Paydar 1400' (Sustainable Security), the naval exercised kicked off on Wednesday morning with the participation of the Army Navy's surface and aerial units, including missile launchers, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, naval drones and electronic warfare systems, as well as Navy's ranger units.

According to the latest statement, the naval forces have carried out reconnaissance mission using Ababil and Yasir mid-range drones. Monitoring the general area of the training, the drones transferred online the recorded data to the control and command center.

Describing the mission as "completely specialized", the statement noted that the drones managed to identify different types of vessels.

This naval exercise is being staged in an area of approximately 77,000 square kilometers in the 20% of the Islamic Republic of Iran's share in the Caspian Sea, during which offensive and defensive scenarios will be implemented to protect the country's territorial waters and maintain transportation lines.

Tehran Ready to...

FROM PAGE 1

The Islamic Republic of Iran is itself a victim of cyber-attacks by the malicious Stuxnet computer virus that was created jointly by the United States and Israel to damage Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities, he said.

In 2010, U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies unleashed a computer worm called Stuxnet on Iranian uranium-enrichment plants in an attempt to disrupt Iran's nuclear program. The Washington Post reported two years later that the US National Security Agency (NSA), its spy service CIA, and Israel's military had worked together to launch Stuxnet against Iran's nuclear facilities.

The act of sabotage was followed by Mossad's assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists.

States, Takht-Ravanchi added, "must refrain from the threat or use of force within or through the cyberspace environment."

He added the countries "must also exercise due control over cyberspace-related companies and platforms under their jurisdiction, and take appropriate measures to make them accountable for their behavior in the ITC environment, including for violating national sovereignty, security and public order of other States. At any rate, States are responsible for their internationally wrongful acts within or through cyberspace."

"Cyberspace and its related means, technics and technologies must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, and to that end, States must act cooperatively, responsibly and in full accordance with applicable international law," Takht-Ravanchi said.

"We share the views that consideration of cyberspace-related issues must be continued in the General Assembly. For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran...stands ready to contribute to the Assembly's efforts in developing principles and norms required for cyberspace," the Iranian diplomat said.

German Finance Minister Rejects Calls to Reform EU Fiscal Rules



BERLIN (Dispatches) - German finance minister Olaf Scholz has dismissed calls for reform of German and EU fiscal rules, saying they provide enough flexibility to overcome crises such as the pandemic.

However, Mr Scholz, who is also the Social Democrats' candidate for chancellor in September's federal election, said Germany must continue its big-spending plans next year to avoid a hard economic landing. "We fared better economically than anyone would have expected in the midst of the crisis because we pursued an expansionary fiscal strategy," he said.

"We mustn't abruptly stop the measures we took to ensure the economic recovery."

Mr Scholz won plaudits for his management of the Covid-19 crisis, promising early on to do "whatever it takes" to cushion the slump and pushing through a €130 billion fiscal stimulus to kickstart recovery with a "ka-boom".

Mr Scholz also said the fine line he must tread as the SPD candidate aiming to succeed Angela Merkel, who soon leaves the political stage after 16 years as chancellor.

Mr Scholz must show his base he will not retrench spending too quickly. But he must also signal to potential centrist voters that an SPD chancellor would not rip up rules that, under Mrs Merkel, delivered six straight years of balanced budgets and a 10-year economic boom – the longest in German postwar history.

Mr Scholz has insisted, for example, that in 2023 Germany will reinstate its "debt brake", the constitutional limit on new borrowing suspended since the start of the pandemic.

But until then, he said, Germany must continue with policies that have delivered billions in aid to struggling companies. Scholz will borrow an additional €100 billion next year, on top of the €370 billion in new loans approved since the crisis began, and has earmarked €51.8 billion for investments in 2022 and more than €50 billion every year until 2025.

The borrowing has been controversial. Jens Weidmann, head of the Bundesbank, told a cabinet meeting last week the debt brake should be reintroduced next year, as Mr Scholz originally planned, and not in 2023, saying that rising growth would yield more tax revenues.

Mr Scholz argued now is not the time to tighten the rules. Yet he also rejected the opposition Greens' call to reform the debt brake, saying there was no majority in parliament for that. "If the Greens [pursue] the idea of changing the constitution to reform the debt brake, they're campaigning de facto on a plan that can't be enforced," he said.

In addition, he argued the debt brake had not prevented "record volumes of investment", which rose "from €34 billion in 2018, when I came into office, to more than €50 billion in 2022". Mr Scholz was optimistic about Germany's economic prospects, with the government expecting growth of 3.5 per cent this year and 3.6 per cent in 2022. He also played down the risk of inflation, which rose to 2.4 per cent in May.

