

Health Ministry Announced on Saturday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 84,627 with 111 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) Reported on Saturday That the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant Had Resumed Activities After Being Shut Down Two Weeks Ago Due to Repairs

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U.S. Should Answer for Downing Iranian Airbus



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Tehran Rejects Baseless U.S. Claims To Justify Border Raid

NEW YORK (PressTV) - Iran has dismissed as "completely baseless" accusations leveled at the country by the United States to justify its illegal aerial assault on the Iraqi-Syrian border.

At the order of President Joe Biden, U.S. warplanes targeted three locations belonging to Iraq's anti-terror Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) or Hashd al-Sha'abi in the border town of al-Qa'im in the western Anbar Province early Sunday.

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

It also killed a Syrian child and injured three other civilians, according to some sources in the Syrian city of al-Bukamal in Dayr al-Zawr Province.

In a letter to the Security Council, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield claimed that the raid was meant to deter resistance fighters and Tehran from conducting or supporting further attacks on American personnel or facilities in Iraq. "This military response was taken after non-military options proved inadequate to address the threat, with the aim of deescalating the situation and preventing further attacks," read the letter seen by Reuters.

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Half of Iran Provinces Hit by Indian Delta Plus Coronavirus

TEHRAN (IP) - The spokesman for the National Task Force for Combating Coronavirus, said that half of Iran's provinces are affected by the 5th wave of Indian Delta Plus coronavirus.

In a press conference on Saturday explaining the latest situation of coronavirus disease in the world and Iran, Alireza Raisi, referred to the outbreak of the 'Delta Plus' variant, said that the infection rates are higher and its pandemic is even greater.

The spokesman also said that half of Iran's provinces are affected by the 5th wave of Indian mutation, with 92 cities in red, 183 in orange, and 173 in yellow. Raisi said that the observance of health protocols in Sistan and Baluchestan province (the most virus-affected province), southeastern Iran, is below 50 percent, adding that many administrations and state offices in the province have been closed due to the outbreak of the Indian Delta virus.

"People should not worry about the second dose of the corona vaccine," Raisi said, noting, "7 million doses of vaccine have been distributed so far. In August and September 2021, 10 million monthly doses will be provided to the Ministry of Health, and by March 20, 2022, all target groups will be vaccinated."

"Iran could shot 200,000 to 300,000 vaccines per day which expected to reach 500,000 per day," Raisi said.

Iran marks 33rd Anniversary of U.S. Downing of Passenger Plane



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran has commemorated the 33rd anniversary of the downing of its passenger aircraft by a US Navy guided-missile cruiser over the Persian Gulf, which killed 290 people.

During a memorial ceremony on Saturday, officials from Iran's southern Hormozgan province and the families of the tragedy's victims, who were aboard a vessel, tossed flowers into the waters near the Strait of Hormuz and Hengam Island.

Chanting slogans such as "Down with the U.S." and "Down with Israel," the participants condemned the inhumane U.S. war crime.

In Tehran, President Hassan Rouhani denounced the cowardly U.S. targeting of the passenger plane as "a great, horrible and unacceptable crime."

"In the incident, 290 people on board the plane were martyred. Unfortunately, the U.S. administration has not formally apologized for the crime and failed to take any significant measure in this regard. It has instead commended the cruiser's commander," he said Saturday.

"We hope that the U.S. government will recognize that a great crime was committed in the Persian Gulf in 1988. All the freedom-seekers of the world always urge the US to take necessary measures to apologize and compensate and explain to the people why it has acclaimed the murderer and the criminal responsible for this great crime."

On July 3, 1988, the USS Vincennes fired missiles at an Iran Air Airbus A300B2 which was flying over the Hormuz Strait from the port city of Bandar Abbas to Dubai, carrying 274 passengers and 16 crew members.

Following the attack, the plane disintegrated and crashed into the Persian Gulf waters, killing all 290 on board, among them 66 children.

U.S. officials claimed that the USS Vincennes had mistaken Iran Air Flight 655 for a warplane. This is while the warship was equipped with highly sophisticated radar systems and electronic battle gear at the time of the attack.

In 1990, the captain of the cruiser, William C. Rogers, was cleared of any wrongdoing, and was even awarded America's Legion of Merit medal by then U.S. president George Bush for his "outstanding service" during operations in the Persian Gulf.

Hundreds of U.S. Businesses Hit in New Cyberattack

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - At least 200 American companies have been hit by a new ransomware attack, setting off alarm bells among U.S. cybersecurity officials who have been increasingly rattled by a new wave of cyberattacks targeting broad sectors of the U.S. economy.

The cyberattack, which is suspected to have been launched by the same group that hit meat supplier JBS Foods this spring, infiltrated a major software company called Kaseya and compromised hundreds of its IT management clients.

"Kaseya handles large enterprise all the way to small businesses globally, so ultimately, (this) has the potential to spread to any size or scale business," John Hammond of the security firm Huntress Labs said in a message on Twitter. "This is a colossal and devastating supply chain attack." The cyberattackers, whom U.S. cybersecurity experts said likely operated out of Russia, managed to smuggle ransomware onto the network platform of Kaseya, whose signature VSA software is widely used by IT management companies and other businesses around the world.

Kaseya said Friday evening that it had limited the attack to "a very small percentage of our customers." Kaseya describes itself as a leading provider of IT and security management services to small and medium-sized businesses.

At least a dozen IT management firms that rely on VSA software have already been knocked out, leaving their corporate clients vulnerable. Kyle Hanslovan, CEO of Huntress Labs, told CNN that he estimated that as many as 1,000 small-to-medium sized businesses may be affected by the hack. He added that at least in one case, the cybercriminals had demanded a ransom of \$5 million. In recent months, organizations that play critical roles across broad swaths of the US economy have been targeted by cyberattacks.

More recently, cybercriminals took down Colonial Pipeline in May and disrupted fuel shipments to gas stations all along the US east coast. About a month later, the cyberattack against JBS, the world's largest meat processing company, prompted a temporary shutdown of all nine of its plants in the United States.

The latest, rapidly unfolding ransomware attack has also alarmed US cybersecurity experts. "If you use Kaseya VSA, shut it down *now* until told to reactivate and initiate [incident response]," tweeted Christopher Krebs, former director of the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

According to US cybersecurity experts and the New Zealand government's Computer Emergency Response Team, the cybercriminals were affiliated with a hacking group known as REvil, the same group behind the JBS attack.

ViewPoint American Nonsense

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian

It seems the Western and especially the U.S. officials are unhappy with the result of 13th presidential election in Iran and they try to undermine the result of election while Americans have not yet forgotten their own controversial election wherein the former U.S. President Donald Trump camp accused Joe Biden's of vote rigging and cheating and still it continues.

Whenever an election is to be held in an independent country, Western officials and especially the Americans start crying foul in order to undermine the result of the elections because they know the outcome of the elections are not in favor of them and ant-West or independent candidates are the winners.

In June and immediately after Iran's Guardian Council announced the final list of presidential election contenders, American media outlets and officials started their attacks for undermining the election in Iran. The White House issued a statement coinciding with sharp criticism of Iran's electoral system from Iranian rights activists and U.S. conservatives as neither free nor fair.

A White House National Security Council spokesperson said, «Iranians should be allowed to exercise their right to choose their own leaders and freely participate in the political process, including during elections.»

But these officials seem to have forgotten the farce in the 2020 U.S. presidential election wherein Trump accused the rivals of cheating in the election and he and his fans have not even yet conceded the defeat and they still believe Trump has been robbed of victory. In 2000 the presidential election, the U.S. had seen another farce when Democrat candidate Al Gore and Republican rival George Bush ignited a controversy in the election in Florida State and the court was forced to interfere in the saga. Now, imagine the U.S. with such records tries to criticize elections in other countries.

According to a new poll conducted in the U.S., a majority of Americans are concerned about having access to ballot, while 72 percent of Republicans have said that voter fraud is their highest priority.

In the NPR/ PBS NewsHour/ Marist Poll released on Friday, 56 percent of respondents said the priority should be "making sure that everyone who wants to vote can do so."

While, 41 percent opposed voter fraud, saying that the focus should be "making sure that no one votes who is not eligible."

Eighty-five percent of respondents who identified as Democrats and 52 percent of those who identified as independents favored voting access, compared to 72 percent of those identifying as Republicans said that voter fraud is their highest priority. **See Page 7**

Saudi Arabia Welcoming Talks With Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) - Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said that his country welcomes holding direct talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan recently addressed the issue of Iran and Palestine in an interview with the Italian newspaper "La Repubblica".

Regarding establishing relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Foreign Minister said his country welcomes talks with Iran but Tehran must prove its commitment to ensuring security and stability of the region with the facts, Al Jazeera quoted the newspaper as saying.

