

Health Ministry Announced on Monday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 84,949 With 157 More Iranians Killed by the Deadly Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

The Spokesman for the Iran's Parliament National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Says Nuclear Facilities' Camera Footages Will Not Be Provided to the IAEA Inspector in His Coming Visit

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TUESDAY JULY 6, 2021 - TIR 15, 1400

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Iran's JCPOA Actions Within Framework of UNSC Resolution 2231

TEHRAN (IP) - A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Parliament said that Iran's actions are within the framework of Articles 26 and 36 of JCPOA and Resolution 2231 of the Security Council, but the United States was not willing to stop its maximum pressure policy.

Referring to the recent UN Security Council meeting on the implementation of Resolution 2231 and emphasizing the return of the United States and Iran to this agreement as well as the lifting of sanctions against Tehran, Abolfazl Amouei said, "One of the main reasons for the incomplete implementation of JCPOA is illegal U.S. action."

He added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to adhere to the provisions of this resolution and Iran accepted the Vienna talks to determine the conditions for the return of the United States to the nuclear deal, but the U.S. has so far shown that it is not willing to stop its maximum pressure policy."

He also stated, "The policy of maximum pressure on Iran is a failed policy for all American elites and its components, like sanctions, are favored by the United States. Therefore, by adhering to Resolution 2231, we have shown that the other side has not fulfilled its obligations."

Amouei added that the UN Secretary-General should increase his pressure on the West, including the United States in order to return to its commitments because it had made it difficult to implement the resolution precisely.

"The Vienna talks have not yet reached the desired results and Tehran should not allow them to enter into the agreement as a member until the United States agrees to lift all sanctions," he noted.

Iran Exports of Goods Up By 50% in Q1

TEHRAN (MNA) - Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade Mr. Alireza Razm Hosseini said that Iranian exports rose by 50% in the first quarter of the Iranian year of 1400 as compared to last year's first quarter.

Hosseini made the remarks in a ceremony in Sabzevar in North Khorasan Province on Sunday.

The industry minister said that the sanctions and the Covid-19 pandemic could not stop Iran's exports last year and this current Iranian year of 1400 (beginning on March 21, 2021), saying that through the efforts and planning of the administration apparatuses and the cooperation of the judicial system, the Iranian exporters could overcome the hurdles and increase their exports volume.

"Exports of goods from the country in the first three months of this year increased by 50% compared to the same period last year and the country's trade balance was positive and reached \$ 500 million," he noted.

Razm Hosseini's comments were made following the data revealed by the Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) Hamid Zadboom who said on Saturday that Iran's exports to other countries increased by 68% in the first three months of the current Iranian year of 1400.

The TPOI head said that the value of exported goods and services increased by 68% as compared to last year's first three months and in terms of their weight, the exports witnessed 38% growth.

Mohseni-Ejei Officially Takes the Helm of Judiciary



IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The farewell ceremony of the Judiciary Chief Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and the introduction of new chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei was held yesterday.

A number of senior Iranian officials, including Majlis Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, First Vice President Jahangiri, and Tehran's mayor Hanachi attended the ceremony.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei appointed Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei as the new head of the Iranian Judiciary on Thursday.

At Leader's decree, Mohseni-Ejei will replace Raisi who won the June 18 presidential elections and is now Iran's President-elect. President-elect Raisi wrote a letter to the Leader last week calling on him to appoint a new head to the Judiciary amid his busy schedule of selecting cabinet members. Addressing to the introduction ceremony, Mohseni-Ejei called the implementation of the Transformation Document as the axis and main criterion of Iran's judicial system.

He added, "The axis of the judiciary is the implementation of the Transformation Document and this period is the period of transformation and excellence and we should have long and leaps and bounds with the unity and integrity of all officials, cooperation of the three branches of the government, military and law enforcement forces."

He also appreciated the Supreme Leader for trusting and electing him as the chief of the Judiciary.