U.S. Sending Bangladesh 2.5m Covid Vaccine Doses

WASHINGTON (Dispatches)

- The United States began shipping 2.5 million doses of Moderna's Covid vaccine to Bangladesh on Tuesday, a White House official told AFP, as the South Asian country confronted a wave of new infections.

"Thanks to the U.S. commitment to playing a leading role in ending the pandemic everywhere, 2.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine will begin to ship to Bangladesh," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Illustrating the urgency, delivery is expected to be completed this week.

Bangladesh, which neighbors India, began a severe lockdown on Monday in response to spiraling infections from the Delta variant. People are restricted to their homes, with offices closed, traffic shut down and the security forces enforcing compliance.

The South Asian country of around 170 million people recorded nearly 6,000 cases last Friday. Authorities say that districts near the Indian border are suffering especially badly, with hospitals in the cities of Khulna and Rajshahi overwhelmed.

Bangladesh "has a 55 percent week-over-week increase in cases, driven largely by the Delta variant," a White House official said, explaining how the country made it onto the urgent list.

President Joe Biden has declared the United States the world's vaccine "arsenal" in the war on Covid-19.

The role reflects U.S. pharmaceutical power but also Biden's emphasis on restoring Washington's leadership around the world after the tempestuous and often chaotic years under Donald Trump.

U.S. officials deny they are competing in "vaccine diplomacy" with authoritarian China and Russia, which



have used nationally produced vaccines to fill the supply vacuum in less-developed regions during the pandemic.

Like many other countries, Bangladesh has desperately sought more vaccines and has not been picky about where they come from.

Health minister Zahid Maleque said in May that the

country wants to buy 50 million doses from China's Sinopharm.

It also wants to buy five million Sputnik doses, foreign minister A.K. Abdul Momen said after meeting the Russian ambassador this month.

The White House pointedly said that its vaccine shipments -- mostly made through the World Health Organization's Covax program -- come free in all senses.

"We are sharing these doses not to secure favors or extract concessions. Our vaccines do not come with strings attached. We are doing this with the singular objective of saving lives," the official said.

The Biden administration has committed to donating \$2 billion to Covax and also purchasing 500 million Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines for the African Union and 92 poorer countries. At the recent G7 summit in Britain, US partners agreed to donate another 500 million doses.

"Putting an end to this pandemic requires eliminating it around the world," the White House official said. "This is a unique moment in history and it requires American leadership."

Additionally, some 80 million doses from the US supply are earmarked for foreign allocation by the end of June.

Two million doses of the Pfizer vaccine are now being shipped to Peru, and 2.5 million Moderna doses are going to Pakistan, the White House said Monday. Another 2.5 million doses are headed to Colombia.

Dinosaurs Declined Before Meteor Strike

PARIS (Dispatches) - Dinosaurs may have been in decline millions of years before the meteor strike often attributed to their extinction, according to research published Tuesday examining the role played by changing climate.

The Chicxulub meteor, which slammed into what is now Mexico's Yucatan peninsula around 66 million years ago, is thought to have led to the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event that killed off three quarters of life on Earth -- dinosaurs included. Now new research suggests that a number of species of the terrible lizards may have been declining up to 10 million years before the meteor strike.

Research published in the journal Nature examined data from 1600 dinosaur remains found across the planet to model how common certain species of carnivorous and herbivorous dinosaurs were in the late Cretaceous.

The team found that species decline began around 76 million years ago.

Fabien Condamine, from the University of Montpellier's Institute of Evolutionary Science and lead study author, said his team had followed the decline of six families of dinosaur, comprising nearly 250 distinct species.

"We have a peak in diversity around 76 million years ago," he told AFP.

"Then there's a decline that lasts 10 million years -- that's more than the entire duration of the Homo genus."

The team found two possible explanations for the falling dinosaur diversity identified in the fossil records and their own computer modelling.

Terzic Named as Technical Director at Dortmund

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Edin Terzic, the caretaker coach who steered Borussia Dortmund to Champions League qualification and lifted the German Cup last season, has been appointed technical director at the Bundesliga club for 2021/22. The 38-year-old took over when Lucien Favre was sacked last December and guided Dortmund to finish third in the Bundesliga last season. He had been expected to be assistant coach of Marco Rose, who takes charge at Dortmund after two years at Moenchengladbach.

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E-Mail Address:
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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

Russia to Send 335 Athletes to Tokyo

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's Olympic Committee will send 335 athletes to the Tokyo Olympics next month, its president said on Tuesday, where they will compete without their national flag and anthem due to doping sanctions. Russian athletes are barred from competing at major international events, including the Olympics, with their flag and anthem until 2022. The country will compete in Tokyo under the name "ROC", an acronym for the Russian Olympic Committee.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

THURSDAY JULY 1, 2021

Zverev, Williams Cruise Into Wimbledon Second Round

LONDON (Dispatches) - Germany's Alexander Zverev eased into the second round of Wimbledon on Tuesday beating Dutch qualifier Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 in just 89 minutes.