The Saudi minister speaks of regional security as his country has been besieging Yemen for more than six years, launching a full-scale war and displacing thousands of families in Yemen. The Saudi Arabian foreign minister called the stance of Iran and Saudi Arabia on the recent talks that began a few months ago in Iraq "positive" and expressed hope that these talks would lead to thawing relations between the two countries of Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman in an interview with Saudi State Television said that Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is based on its interests and Saudi Arabia is working to strengthen the alliance with all its partners in the world and is interested in establishing relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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UAE, Bahrain Leader Confine Their Fates to Child-Killers

TEHRAN (MNA) – Opening of child-killer Israeli embassies in UAE and Bahrain reveals a lack of proper understanding since their leaders confine their fates to Zionism, a senior Iranian advisor said. “Despite Tel Aviv defeat against latest Palestinian resistance, opening of child-killer Israeli embassies in UAE & #Bahrain reveals lack of proper understanding since their leaders confine their fates to the Zionism. Israel will have no place in the region. The Zionists enslave Jews”, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iranian Parliament Speaker’s Special Aide for International Affairs wrote on his Twitter account. UAE, Bahrain leader confine their fates to child-killers

U.S. Should Answer for Downing Iranian Airbus

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani criticized the U.S. for not apologizing for targeting Iranian Airbus passenger plane in the Persian Gulf in 1988 and urged Washington to explain why it has eulogized the perpetrators of the crime.

Addressing the National Task Force for Fighting the Coronavirus on Saturday, President Rouhani said that unfortunately, the U.S. administration has never officially apologized for committing this crime and has even eulogized the navy commander.

He described U.S. act as “horrendous, and unacceptable” and hoped for the U.S. administration to be aware of the fact that it has committed a big crime in 1988.

The aircraft, an Airbus A300, was destroyed by two surface-to-air missiles fired from the USS Vincennes warship, killing all 290 passengers on board, including 66 children under thirteen, 53 women, and all the 16 crew members. The plane had 36 foreign nationals on board from six countries.

The black box of the aircraft was never found.



He also admitted the country is bracing for another wave of COVID-19 infections as the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus is spreading through the country’s southern and southeastern provinces.

Expressing alarm, Rouhani noted that adherence to health protocols such as using masks and physical distancing had declined.

“If we’re not careful enough, there is concern that the country will face a fifth wave,” he said during a televised session of the anti-coronavirus task force.

Official figures show that the pandemic has so far killed close to 85,000 people in Iran, the worst-hit country in the Middle East. At least 3.23m cases have been registered in the country of more than 83 million people.

Swiss Urges Cementing Good Bilateral Relations With Iran

BERN (IP) - The President of Swiss congratulated Ebrahim Raisi on his victory in the 13th Presidential Election in Iran, stressed bilateral ties between two countries.

Swiss President Guy Parmelin in this message wished success for Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi in his new position, expressed confidence that good bilateral relations between Iran and Switzerland during the presidency of Raisi will be strengthened more than ever.

The Swiss President also stressed that his country is committed to strengthening dialogue and cooperation with Iran with the aim of increasing stability and prosperity in the region, and considers it in the interest of all.

Parmelin noted that Switzerland would support Iran’s efforts to strengthen dialogue and global cooperation to promote peace and security.

On Friday, June 18, the 13th round of Iran’s presidential election was held with the energetic turnout of people all over Iran and also in 133 countries.

In this election, Ebrahim Raisi was elected as the eighth president of Iran with more than 18 million votes.

Iran, Portugal Parliaments Stress Expansion of Ties

TEHRAN (IP)- The heads of the parliamentary friendship groups of Iran and Portugal emphasized the expansion of bilateral relations in various fields.

In a video meeting the heads of the parliamentary friendship groups of Iran and Portugal held on Friday, both sides discussed the regional and international issues including the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The Chairman of Iran-Portugal friendship of the Iranian parliament Jalil Rahimi Jahan Abad pointed to the two countries’ potentials for beneficial economic cooperation and stressed further efforts to strengthen the trade cooperation between the two countries.

Luis Grasa, Chairman of the Parliamentary

Friendship Group between Portugal and Iran for his part considered cooperation with Iran, especially parliamentary relations, of high importance with regard to the historical background and friendly relations of the two countries.

He criticized the U.S. sanctions on Iran as an inhumanitarian weapon against the Iranian nation and expressed hope that with the revival of the JCPOA the sanctions were soon removed and so that Iran could resume economic ties with Europe, especially Portugal.

Grasa invited his Iranian counterpart to visit Portugal while expressing his readiness to visit Iran.

In the meeting, it was agreed that the parliamentary delegations of the two countries would be exchanged in the current year. 219

Iranian-Made Games Capable of Competing With Foreign Ones

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Computer and video games produced and released by Iranians are capable of competing with those made by foreigners, deputy head of games development institute affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance said on Saturday.

Abolfazl Qana’ atpishah said that industry of computer games has developed thanks to Iranian government and elites.

Producing computer games in Iran dates back to over a decade ago, the official said.

He further appreciated Iran Computer and Video Games Foundation for supporting this industry.

Iranian experts who follow this industry are so skilled in developing artistic aspects of games and making their scenario, he added.

Tehran, Moscow Can Thwart Western Sanctions

TEHRAN (PressTV)- Russian Energy Minister Nikolai Shulginov says Russia and Iran can counter the West’s sanctions by further strengthening bilateral economic cooperation, particularly in the oil and energy sectors.

In a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali on Friday, Shulginov hailed the positive mutual relations and expressed hope that the two countries would take steps towards the expansion of ties, particularly those in the economy sector.

Moscow is keen to boost ties with Tehran and hopes that the two sides will be able to advance relations during the tenure of Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raesi in an effort to jointly counter the West’s sanctions, he added. He noted that Iran and Russia are currently implementing joint projects in the oil, gas, energy, railway and peaceful nuclear energy fields.

Pointing to the construction of Sirik Power Plant in southern Iranian Hormozgan Province in cooperation with Russia, the energy minister expressed hope that sanctions against the Islamic Republic would be lifted to help the country achieve more progress and development.

Late in February, the Russian government issued banking guarantees for a

loan of \$1.2 billion to be used for the construction of the project.

The funding is part of a wider package of loans worth \$5 billion that will be used by Iran for several key infrastructure projects in the country.

Russia’s Power Machines has been contracted by Moscow to use Russian funds to build the 1.4 gigawatt thermal power plant in Sirik.

Before issuing the order to start the construction of 1400-mgw Sirik Power Plant, Rouhani said the project, which is also joined by Russia, is of great importance due to the “friendly and close” ties between Iran and its northern neighbor, the Russian Federation.

Jalali, for his part, said Tehran and Moscow are determined to enhance relations and added that the next Iranian administration would certainly heed fostering solidarity and convergence with Russia.

He added that the two countries are working on important energy projects including the Sirik thermal power plant.

The ambassador said Iran has succeeded in manufacturing Russia’s flagship Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine as the first country in the region and the sixth one in the world.

Iran Owes Security to Gen. Soleimani, His Comrades

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran’s IRGC Aerospace Force Commander says the Islamic Republic owes its security to Martyr General Qassem Soleimani and his companions who destroyed ISIL terrorism in the region.



“Americans have been never our friend, and that is why we do not normalize relations with the United States”, Iran’s IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said, adding, “Even this normalization does not solve the country’s problems”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Hajizadeh described ISIL terrorism as a virus coming from American think tanks, saying that the US regime has been always trying to make the entire Islamic world face the problem of takfiri and terrorists.

However, by the timely decision of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the self-sacrifice of the Shrine Defenders, especially General Qassem Soleimani, ISIL was restrained and destroyed, he stressed.

“The guidance and command of Martyr General Qassem Soleimani and the sacrifice of the Shrine Defenders are the main factors of our security today”, he added.

Defense Innovations; Main Component of Armed Forces Authority

TEHRAN (IP) - The minister of defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran has stressed that defense innovations are the main component of the authority and increase of the combat power of the Iranian Armed Forces.

Speaking at the meeting of ‘Transformation and Progress of the Ministry of Defense’ on Saturday, Iranian Minister of Defense, Brigadier-General Amir Hatami said: “Transformation is a kind of progress and development in all fields.”

The high-ranking military official added: “In the process of maintaining, protecting, and enhancing Iran’s defense power, we have been looking for new models of progress in Iran’s defense industry.”

Brigadier-General Hatami also stated: “The experience of 8 years of sacred defense and the continuation of heavy defensive sanctions in the country led the Iranian Armed Forces to design a model of progress. Relying on the capacity of domestic scientists and methods based on the needs of the Islamic Republic of Iran today, we have become one of the world powers.”

Quoting the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamanei on his orders concerning the need to formulate an indigenous model of progress in Iran, the minister of defense said: “Although western models have been formed under their own conditions and principles, they have been unsuccessful in many cases.”

Expressing that the western model of progress is not necessarily a successful and appropriate one, Brigadier-General Hatami said: “They have gained power, they have become wealthy; however, they have undermined humanity, and today, the whole world and humanity are suffering from the consequences of their actions.”

Tokyo, Tokyo Inaugurate Painting Exhibition On Cultural Exchanges



TEHRAN (IRNA) - A painting exhibition entitled “Cultural exchanges between Iran and Japan” was inaugurated by the Cultural Counselor of the Iranian Embassy in Japan for the first time with the participation of more than 36 artworks by 8 prominent Japanese artists on the verge of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics .

According to Islamic Culture and Communication Organization, in this important cultural-artistic event, eight prominent painters of Japan have put on display 36 beautiful paintings and artworks about Iran created during the past few months. They have also put on display a number of their other outstanding works in prominent events and exhibitions in Japan, including the National Museum, Art Gallery.

Iran, Japan inaugurate painting exhibition on cultural exchanges

Artists participating in the exhibition are Soh Tsukamoto, Jun Matsubara, Shigenobu Moriyama, Hideko Murata, Takumi Sejima, Kidai Taguchi, Syouchirou Tsukuda, and Kazunori Yamauchi.

Iran, Japan inaugurate painting exhibition on cultural exchanges

Tehran Int’l Short Film Festival Gateway to Oscar

TEHRAN (MNA) – The CEO of the Tehran International Short Film Festival said the festival is one of the gateways for entering the annual Oscars celebration.

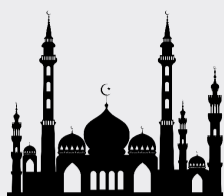
According to Sadeq Mousavi, Tehran International Short Film Festival informed on Sat. that the festival has been accepted as one of the gateways for entering the annual Oscars celebration.

“Each film that can receive the main award of Tehran International Short Film Festival will be introduced directly to Oscar,” he said.

IYCS organizes Tehran International Short Film Festival every year in October (TISFF). It is one of the oldest short film festivals not only in Iran but also in the region. The festival has been the host of international well-known festival directors and cineastes from around the world.

Tehran Short Film Festival is a member of the International Short Film Conference (ISFC).

Due to the Covid19 pandemic, this year’s Tehran Short Film Festival will be held online from October 28th to November 3rd.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:08
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:09
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:54

155. Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met, it was Satan who caused them to fall, because of some (evil) they had done. But Allah has blotted out (their fault): For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.
156. O ye who believe! Be not like the Unbelievers, who say of their brethren, when they are travelling through the Earth or engaged in fighting: "If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain." This that Allah may make it a cause of sighs and regrets in their hearts. It is Allah that gives Life and Death, and Allah sees well all that ye do.
Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran (155 - 156)

Value of Traded Goods On IME Hit 350,000b Tomans Last Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Managing Director of Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) Hamed Soltaninejad, referring to setting a new record for offering commodities on IME, said the value of the commodities traded on IME stood at about 350,000b tomans last year.

Speaking in the inaugural ceremony for launching gold investment fund futures and trade of cement in the physical market, Soltaninejad said today IME is a festivity for the launch of trade of a commodity which has been anticipated for long.

He went on to say that currently one is witnessing a growing trend on the IME through the assistance of all pillars of the capital market, and added the value of trade of commodities last year was about 350,000b tomans and it set a new record for tonnage of products comparing to the activities of the total IME activities in the past years.

Soltaninejad noted that last year, IME saw the trade of 33.4m tons of commodities worth of 312,000b tomans on its physical ring which was an unprecedented figure in the total history of activities of the IME.

He said major part of this success is indebted to the efforts of all pillars of capital markets, adding that we had never seen a discipline before in offering the regulating market products on the IME and for this reason we see the growth in trade on the IME and capital market.



Touching upon this year's growth of trade on IME, he said in the first quarter of the Iranian calendar year, IME has seen the growth of trade in a way that on last Wednesday, some 10.6m tons of commodities was traded on the IME which indicates the growth of trade in this market.

He said the increase in the trade on the IME indicates the support of all pillars of the capital market from not commanding the pricing and trade of commodities on the IME scene.

Soltaninejad went on to say that the IME has seen some new records in offering industrial and mineral products in a way that it had never seen such an amount of growth in the past.

He added that to diversify services for activists in the financial market, the IME has completed the infrastructures for futures contracts of the investment fund for gold which the trade of this tool will kick off this year.

Gold coin deposit certificate is a tool wherein people deposit their gold coins in the banks and trade them in the capital market under a framework provided by the IME.

Metals, Minerals Trade Rise by 13% on IME

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) witnessed last week the trade of 1,012,000 tons of commodities worth almost \$412m, with a noticeable growth of 13% in volume of trades in its metals and minerals trading platform.

According to a report by the IME's international affairs and PR, the exchange sold on its metal and minerals trading platform 665,862 tons of commodities valued at more than \$233m.

Commodities traded on this floor included 203,700 tons of steel, 9,985 tons of copper, 10,940 tons of aluminum, 27 tons of precious metals concentrate, 250 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 550 tons of zinc, 389,560 tons of cement, 5 kg of gold bars, 11,000 tons of sponge iron and 40,000 tons of iron ore.

Furthermore, the IME saw trade of 345,056 tons of commodities with a total trading value of more than \$180m on its oil and petrochemical trading floor.

The IME's customers purchased on this floor 92,150 tons of vacuum bottom, 91,530 tons of bitumen, 94,801 tons of polymeric products, 36,934 tons of chemicals, 27,000 tons of lube cut, 3,577 tons of base oil, 110 tons of argon, 120 tons of sulfur and 205 tons of insulation.

It's worth noting that the exchange also played host to trading 906 tons of various types of commodities on its side market.

Railway Fleet Receives 169 Domestically-Made Locomotives



TEHRAN (MNA) - Iranian railway fleet received 169 new domestically-made or renovated locomotives and wagons worth 3.52 trillion rials (about \$83.8 million) on Saturday in a ceremony attended by senior transport officials, IRIB reported.

As the first stage of the program for the renovation of the country's railway fleet in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21), 156 freight wagons, three locomotives including two renovated ones and a newly made one by MAPNA Group, as well as 10 renovated passenger wagons joined the railway fleet.

The unveiling ceremony of the mentioned fleet was attended by the Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami and the Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Saeed Rasouli.

As reported, the mentioned vehicles have been manufactured and renovated by six domestic companies including Wagon Pars, Arak Steel Company, and Wagon Kowsar Company.

Construction and renovation of the freight wagons have saved the country over five million euros, while the manufacturing and renovation of the said locomotives by MAPNA has created jobs for over 80 people.

The renovation of the passenger wagons by domestic companies has also created jobs for over 132 people.

Earlier in May, Eslami had announced that his ministry plans to renovate 1,500 wagons and locomotives to be added to the country's railway fleet by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2022).

Speaking on the sidelines of an event on the occasion of the National Productivity Day on May 24, Eslami said: "The renovation of the mentioned fleet will be accelerated if the necessary funds for the program are provided on schedule."

Iran-Tajikistan Business Forum to Be Held

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN- Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA) will hold an Iran-Tajikistan business forum on July 27, the chamber announced on its website.

The event titled "Investigating Opportunities for Trade Cooperation with Tajikistan" will be held online and with the aim of boosting Iranian businessmen's knowledge of the Tajik market and elevating bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The 14th meeting of Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Committee was held in Tajikistan in early June.

As reported, promoting economic relations was the major focus of the mentioned meeting which was co-chaired by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Recourses Daler Juma.

Iran to Return to Oil Market in Shortest Possible Time Post Sanctions

TEHRAN (MNA) - Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said his country will return to the oil market in the shortest possible time after the removal of the U.S. sanctions on the country's oil industry, ISNA reported.

Speaking to the press after attending the 18th OPEC+ ministerial meeting, which was held online on Friday, Zanganeh said: "At this meeting, I announced that if the sanctions are lifted, Iranian oil will return to the market as soon as possible; This is our official decision."

"I announced Iran's position in the meeting and emphasized that any decision made in this meeting will not

affect our plans. We will return to the market with at least an amount equal to the pre-sanctions level," he added.

The official noted that some OPEC members are in disagreement regarding their assigned shares for the cuts in the coming months and discussions are ongoing to settle the issue.

The 181st meeting of the OPEC conference was chaired by Angola's Minister of Mineral Resources and Petroleum Diamantino Pedro Azevedo.

In the Friday meeting OPEC paid tribute to Zanganeh for his long-lasting contribution to the organization and the oil market.

Iran Almost Self-Sufficient in Home Appliances Production

TEHRAN (MNA) - Industry, Mining and Trade Minister has said the country is on the verge of self-sufficiency in the production of various types of home appliances, IRNA reported.

"Despite the economic sanctions, the production of home appliances in the country has grown significantly and we are on the verge of achieving self-sufficiency in the production of various types in this field," Alireza Razm Hosseini said on Saturday.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a washing machine production line in Khorasan Razavi Province, Razm Hosseini said: "over 13 million home appliances were produced in the country in the previous [Iranian calendar] year (ended on March 20), which was a great achievement for the industry."

The official noted that the growth in the home appliance industry shows the surge of domestic manufacturing in this field, saying: "in the near future the Iranian home appliance market will no longer need foreign brands."

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has been following a new strategy for supporting domestic production to neutralize the impacts of the U.S. sanctions while reducing the reliance of the economy on oil revenues.

The home appliances sector has been one of the pioneers in this regard and like many other areas, the production of home appliances has witnessed a significant rise in the past two years.

CEO of Chadormalu Co. Honored

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Chadormalu Mining and Industrial Company Eng. Naser Taghizadeh was honored by the governor general of Yazd Province in a meeting with the head of Bonyad Shahid (Foundation of Martyrs) Hojjatoleslam Zare.

In the meeting, Hojjatoleslam Zare submitted the plaque of gratitude and appreciation letter of the governor general to Eng. Taghizadeh.

In the meeting, Zare hailed the supportive services of Chadormalu company for the esteemed families of martyrs and war disabled of the town and said attention of the company to the war disabled and veterans as well as the families of the

martyrs is a valuable and appreciable act and expressed his gratitude to the CEO and board of directors of the company.