The 24-year-old French Open semi-finalist had lost to qualifiers at Wimbledon on two occasions -- Ernests Gulbis in the third round in 2018 and to Jiri Vesely in the first round in 2019 -- but he made no mistake this time round.

Not even a 15 minute break so the Court One roof could be closed due to rain upset the fourth seed's rhythm.

"I was great on the court! Without the roof and then with," he said.

Zverev, who pounded down 20 aces, will play the winner of the match between American Tennys Sandgren, ranked 68, and 94th-ranked Norbert Gombos of Slovakia.

Meanwhile Venus Williams marked her record 90th Grand Slam appearance with a three-set victory over Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania at Wimbledon on Tuesday.

The 41-year-old American, who is a five-time champion at the All England Club, triumphed 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.

Former world number one Williams first played Wimbledon in 1997 and is making her 23rd appearance at the tournament.

Now ranked at 111 in the world, she fired 10 aces and 33 winners to defeat her 160th-ranked opponent.

Up next is Tunisian 21st seed Ons Jabeur who eased past Rebecca Peterson of Sweden 6-2, 6-1.

Australia's Ashleigh Barty overcame a mid-match wobble to reach the second round at Wimbledon as rain once again halted play on the outside courts on Tuesday.

Barty came through 6-1, 6-7 (1/7), 6-1 against Carla Suarez Navarro in a match filled with emotion on Centre Court, whose roof ensured the match could be finished.

Play was due to get underway again at 5:00pm local time (1600GMT) the same time as kick-off in the Euro 2020 last 16 tie between England and old foes Germany at Wembley.

However, 18 first round matches were



pushed back to Wednesday with men's doubles matches cut to best-of-three sets in the first two rounds in an effort to make up the backlog.

Barty's Spanish opponent made sure her 11th and final appearance at The Championships went the distance just months after returning from a winning fight against cancer.

Barty is bidding to add the senior singles Wimbledon title to her 2011 junior crown on the 50th anniversary of her fellow indigenous Australian's Evonne Goolagong Cawley's first title.

Goolagong Cawley was 29 when she won her second singles title in 1980 -- 10 years younger than two legends.

Venus had some worrying moments in her match against Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania. However, the five-time Wimbledon singles champion, playing in her 90th Grand Slam, eventually came through 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.

With no 2019 champion Simona Halep or Naomi Osaka, Williams's chances of equalling the controversial Margaret Court's record of 24 Grand Slam titles on her favorite surface have improved considerably.

At the other end of the age scale Venus's conqueror from 2019 Wimbledon the then 15-year-old Coco Gauff makes her return and plays British wildcard Francesca Jones.

Barty opened on Centre Court -- an honour usually given to the defending champion -- due to Halep having withdrawn through injury.

The 25-year-old lost focus when serving for the match in the second set but dominated the third to go through.

Dutch Coach Quits After Euro 2020 Exit



THE HAGUE (Dispatches) - Dutch coach Frank de Boer stepped down on Tuesday after the Netherlands' dismal Euro 2020 last-16 elimination by the Czech Republic.

De Boer's decision comes as speculation mounted over his future as manager of the Oranje following the team's 2-0 loss in Budapest on Sunday evening.

"I have decided not to continue as national coach. The target has not been achieved, that is clear," De Boer, 51, said in a statement released by the Dutch football federation KNVB.

De Boer said when he was appointed in 2020 it was an "honour" but he was also "aware of the pressure that would come upon me from the moment I was appointed".

"That pressure is only increasing now, and that is not a healthy situation for me, nor for the squad in the run-up to such an important game for Dutch football on its way to World Cup qualification."

The KNVB said in any case, De Boer's contract stipulated that the team should reach at least the quarter-finals, adding "the contract will not be renewed".

"It has been decided that both parties will separate," the KNVB added, speaking from its headquarters in Zeist near the central city of Utrecht.

Barty, Kyrgios Lead Australia's Olympic Tennis Team

SYDNEY (Dispatches) - World number one Ashleigh Barty confirmed she will compete at the Tokyo Olympics Tuesday, headlining an 11-strong Australian tennis team for the Games that includes firebrand Nick Kyrgios.

Barty's announcement comes just a day after four-time gold medallist Serena Williams revealed she would be skipping the Games, which will also be without Spanish great Rafael Nadal.

The 2019 French Open champion Barty, 25, said she intended to compete in both singles and doubles at the Games, adding "I can't wait to be a part of it".

"Competing in an Olympic Games is always a dream as young kids you aspire to," she said.