Eng. Taghizadeh, for his part, thanked the governor general as well as officials of Bonyad Shahid and families of the martyrs and war veterans, adding that it is a human, religious and national duty



Washcoat Production Line Inaugurated in Qom

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Concurrent with National Industry and Mine Day, the production line of washcoat (kind of catalyst used in the auto industry) was inaugurated in Qom in presence of Deputy Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Head of Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) Mr. Mohsen Salehinia.

In the inaugural ceremony held at Mobadel Khodro Pak Company in the Mahmoudabad Industrial Town of Qom, Salehinia said national auto industry in the sanctions and pandemic era has taken proper steps in line with deepening indigenization of products that production of auto parts is important and washcoat is an example for these efforts.

Head of IDRO referred to the plans of the auto-makers for production of 1.2m vehicles and expressed hope with the new government, the climate would be provided for improving the quality and quantity in the auto industry as the locomotive of the national industries, and the country would witness more development and satisfaction of consumers.

Meanwhile addressing the ceremony, the CEO of Iran Automotive Industrial Group (IAPCO) Mr. Saeed Reza Panah said that in accordance with the social responsibilities regarding the protection of environment and reducing pollution, the production of washcoat has been carried out as one of the main projects of Mobadel Khodro Pak Company.

He added that in the first year, production of 4m euros of washcoat equaling to 110b tomans of saving forex will be materialized due to indigenization of this part, and the figure will definitely grow with the increase in the production.

During his one-day travel to Qom Province, Mr. Salehinia also visited several companies like Zarnama SISU Polymer, Ayandeh Negar, Barazesh Sanaat and Arian Innovative Tool Manufacturers.

Opposition in Armenia Contests Pashinyan's Vote Win Via Court

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Armenia's opposition alliance, led by former president Robert Kocharyan, has asked the constitutional court to overturn the results of a June 20 election which it lost, the TASS news agency cited the group as saying on Friday.

Acting prime minister Nikol Pashinyan's party won 53.91% of the vote at parliamentary elections last month with Kocharyan's Armenia political bloc trailing with 21.9%.

International observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) said the elections were competitive and generally well-managed.



Number of foreign Tourists To Spain Jumps in May

MADRID (Reuters) - The number of foreign tourists visiting Spain rose to 1.36 million in May, up from virtually zero who came in May 2020 when the country was under a strict lockdown, the National Statistics Institute (INE) said on Friday.

The number of tourists more than doubled from April 2021 as travel restrictions were eased but was still 83% lower than in May 2019, the data showed.

Foreign tourists spent a total 1.39 billion euros (\$1.64 billion) in May, 83% less than in the same month in 2019, INE said.



U.S. Forces Quit Main Base in Afghanistan



KABUL (Reuters) - American troops pulled out of their main military base in Afghanistan on Friday, leaving behind a piece of the World Trade Center they buried 20 years ago in a country that the top U.S. commander has warned may descend into civil war without them.

"All American soldiers and members of NATO forces have left the Bagram air base," said a senior U.S. security official on condition of anonymity. Though a few more troops have yet to withdraw from another base in the capital Kabul, the Bagram pullout brings an effective end to the longest war in American history.

The base, an hour's drive north of Kabul, was where the U.S. military has coordinated its air war and logistical support for its entire Afghan mission. The Taliban thanked them for leaving. "We consider this withdrawal a positive step. Afghans can get closer to stability and peace with the full withdrawal of foreign forces," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters. Other Afghans were more circumspect. "The Americans must leave Afghanistan and there should be peace in this country," said Kabul resident Javed Arman. But he added: "We are in a difficult situation. Most people have fled their districts and some districts have fallen. Seven districts in Paktia province have fallen and are now under Taliban control."

For the international forces, more than 3,500 of whom died in Afghanistan, the exit came with no pageantry. A Western diplomat in Kabul said the United States and its NATO allies had "won many battles, but have lost the Afghan war".

It was at Bagram, by a bullet-ridden Soviet-built air strip on a plain hemmed in by the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush, that New York City firefighters and police were flown to bury a piece of the World Trade Center in December, 2001, days after the Taliban were toppled for harbouring Osama bin Laden.

It was also here that the CIA ran a "black site" detention centre for terrorism suspects and subjected them to abuse that President Barack Obama subsequently acknowledged as torture.

Later it swelled into a sprawling fortified city for a huge international military force, with fast food joints, gyms and a cafe serving something called "the mother of all coffees". Two runways perpetually roared. Presidents flew in and gave speeches; celebrities came and told jokes.

An Afghan official said the base would be officially handed over to the government at a ceremony on Saturday.

The U.S. defence official said General Austin Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan "still retains all the capabilities and authorities to protect the force" stationed in the capital, Kabul.

Earlier this week, Miller told journalists in Kabul that civil war for Afghanistan was "certainly a path that can be visualised", with Taliban fighters sweeping into districts around the country in recent weeks as foreign troops flew home.

Pakistan PM Backs China on Uighurs, Praises One-Party System

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has repeated his country's support for the Chinese government regarding its policies in the Muslim-majority Xinjiang province, while also praising the country's one-party system as offering a better model for societies compared with electoral democracy.

Khan was speaking to members of the Chinese news media who were visiting Islamabad as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on Thursday. Rights groups accuse China of systematic and widespread "mass internment and torture amounting to crimes against humanity" against the Muslim population in its southwestern Xinjiang province. In a report last month, Amnesty International termed the situation in Xinjiang "a dystopian hellscape", citing dozens of witness accounts that detailed allegations of brainwashing, torture and an erasure of cultural identity.

But Khan, who has regularly called for international action against Islamophobia, particularly in European countries, said he was satisfied with the Chinese government's denials of any rights abuses.



Iraqis Protest Over Power, Water Cuts

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Hundreds of Iraqis protested in Baghdad on Friday over worsening power and water cuts as temperatures exceeded 50 degrees Celsius in some parts of Iraq.

At Friday prayer in the Sadr City district of Baghdad, men sweated and prayed under parasols, then held a protest criticizing the government for not providing its citizens with enough electricity.

"It's just getting worse. We can take power cuts, even 10 hours of cuts a day, but just give us something," said Haider Hussein, a 32-year-old labourer.

Power went out completely across most of the country's provinces before dawn, residents said, in some of the worst shortages this year. Some main grid electricity had returned to Baghdad by the afternoon.

The sky over Baghdad, where residents enjoy better supply than poorer southern parts of Iraq, clouded with smog after sunrise as homes ran their diesel-fuelled generators for much longer periods than usual.

Power from Iraq's main grid suffers year-round from hours-long cuts each day, but the shortages worsen during the hot summer months when temperatures regularly reach 50 degrees and households rely on air conditioning.

Iraqis blame a government which relies on energy imports from Iran and which they say has failed to develop Iraq's own grid to serve its population. Iraq's electricity minister resigned this week under pressure over the power crisis, local media reported.

Haider al-Saidi, a 52-year-old tribal leader protesting in Sadr City, blamed the political class that has ruled Iraq since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003. "From that regime to this one, still we don't have enough electricity. What has democracy brought? It just goes from bad to worse," he said.

Reduced power supplies from Iran this month and a series of attacks on power lines by militants have compounded the electricity crisis.

Palestinians Defy Precursor To Mass Displacements

BEIRUT (Dispatches) - Silwan, Occupied East Jerusalem - Violent confrontations broke out following Friday midday prayers between Israeli police and residents, with a number of Palestinians wounded and arrested.

Israeli forces fired stun grenades, rubber-coated steel bullets, and tear gas canisters at Palestinian demonstrators angered by ongoing home and business demolitions in the area.

Tensions continue after Nidal Rajabe, his brother Fadi, and several other Palestinians from Al Bustan were released to house arrest for five days on Friday, after paying 500 shekels (\$150) bail each.

The men were charged with assault when they resisted arrest after Rajabe's butchery and another Palestinian home were destroyed by Israeli authorities using CAT excavators on Tuesday.

Images of a distraught Rajabe trying to defend his butchery, and livelihood, from being demolished and his subsequent arrest - and those of the other young men who were all beaten - made the rounds on social media almost instantaneously, fuelling a growing vortex of collective anger in occupied East Jerusalem.

Since 2005, Israel has sent demolition notices to residents of about 100 homes in Silwan warning their abodes - housing more than 1,500 people - are to be

destroyed on the grounds they were built without a permit.

However, it is almost impossible for Palestinians to get building permits in East Jerusalem, as only about 13 percent of the illegally occupied part of the city has been allocated for Palestinians. Simultaneously, Israeli settlements are actively encouraged with financial incentives and the protection of Israeli law.

The demolitions are to make way for an Israeli settler organisation that seeks to turn the land into a national park, linked to the archaeological City of David area.

According to a statement released by Fakhri Abu Diab, co-director of the Jahalin Solidarity organisation and spokesman for Silwan residents, members of the US Congress are currently discussing Israel's ongoing displacement of Palestinians and the destruction of their homes in East Jerusalem in contravention of international law.

"People know members of Congress are speaking out about these issues, yet current events witnessed by Palestinians prove that Israel is prepared to defy the international community, including members of the U.S. Congress," said Abu Diab.

Recently, a number of homes and buildings in Silwan were ordered to self-demolish or face a fine of \$6,000 if the municipality carried out the demolitions. Nidal Rijabe was one of them.



France Denies Cover-Up Over Pacific Nuclear Tests

PARIS (Dispatches) - The French government denied any cover up on Friday over radiation levels in the Pacific following its nuclear testing in the region, as discussions were held in Paris about the legacy of the explosions.

A two-day roundtable meeting called by French President Emmanuel Macron in April began on Thursday following fresh allegations that the testing between 1966-1996 caused hidden atmospheric and ground pollution.

"There was no state cover up," Genevieve Darrieusseq, junior defense minister, told AFP in a brief comment on the sidelines of the event where she has ruled out any official apology from France.

In March, online investigation site Disclose created waves when said it had analyzed some 2,000 pages of French military documents declassified in 2013 about the nearly 200 tests carried out around French Polynesia.

Using statistical modelling and help from academics and specialists, it concluded that "French authorities have concealed the true impact of nuclear testing on the health of Polynesians for more than 50 years."

The roundtable discussion, which Macron attended on Thursday without making any public comment, has met with a mixed response from Polynesian politicians. MP Moetai Brotherson, a supporter of independence who sits in the national parliament representing the archipelago, has refused to attend unless France apologises. His party, the Tavini Huiraatira, has announced it will organise a rival event in Tahiti on July 2.

But the head of the region, which comprises more than 100 islands, has welcomed the initiative despite his previous highly critical comments of France's "contempt and arrogance".

"We felt that the president of the republic had a real desire to turn this painful page for all of us, with the resources that will need to be put in place in the future, so that Polynesians can rebuild the faith that we have always had in France," Edouard Fritch said.

"It's a strong signal that he sent," Fritch added, commenting on Macron's pledge to the conference that he would travel to Tahiti on July 25.



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TWENTY YEARS OF THE SCO: COOPERATION FOR STABILITY AND PROSPERITY

By: President of Republic of Tajikistan and Chairman of the Council of Heads of SCO Member States, H.E. Emomali Rahmon

Since the early days of gaining its state independence, the Republic of Tajikistan, based on the principles of the "open doors" policy, peacefulness and objectivity, established and subsequently extended and strengthened friendly, equal and mutually beneficial relations with most countries of the world, and with number of them established strategic partnership. One of the priorities of the international strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan is the policy of good-neighborliness and multilateral cooperation with the Central Asian states. The creation of an atmosphere of credibility and security along the entire perimeter of the country's borders is one of the key goals of this policy.

Along with this, the foreign policy of our state aimed at ensuring wide-ranging and effective participation of the country in relevant international and regional organizations. Through the implementation of such policy, Tajikistan makes its feasible contribution to ensure security and peace, the establishment of beneficial international cooperation and constructive dialogue, and takes the advantage of the capabilities of international and regional organizations to enable the sustainable development of the country and strengthening its position in the international arena.

This year the Republic of Tajikistan celebrates the 30th Anniversary of State Independence. During this short period by historical standards, our republic has established full-fledged diplomatic relations with 179 countries of the world and has become an active member of prestigious international and regional organizations.

By establishing partnerships with the world community within the framework of international and regional organizations, the Republic of Tajikistan has expanded cooperation with the UN and its specialized agencies, SCO, CSTO, OSCE, ECO and OIC, as well as with other development partners, international and regional financial institutions.

In the framework of multilateral diplomacy, the Republic of Tajikistan pays particular attention to the development of fruitful relations within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter referred to as SCO / Organization). It is no coincidence that the current Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Tajikistan notes: "Active participation of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization aims to strengthen good-neighborly ties, friendly and amicable relations among the Member States and observers of the Organization, as well as ensuring security, stability and sustainable development in the region".

Therefore the Republic of Tajikistan perceives priority areas of its activities within the framework of this Organization not only in the spheres of security and economic collaboration but also in the development and improvement of multilateral cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian fields.

Tajikistan also supports the involvement of observer states in the sphere of combating the contemporary challenges and threats within SCO.

It should be highlighted that SCO, the twentieth anniversary of which we are celebrating this year, has confirmed from the first day of its activity that it is a dynamic Organization and a reputable international institution not only in the region but also at the global level.

Over its twenty-year history, SCO has turned into one of the most influential international organizations of a new type, into a unique regional structure that has repeatedly proved its universal character in resolving topical world issues. The course of events in the era of globalization has clearly shown to all political actors that no state alone is capable of effectively dealing with modern challenges and threats. Under such circumstances, only coordinated measures and joint efforts of all states can be effective.

A popular proverb says, "A friend in need is a friend indeed". SCO member states in the most difficult times of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated their solidarity, provided effective support to each other on many problematic issues. The world has once again become convinced that the member states of the Organization are committed to the values and principles of the «Shanghai Spirit».

SCO has gone through a long process of formation to reach the current stage of development and become a powerful international organization. To establish the organization as such, it was essential to go through a period of fruitful and multifaceted cooperation.

Considering the development of the international situation and the surge in security threats in the region at the end of the 90's of the last century, the "Shanghai Five" member states faced the crucial decision. It was necessary to agree on the creation of a new, improved organization as one of the most important tools to counter the new threats and challenges that are gaining strength. Taking into account the real state of affairs, the Heads of State decided to initiate the foundation for creating a more complete structure based on the "Shanghai Five", which could unite China, Russia and all the Central Asian countries into a single regional organization.

Considering the identified tasks an intergovernmental commission was established, which carried out immense consultative work.

On 25 August 1999, fourth summit of the "Shanghai Five" held in Bishkek. At this forum, it was decided to transfer the initiative to hold the Fifth summit of Heads of State to Tajikistan.

The presidency of the Republic of Tajikistan in the "Shanghai Five" lasted from September 1999 to July 2000.

During the presidency, we carried out comprehensive preparatory work on holding the summit of the «Shanghai Five», to which the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan was invited. The meeting of the Heads of the "Shanghai Five" countries, which took place on 5 July 2000 in Dushanbe, became a remarkable event of particular significance. The «Shanghai Five» was called the «Shanghai Forum» in Dushanbe. It was this Dushanbe decision that laid the foundation for the creation of SCO. Thus, a proposal to transform the "Shanghai Five" into a regional international organization, which is currently known as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, introduced in Tajikistan. The Dushanbe Declaration of 2000 laid down the fundamental ideas about the goals, objectives and main directions of activities of the future prestigious



regional international organization — SCO, which today has taken a worthy place in world political reality.

Later, on 15 June 2001, a meeting of Heads of State took place in Shanghai during which a Joint Declaration on the Republic of Uzbekistan's accession to the "Shanghai Five" was adopted, and a Declaration on the establishment of SCO was signed based on the accumulated experience within the "Shanghai Five".

As humanity entered the new century, the world has witnessed the emergence of a powerful international structure.

One of the important steps in the formation and development of SCO was the meeting of the Council of Heads of State in 2005: it took a fundamental decision to grant observer status within the Organization to three major Asian powers — India, Iran and Pakistan. Earlier in 2004, status was granted to Mongolia. The geographical expansion of the Organization made it possible to rise its international significance.

Later in 2007, SCO countries signed an Agreement on Long-Term Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation.

In 2009, a decision was taken to grant the status of a dialogue partner to Sri Lanka and Belarus. In 2012, SCO leaders adopted a Declaration on Building a Region of Long-Term Peace and Shared Prosperity. In the same year, Afghanistan gained observer status in SCO, and Turkey became a dialogue partner. In 2014, India and Pakistan officially applied for SCO membership. This coincided with Tajikistan's chairmanship in SCO in 2013-2014. This period gave a new impetus to the procedure for considering the issue of granting the status of SCO Member State. The Summit of the Heads of State of the Member States in Dushanbe laid a solid foundation for the elaboration of a legal basis for the procedure for granting the status of SCO Member State. This procedure was further discussed and finalized at the next Summit of Heads of State. In 2015, the leaders of SCO countries approved a decision to commence the procedures for admitting India and Pakistan to membership in the Organization, and resolutions were also signed on granting Belarus an observer status at SCO, as well as on granting the status of a dialogue partner to Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal. Thus, SCO has promptly evolved from a standard regional organization into a large international organization. Such a rapid expansion of the Organization over just two decades, both in structure and in the variety of activities, demonstrates precision in determining the goals and good intentions of SCO.

This process produced its first results at the Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana in June 2017. The two largest countries in



the region, India and Pakistan, have obtained the status of member states of the Organization. It is noteworthy that, according to the fair opinion of most experts, such organizations in the contemporary world are the essential organizers of interstate communication to facilitate the solution of international issues. Since the very beginning of SCO establishment, the entities were set up to meet the demands of modern realities. For instance, SCO Secretariat and the Executive Committee of SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), which have been operating since January 2004, were identified as permanent bodies or structures based on mutual agreement of the parties. Beijing city was determined as the venue of SCO Secretariat, while Tashkent city was the venue of SCO Executive Committee.