The Australia team comprises six men and five women, including former US Open champion Sam Stosur who will be going to her fifth Olympic Games at the age of 37.

World number 15 Alex de Minaur is the top-ranked Australian man, with the volatile Kyrgios likely to be one of the highest profile male players in the draw, despite his modest ranking of 60.

Both will play singles with De Minaur also featuring in the doubles.

In contrast to veteran Stosur, Barty De Minaur and Kyrgios will all be making their Olympic debuts in Tokyo.

"It's super special being able to represent your country in one Olympics let alone five," said Stosur, who also competed at Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio 2016.

Stosur and Barty are joined by Ajla Tomljanovic in the women's singles, with Barty teaming up with Storm Sanders in the women's doubles and Stosur with Ellen Perez.

John Millman and James Duckworth join Kyrgios and De Minaur, who won the Eastbourne International last week, in the men's singles.



Fernandinho Extends Contract With Man City

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City captain Fernandinho has signed a one-year contract extension at the Premier League champions, saying he has unfinished business at the club.

The deal keeps the 36-year-old Brazilian at the Etihad Stadium until 2022 and he is targeting another shot at the Champions League after City lost to Chelsea in their first final in the competition last month.

"In my head and my mind, the job is not done yet and so that's why I decided to stay here another year and try to help the team and the club to achieve the goals

that they're looking for," said Fernandinho.

"In my point of view, we can do that, there's still places to improve and to get those targets."

He added: "If I can keep doing the same way, leading them inside the pitch, off the pitch, to help them to improve and get better and to perform better during the games, I would be the most happy person there."

Fernandinho joined City from Shakhtar Donetsk in 2013 and has made 350 appearances and won 12 domestic trophies during that time.

"Fernandinho's contribution to Manchester City cannot be overstated," said director of football Txiki Begiristain. "He is an outstanding footballer -- one of the best in the world in his position -- and an exemplary professional."

"Since he arrived in 2013, his attitude and consistency have been exceptional, and he has developed into one of our most influential players."

England Reach Euro 2020 Quarters to End Germany Curse

LONDON (Dispatches) - Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane fired England into the Euro 2020 quarter-finals as they sealed a 2-0 win against Germany that ended decades of hurt at the hands of their bitter rivals on Tuesday.

Sterling struck with 15 minutes left in a tense last 16 tie at Wembley before Kane clinched England's first knockout-stage victory over Germany since 1966.

In the 55 years since England beat the Germans in the World Cup final, they had endured a painful litany of defeats against Die Mannschaft when the stakes were highest.

England were eliminated from the 1970, 1990 and 2010 World Cups by Germany, who also beat them in the Euro 96 semi-finals at Wembley.

But Gareth Southgate's side have finally exorcised the ghosts of Paul Gascoigne's tears and their own manager's penalty miss 25 years ago. England produced a gritty display capped by clinical finishes from Sterling, who now has three goals in the tournament, and Kane -- who at last bagged his first of the competition.

England, yet to concede a goal in the tournament, head to Rome on Saturday for a quarter-final against Ukraine.

Andriy Shevchenko's team beat 10-man Sweden 2-1 after extra-time in the last 16 on Tuesday.

Chasing a first major international trophy since 1966, England's side of the draw looks wide open, with a potential semi-final against Denmark or the Czech Republic unlikely to strike fear into their hearts. It was only England's second knockout-stage win in the history of the European Championship and their first victory over Germany at Wembley since 1975.



Messi Becomes Argentina's Most Capped Player

BUENOS AIRES (Reuters) - With his inauspicious Argentina debut nothing but a distant memory, Lionel Messi became his country's most capped player on Monday in their 4-1 Copa America victory over Bolivia.

A perennial candidate in the 'Greatest of All Time' debate, Messi marked the occasion in style with a virtuoso performance, scoring twice and setting up another in his 148th national team appearance, surpassing Javier Mascherano's record.

It was all a far cry from his debut in 2005 when he was sent off after just 43 seconds.

Coming on the pitch as a second-half substitute in a friendly against Hungary in Budapest, the then 18-year-old was red carded for swinging an arm in an opponent's face.

Argentina's record scorer, Messi's 74th and 75th international goals helped extend the side's unbeaten run to 17 games on Monday and booked a quarter-final tie against Ecuador on Saturday.

Argentina have not won a major title since lifting the Copa America in 1993 and Messi, who has won every honor available to him at Barcelona, is desperate for some success in a blue and white shirt. "I've been lucky enough to win everything at club level and individual level and it would be lovely also to win something with the national side," the 34-year-old said on the eve of this year's Copa. "That's my dream."

His Spanish club were among those to send their congratulations for his record-breaking achievement on Monday: "A true legend, Leo! Congratulations".