Generally, analyzing the overall arrangements of SCO establishment and all phases of its development it should be emphasized that many political, historical and economic factors led to the emergence of the Organization in the political space of Eurasia, the most important of which are:

- destruction of the bipolar system in international relations;
- formation of a new world order as a result of the collapse of the former

USSR;

- rise of new challenges and threats, among of which terrorism, extremism and separatism were the most dangerous phenomena;
- realization of the principles of a just world order, dominated by the aspiration for joint development, taking into account the experience of relations that have developed among the countries of the region within the framework of the "Shanghai Five";
- joint pursuit for new effective mechanisms that would enhance the regional integration of countries;
- formation of a new model of cooperation in the region, where the priority areas are security, economic interaction and cooperation in all areas.

In fact, in the years when SCO was founded, significant changes took place in the world that completely altered the content and vectors of world politics. In this regard, the countries that initiated the establishment of this Organization had to adapt it to new world realities, to fast-paced conditions and seek a worthy place for it in the world political arena. The new conditions required the newly formed regional international organization — SCO, to operate differently, more actively contribute to the solution of topical regional problems. The question arose in this way: the Organization must have the capability and ability to meet the interests of the member states, to carry out economic, trade, cultural and humanitarian integration in complicated international circumstances.

The further activities of SCO proved that the Organization not only succeeded in starting to address these issues but also to become a structure that occupies strong positions in the international political arena.

SCO's activities are focused, which is very important, not only on political issues but also on economic ties. Within the framework of the Organization, the long-term economic cooperation plans have been approved by the member states, the purpose of which is to facilitate the free movement of goods, services and technologies among all member states. The interaction of countries in the fight against crime, in the spheres of culture and education, science and innovative technologies, as well as in such areas as health care and the agro-industrial complex is also gaining strength.

Twenty years of SCO's activity confirms that this Organization is reputable and influential platform for discussing and solving pressing regional and international issues.

Accordingly, Tajikistan is involved in its activities, including in the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of SCO Member States and interacts in the implementation of various projects and in other areas.

Over twenty years of its activity in the field of international politics, SCO has been a hallmark of an effective organization and has won great authority in the fast-growing world. Its recognition as an observer in the UN General Assembly as well as effective cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States and ASEAN testifies to the growing status of the Organization in world politics. On the other hand, further progress and expansion of SCO depend on many regional and international factors. This is, primarily, the geopolitical situation in the world, cooperation in matters of regional security and trade and economic development.

It would be appropriate to state that the role of the Republic of Tajikistan, as one of the founders of SCO, is essential in the process of formation and development of the Organization.

Tajikistan chaired the Council of Heads of State in 2008 and 2014, and the Council of Heads of Government of SCO member states in 2006, 2010 and 2018. We will expand our activities within the framework of the Organization and strengthen our relations with its members, continue our joint activities within SCO in the field of countering modern challenges and threats, in particular, terrorism, extremism, illicit drug trafficking and other manifestations of transnational organized crime.

Tajikistan believes that SCO member states should not only preserve the traditions of good-neighborliness, but also find new optimal ways to solve existing or emerging problems of a socio-economic nature.

To date, our countries have achieved positive results in all these areas. However, in a rapidly changing world, we should not stop there, but move forward and solve topical issues of a political, economic and social nature. Together we should strive to ensure security in the region and the peaceful coexistence of all countries of the world.

In 2020, the presidency of the Organization handed by the Russian Federation to the Republic of Tajikistan. Accordingly, the Jubilee Summit of the Heads of SCO States will be held in Dushanbe on 16-17 September 2021. This is very significant since the initial decision to establish SCO was taken in the capital of our country. We are confident that after celebrating its anniversary, SCO will continue to be an active structure, an effective platform for exchanging views, developing common positions and agreeing on various points of view, and will also improve its policy following the demands of the times. SCO's activities fully comply with the basic principles of the foreign policy strategy of our state. We are interested in further strengthening its role in solving the key tasks of strengthening peace and security, expanding trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties.

In conclusion, I would like to note that from the very beginning of its foundation, SCO has been striving to establish fair international relations. Twenty years of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's activity, which coincided with a very difficult period in international relations, have shown that the Organization has become a real force in the arena of global politics. SCO member states have achieved a high degree of cooperation and trust in resolving the issues of policy, economy and security. Annual meetings at different levels not only provide an opportunity to a timely solution of urgent problems, but also provide quick responses in the rapidly changing world. All these indicate that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, at the origin of which was also our State, is indeed a very promising structure both in the regional and the global scale.

“Eclipse” Finds Way to LA Shorts Int’l Film Festival

TEHRAN (MNA) – “Eclipse” by Iranian directors Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Qasemi has made to the LA Shorts International Film Festival.

Iranian short film “Eclipse” directed by Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Qasemi has entered the competition section of the LA Shorts International Film Festival.

Mischievous and rebellious, they steal a camera stand, lie to their parents and discuss boys as well as an upcoming party. Their wanderings lead them to a remote part of the park. As the sun disappears, Saghi sees something that should have stayed hidden, reads the synopsis of the short film.



IMF Sees Much Stronger U.S. Growth, 2021 GDP +7.0%

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The IMF is bullish on the US economic recovery, predicting growth will hit 7 percent this year -- much stronger than previously forecast and “the fastest pace in a generation,” the Fund said in a report Thursday.

The cheery analysis is a boon to President Joe Biden’s administration and comes amid data showing an improving job market and on the eve of the all-important official employment report.

The International Monetary Fund’s annual review of the US economy put growth at its fastest rate since 1984, and also boosted the 2022 GDP forecast to 4.9 percent, 1.4 percentage points higher than the April estimate.

But while the IMF mostly cheered Biden’s policies to support the economy, the report flagged “significant concern” over the fact he has not pulled back on tariffs on goods like steel and aluminum imposed by his predecessor.

The United States has seen a “remarkable recovery,” the Fund said, helped by “unprecedented” support from government spending and the Federal Reserve’s “highly effective” stimulus measures.

The report notes the potential for growth to be even higher than forecast, but the outlook assumes \$4.3 trillion in spending over the next decade from Biden’s proposed American Jobs Plan (AJP) and American Families Plan (AFP).

Together those programs would fuel a more than 5 percent GDP increase for 2022-2024, the IMF estimated.

“Rather than just offering a short-term boost to demand that then fades away, the Jobs and Families Plans are expected to produce a lasting improvement in income and living standards for many years to come,” IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told reporters.

However, if Congress fails to approve the legislation or sharply curtails the size, that would reduce the growth boost.

Asked about that, Georgieva noted the bipartisan agreement on the physical infrastructure parts of the proposal.

“Size is not everything. What matters more than sizes, what is the composition of the packages,” she said.

The IMF report said there is “solid empirical evidence ... of the societal payoffs” of programs like those Biden has proposed, which include access to childcare to allow women to enter and remain in the workforce, and access to higher education and training to ensure younger workers have necessary skills for the jobs available.

A “permanent increase in taxes on corporate profits and on high income households is warranted” to pay for the proposals.

The Washington-based crisis lender reserved its harshest comments for Biden’s trade policies, and said removing trade barriers would help support his worker-centric agenda.

“It is of significant concern ... that many of the trade distortions introduced over the past four years remain in place,” the report said.



Biden has continued tariffs imposed by former president Donald Trump on imported steel and aluminum, washing machines, solar panels, “as well as a range of goods imported from China.”

The IMF also questioned the tougher requirements set by the Trump administration for US products in government procurement which remain in place.

“These policies should be reconsidered. Trade restrictions and tariff increases should be rolled back and ‘Buy American’ provisions should be tightly circumscribed,” the report said.

The IMF forecast, which downplayed inflation risks, was in line with the Congressional Budget Office and Federal Reserve officials, which see strong government spending and a surge of consumer demand supporting the recovery and hiring as businesses work to return to normal.

New applications for U.S. unemployment benefits fell last week to the lowest since the pandemic lockdowns began, dropping to 364,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

After two months of tepid gains that fell short of expectations, the employment report for June due out Friday is expected to show a solid hiring to regain some of the 7.6 million jobs lost during the pandemic.

The consensus forecast is for an increase of 680,000 with the unemployment rate ticking down to 5.7 percent, however, Oxford Economics sees a much higher increase while Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics is expecting more than a million hires, which would be the most since August.

Tens of Millions Sizzle in India’s Severe Heatwave



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Tens of millions of people in India were suffering Friday under a severe heatwave that has pushed the temperature to a nine-year high in Delhi as monsoon rains run behind schedule.

Heatwaves have killed over 6,500 people in the world’s second-most populous nation since 2010, and scientists say climate change is making them harsher and more frequent.

Daytime temperatures were above 40 degree Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) for the fourth consecutive day Friday across the states of Rajasthan, Haryana and New Delhi.

Large parts of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in central India were also wilting.

New Delhi saw 43.1 degrees Celsius on Thursday, the hottest July day in the city since 2012 when the capital sweltered under 43.5 degrees Celsius.

On Friday, the temperature again shot up to 41 degree Celsius in the city of 20 million. Temperatures have remained more than seven degrees Celsius above normal for this time of the year, prompting India’s weather office to classify it as “severe extreme heat”.

India Meteorological Department said the mercury will stay above 40 degrees for the coming week because of the late arrival of the southwest monsoon and a hot wind known as the Loo blowing in from the desert state of Rajasthan and Pakistan.

The weather department has issued a heatwave alert for the region, with forecasters also saying some isolated places will witness thunderstorms. The intense heat has driven up power consumption as more and more people turned to air-conditioners and air coolers.

Delhi’s power consumption peaked to nearly 7,000 megawatts (MW) this week, 10 to 15 percent higher than the average demand at this time of the year.

In Punjab in the north, authorities announced a two-day weekly closure of industrial units and reduced office hours for its employees after electricity demand topped 15,000 megawatts due.

Forecasters predict that the annual rains will not hit New Delhi before July 7, making it the most delayed monsoon in the national capital since 2006.

The deadliest year for India was 2015 when over 2,000 were killed by intense heat.

Protecting Nature Could Avert Global Economic Losses of \$2.7 Trillion Per Year

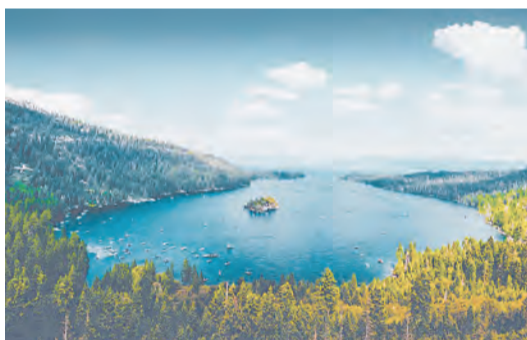
WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A new World Bank report estimates that the collapse of select ecosystem services provided by nature – such as wild pollination, provision of food from marine fisheries and timber from native forests – could result in a decline in global GDP of \$2.7 trillion annually by 2030.

The Economic Case for Nature underscores the strong reliance of economies on nature, particularly in low-income countries. The report highlights that Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia would suffer the most relative contraction of real GDP due to a collapse of ecosystem services by 2030: 9.7 percent annually and 6.5 percent, respectively. This is due to a reliance on pollinated crops and, in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa on forest products, as well as a limited ability to switch to other production and consumption options that would be less affected.

“Preserving nature and maintaining its services are critical for economic growth,” said World Bank Group President David Malpass. “Nature-smart policies and reforms, including agricultural subsidy reform and investments in agricultural innovation enhance biodiversity and economic outcomes. As countries seek to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s important that economic development improves outcomes for nature.”

“It is a combination of policies that shows the greatest win-wins for both biodiversity and for economies. Adding investment in research and development to the policy mix is particularly important and beneficial to developing countries,” said World Bank Lead Environmental Economist and one of the report authors, Giovanni Ruta.

The report was undertaken in close collaboration with the University of Minnesota and Purdue University, and



comes as countries are set to formulate a new global biodiversity framework at a Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China.

Nature smart-policies will be crucial to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Kunming COP is also seen as an opportunity to adopt actionable targets, such as the protection of 30% of land and 30% of oceans by 2030 (known as the “30x30” target). The report argues that the ecosystem service benefits accruing from achieving the 30x30 target would almost completely offset the opportunity costs generated by protecting additional land to meet the target.

Investments in ecosystem services must be made in a way that exploits synergies with climate change mitigation and adaptation, as this strengthens the case for action. For example, when forest carbon payment schemes are implemented, either at the domestic or global level, other domestic policies like agriculture subsidy reform become more effective at protecting nature while enhancing economic gains.

The World Bank Group is committed to supporting operations focused on biodiversity and that invests directly in the conservation of species and natural habitats and improve livelihoods through sectors that rely on natural capital, such as forestry, fisheries, and agriculture. Over the past year, the World Bank portfolio included 70 biodiversity projects in more than 40 countries with an estimated net commitment of US\$1.18 billion. Examples of this work include the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, which is supported by the Global Environment Facility, and investments in sustainable agriculture and landscape management in Brazil and Ethiopia.

GM Shakes Up Lithium Industry

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - General Motors Co is investing in a U.S. lithium project that could become the country’s largest by 2024, making the automaker one of the first to develop its own source of a battery metal crucial for the electrification of cars and trucks.

The deal, announced on Friday, comes as automakers around the world scramble for access to lithium and other electric vehicle (EV) metals as internal combustion engines are phased out.

Detroit-based GM said it will make a “multimillion-dollar investment” in and help develop Controlled Thermal Resources (CTR) Ltd’s Hell’s Kitchen geothermal brine project near California’s Salton Sea, roughly 160 miles (258 km) southeast of Los Angeles. “This will supply a sizeable amount of our lithium needs,” said Tim Grewe, GM’s director of electrification strategy.

The company declined to be more specific on its investment amount, but said the project’s lithium will be used to build EVs in the United States and that GM engineers and scientists will visit the site once pandemic-related travel restrictions end.

While other automakers, including China’s Great Wall Motor Co (601633.SS) and BYD (002594.SZ), have invested in lithium producers before, none appear to have taken such an aggressive step to be part of the production process, as GM is taking with CTR.

The move could spark other automakers to follow suit with similar partnerships, especially as demand for the metal is expected to outstrip supply by 20% within four years, according to industry consultant Benchmark Mineral Intelligence.

American Nonsense

FROM PAGE 1

The poll comes as Republican-led states are trying to pass sweeping voting reforms tightening up rules at the ballot box, which will deny many Americans their voting right.

Several states, such as Georgia, Arizona and Florida, have passed controversial laws aimed at restricting voting.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday delivered a potent blow to the Voting Rights Act (VRA), ruling that a pair of GOP-backed Arizona restrictions could remain in place.

The decision came after the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) appealed for the fast-tracking of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Now with such a distrust regarding the U.S. election system dominating the country, American officials try to save their face by blaming other countries and accusing them of unfair election system or vetting.

Iranian people have always showed the West that they decide their own fates by themselves and they will not let other countries like the U.S. decide their fates.

The U.S. preferred a pro-West candidate to win the election in Iran but whatever they had done went down the drain and a principalist candidate, Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, was elected by the nation to take the helm of the next government in the country.

So it is better for Americans to resolve their own internal problems and election system to avoid further protests regarding the vote rigging in the country.

Iranians know it well that the U.S. officials are not their well-wishers because if they really were well-wishers, they would have lifted all unilateral sanctions which have crippled the daily life and health of the common people.

Human rights, freedom of expression, fair election, equality of genders and etc. are all issues that the U.S. and Westerners claim of supporting them but in practice, they are all violators of those issues and people in their countries are suffering.

So we advise the Americans to stop their nonsense regarding Iran or any other independent country’s election and to mind their own business because independent and freedom-loving people never pay heed to the American nonsense.



Tehran Rejects...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran’s UN Ambassador Majid Takht-Ravanchi wrote a letter to the Security Council president, reiterating that the Islamic Republic has not been directly or indirectly involved in any armed attack by any entity or individual against U.S. personnel or facilities in Iraq.

“Therefore, any effort to explicitly or implicitly attribute such an accusation to Iran is inaccurate. It even lacks the most obvious reliable information to be proved and is completely baseless. Hence, we categorically reject such claims and consider them legally invalid and devoid of any effect,” he said.

“The Islamic Republic strongly rejects the US arbitrary interpretation of Article 51 of the UN Charter to justify its illegal military attack on Syria and Iraq on June 27, 2021, and vehemently condemns these illegal actions, which violate the sovereignty of the two regional countries.”

Under Article 51 of the UN Charter, the 15-member Security Council must immediately be informed of any action that states take in self-defense against an armed attack.

The U.S. argument for the offensive “has no real or legal basis because it is based solely on an arbitrary interpretation of Article 51 of the UN Charter. As a result, the U.S. attacks are a flagrant violation of international law, particularly Article 2 of the UN Charter,” the Iranian envoy said.

He further stressed that the recent US bid to accuse others in the region is doomed to failure as it is meant to cover up Washington’s irresponsible and destabilizing activities or divert public opinions from its illegal and adventurous military actions.

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Verstappen Fastest in First Austrian Practice

VIENNA (Reuters) - Red Bull's Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen picked up where he left off with the fastest time in first practice for the Austrian Grand Prix at his team's home circuit. The 23-year-old Dutch driver won the Styrian Grand Prix at Spielberg's Red Bull Ring from pole position last Sunday and will be chasing his third win in a row, and fifth of the season, this weekend. Verstappen clocked a best time of one minute 05.143 seconds, with the Ferrari pair of Charles Leclerc, 0.266 slower, and Carlos Sainz second and third on the timesheets.

Thompson Grabs First Round Lead in Detroit

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Davis Thompson, making his third US PGA Tour start as a professional, fired a nine-under par 63 to take a two-stroke lead in the Rocket Mortgage Classic in Detroit, Michigan. Thompson fired nine birdies without a bogey to equal a Detroit Golf Club record and lead England's Tom Lewis, Chile's Joaquin Niemann and American Brandon Hagy by two strokes, but the 22-year-old wasn't getting ahead of himself with three rounds to come.

Djokovic Powers Past Kudla Into Fourth Round

LONDON (Dispatches) - World number one Novak Djokovic wasted little time in storming past Denis Kudla 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 to reach the fourth round of Wimbledon.

Djokovic, the top seed and overwhelming favorite at SW19, was ruthlessly efficient in securing a straight-sets victory over the American on Court One.

The top seed never really looked overly troubled, even when Kudla raced into an early lead in the third set tie-break, and he will next take on Cristian Garin after the 25 year old from Chile beat Pedro Martinez.

After sweeping through the opening two sets with the breaks of serve that were required at the key moments, Djokovic battled through an entertaining third set tie-break to take it 9-7.

There were occasional moments where the Serb lost his intensity as Kudla threw everything he possibly could at his opponent, but ultimately it was the 34 year old who secured the win.

The Australian Open and French Open champion earlier this year has been heavily backed to continue his incredible form this season as he aims to draw level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Grand Slam singles titles.

The defending champion, chasing his sixth Wimbledon title, certainly appears set to make it three Grand Slams out of three this year if he can continue as he has started.

Meanwhile trailblazing Tunisian Ons Jabeur reached the Last 16 at Wimbledon, coming back from a set down to beat 2017 champion Garbine Muguruza 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 in 2hrs 26 minutes.

The 26-year-old Jabeur was so nervous when she moved to two match points she knelt down and was physically sick in the corner of Centre Court at the end where the Duchess of Cambridge was sitting in the Royal Box.

Muguruza saved that one but Jabeur made no mistake when she secured a second one and fell on her back in celebration getting back up to a



standing ovation.

Her victory will do wonders for her goal of encouraging more Arab women, especially in North Africa, to take up the sport and eventually join her on the professional circuit.

It was another landmark performance by Jabeur who only last month became the first Arab woman to win a WTA Tour title, winning on grass at Birmingham.

"I am good I could play another match," she laughed.

"I am very happy honestly first time on Centre Court it is amazing. It is the best day of my tennis career," Jabeur, whose best Grand Slam run is the quarter-finals at the 2020 Australian Open, said she was nervous at the outset but gradually settled into a rhythm.

"I was a little bit nervous at the beginning but by the second I tried to be calmer. I lost to her last time so this was kind of my revenge in a nice way!"

Muguruza had taken a tight first set but 26-year-old Jabeur worked her way back into the match and by the third she clearly had the upper hand.

Meanwhile Sloane Stephens' run at Wimbledon is over in the third round following a tough 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 loss to Liudmila Samsonova.

Samsonova, 22, came into Wimbledon as a wildcard after winning in Berlin last month. She'll face No. 8 seed Karolina Pliskova in the fourth round.

Stephens, the former U.S. Open champion, fell behind and lost the first set in the start to a two-hour match. But she fought back to win by the same score and push a deciding final set.

Samsonova broke in the opening game and held tight on service for 5-3 to go on and win. Samsonova hit 31 winners to Stephens' eight and had four aces. In eight appearance at Wimbledon, Stephens has made it out of the third round only once, reaching the quarterfinals in 2013.

Kroos Retires From Int'l Football



BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany midfielder Toni Kroos said Friday he was retiring from international football, days after the team was knocked out of Euro 2020 by England.

"I have played 106 times for Germany. There will not be another time," the 31-year-old Real Madrid star wrote on Twitter.

"I had already made the decision to retire after this tournament," he added, referring to the European championships which ended for the Germans when they lost 2-0 to England in the last 16 on Tuesday at Wembley.

"It had been clear to me for a while that I will not be available for the World Cup 2022 in Qatar."

Kroos said he planned in the next years to place his "full concentration" on Real Madrid.

"I would also like to be there more as husband and father for my wife and children," he wrote.

"Due to the (international) breaks that I will get in the future, I believe that I can recharge my battery better," he added.

Thanking supporters and critics alike, Kroos also had special words for Joachim Loew, who bowed out as national coach on Tuesday following 15 years in the job.

PSG to Move for Pogba or Ronaldo

PARIS (Dispatches)- Paris St Germain are getting ambitious with their wishlist, with the Ligue 1 side holding out for a new marquee signing of either Paul Pogba or Cristiano Ronaldo, according to the Daily Mirror.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is said to be eager to land a new striker over the summer, and Dominic Calvert-Lewin fits the bill, according to the Sun. The 24-year-old scored 16 goals in 33 appearances last season for Everton.

Declan Rice's future at West Ham looking uncertain with the midfielder having rejected two contracts with the Hammers, amid potential interest from Chelsea, Manchester United and Manchester City, writes the Guardian.

After wrapping up the deal for Jadon Sancho, Manchester United will immediately turn their attention to signing centre-back Raphael Varane who is currently on the books of Real Madrid, reports the Daily Star.

Everton and Arsenal will tussle for the signature of Brighton's Ben White, with the Gunners already having seen two bids for the 23-year-old rejected, according to the Daily Mail.

Kyrgios Undecided On Tokyo Games

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Two days after being named in Australia's Olympic tennis team, Nick Kyrgios said he was "tossing up options" and may opt out of the Tokyo Games due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Kyrgios, who snubbed the 2016 Rio Games amid a feud with Australia's chef de mission, has entered the Atlanta Open, which clashes with the Olympic tennis tournament.

"Ever since I was a player I wanted to compete at the Olympics but I've also entered Atlanta as well. I'm tossing up my options at the same time," Kyrgios told reporters after beating Gianluca Mager to reach the third round at Wimbledon.

"I've heard some things about the Olympics that are very tough restrictions-wise. No guests, none of that stuff."

Man Utd Agree to Sign Sancho



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United announced on Thursday they had reached an agreement in principle with Borussia Dortmund for the transfer of England international Jadon Sancho, who will cost the Premier League club 85 million euros.

United have long been keen to bring the winger to Old Trafford and they are finally set to get their man, who is currently on England duty at Euro 2020.

"The signing is subject to contractual terms and a medical, which will be completed after

Jadon's involvement in the UEFA European Championship," United said in a brief statement. Bundesliga side Dortmund confirmed earlier Thursday that they had agreed a fee of 85 million euros (\$100 million, £73 million) for the 21-year-old.

"The contractual details now have to be coordinated and completed," the club said in their statement.

"Moreover, the formal processing of the transfer is still subject to the successful completion of all necessary medical tests and examinations."

Reports said Sancho would sign a five-year deal at Old Trafford.

Speculation had been rife last year that he would be headed to Old Trafford, but no transfer materialised at that point.

Sancho, who has scored three times in 20 senior international appearances, is set to become the second-most expensive English player behind Harry Maguire, whom United signed two years ago from Leicester for £80 million.

Spain Beats Ten-Man Switzerland In Penalty Shootout



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Unai Simon made two saves and Mikel Oyarzabal scored the decisive penalty to give Spain a spot in the European Championship semifinals by beating Switzerland 3-1 in the shootout after a 1-1 draw.

Switzerland and Spain are headed to a penalty shootout in the European Championship quarterfinals after a 1-1 draw through extra time. The Swiss got through the extra period of 30 minutes despite playing with 10 men following a red card for midfielder Remo Freuler in the 78th minute.

Switzerland advanced after penalties in the round of 16. The team beat World Cup champion France 5-4 in the shootout.

Spain and 10-man Switzerland are headed for extra time at 1-1 in the European Championship quarterfinals. An own-goal by Switzerland midfielder Denis Zakaria gave Spain the lead in the eighth minute. The Swiss equalized when Xherdan Shaqiri took advantage of a defensive mix-up in the 68th.

Remo Freuler was shown a straight red card in the 78th for a studs-up challenge on Spain substitute Gerard Moreno. Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer, the hero of the penalty shoot-out win over world champions France in the last 16, made a string of fine saves in extra time.

But Simon saved from Fabian Schaer and Manuel Akanji, while Ruben Vargas blazed over in a tense finale as Spain snuck through, with Mikel Oyarzabal smashing home the winning spot-kick. Luis Enrique's men will take on either Belgium or Italy at Wembley on Tuesday.

After scoring 10 goals in their previous two matches, this was a return to the type of profligate performances which saw Spain draw their first two group games against Sweden and Poland.

Bucks Roll Over Hawks to Take 3-2 Series Lead



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The Milwaukee Bucks showed they are more than a one-man show, using a balanced attack to beat the Atlanta Hawks 123-112 in game five of the Eastern Conference finals.

Brook Lopez had 33 points, Jrue Holiday had 25 points and 13 assists and Khris Middleton finished with 26 points and 13 rebounds for the Bucks, who grabbed a 3-2 series lead and are one win away reaching the NBA finals for the first time since 1974.

Milwaukee won despite playing without two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis Antetokounmpo, who is out with an injured knee. Antetokounmpo watched the game from the sidelines, standing with his teammates almost the entire game.

In his absence, four Bucks starters scored more than 20 points.

"We came out tonight and just did our best to dominate at both ends of the floor," said Lopez. "We did a great job of playing together. When everyone is scoring and everyone is doing their thing it is tough on their defence." The best-of-seven series now switches back to Atlanta for game six on Saturday. The winner of the series will face the Phoenix Suns, who eliminated the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday to reach the finals for the first time in 28 years. Role players and reserves were forced to step into the limelight Thursday as both clubs were missing their top scorers.

Antetokounmpo injured his knee in a loss in game four, and Hawks star Trae Young sat out his second straight game after he suffered a bone bruise in his right foot in game three. Bogdan Bogdanovic scored a team-high 28 points for the Hawks in the road loss.

Milwaukee improved to 7-1 at home in the playoffs. They were 6-5 without Antetokounmpo in the lineup during the regular season, and 40-21 with him.