He expressed readiness to pursue this serious responsibility with "strength and power in order to serve the system and the people and values." Mohseni-Ejei noted, "Promotion of justice in all areas, more decisive and non-discriminatory fight against corruption in all areas, development of technology to serve people better and cheaper and in some cases even free of charge for them, maximum use of the popular capacity for the prevention of crime, the reduction of judicial cases and violations in the judiciary branches, peace, and reconciliation, and the establishment of a mechanism for the expansion of legitimate freedoms is the most targets of the Judiciary Branch."

Referring to the expansion of legitimate freedoms, he added: "In the constitution and in the Leader's communiqué, the issue of expanding legitimate freedoms is mentioned, and this issue requires a mechanism so that we can defend legitimate freedoms more than before, because if these freedoms are expanded and as the restrictions defined by Islam, many illegal acts are prevented." Meanwhile former Judiciary Chief and President-Elect Raisi said that Mohseni-Ejei has a Revolutionary spirit and is always committed to Revolutionary principles. He went on to say, "I have been working closely with Mr. Mohseni-Ejei for 36 years. He is a competent judge and is very familiar with the judiciary."

The president-elect described Mohseni-Ejei as having a Revolutionary spirit, noting: "He has not been changed over time and he is always committed to Revolutionary principles."

He added: "Despite the Corona conditions, we tried our best day and night and our colleagues presented a report that caused the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to comment on June 28 this year. This is an honorary document for the judiciary and our dear colleagues. I am sure that with the management of Mohseni-Ejei and the good colleagues we have in the judiciary, great strides will be made." Raisi stated, "If there is a success in the judiciary today, it is related to each and every colleagues. It is related to all their efforts made in the judiciary." Referring to the characteristics of Mohseni -Ejei, the president-elect said: "He is now the judiciary Chief, but he has played a role in many developments before."

Iraqi Forces to Protect Power Lines Amid Heightened Daesh Attacks

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) - Iraq's Joint Operations Command has announced the formation of a joint force between the Iraqi army, police and the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) to protect the country's power lines from repeated attacks by the Daesh terrorist group.

"There are around 45 transmission lines that have been targeted by terrorists in the past few days," Major General Tahsin al-Khafaji, spokesman for the Joint Operations Command, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA), adding that most of the targeted power lines have been repaired.

According to al-Khafaji, Daesh seeks to throw the Iraqi population into panic by targeting electricity pylons. He added that an operations cell involving Iraq's security forces and the Electricity Ministry staff has been formed to work out strategies for the protection of transmission towers, with the army, police and the PMU set to contribute to the joint effort. Iraq's electricity lines have been targeted repeatedly in the past few months, mostly in the territories where Daesh still poses a threat, whereas the terrorist group had already been crushed across the Arab country through a joint effort by Iraq's army, resistance groups such as the PMU, and other regional actors.

Last week, Iraq's Electricity Ministry announced that the country's Salah al-Din Power Station in the holy city of Samarra was targeted by Katyusha rockets, causing severe damage to parts of the generating unit, in an attack claimed by Daesh.

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Next Gov't Urged to Focus On Regional Treaties

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The heads of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)'s specialized committees have called on the next government to focus on privatization and joining regional treaties as a priority in its economic planning.

As reported by the ICCIMA portal, the head of ICCIMA's specialized committees gathered on Sunday to prepare a proposal package for the next government in which the demands of the private sector in various areas would be presented.

It was decided in this meeting that the mentioned package would be prepared and published in two sections covering macroeconomics and more detailed areas such as industry, mining, agriculture, tourism, etc.

The need to joint regional treaties, downsize the government, maintain economic security by stabilizing laws and regulations, and trying to strengthen the ICCIMA position in the economy by relying on its members were among the most important points emphasized by the heads of the mentioned committees.

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Pakistani Businessmen Propose SPV System For Trade With Iran

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) - Rice exporters and traders in Pakistan have proposed the government establish a strong banking system with the Islamic Republic of Iran or implement a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) system to boost trade, especially the rice exports.

Pakistani businessmen and economic institutions, especially the private sector have always stressed the need to use banking capacity between Tehran and Islamabad to facilitate trade and make better use of the two neighbors' trade and economic ties.

The chambers of commerce in Pakistan have repeatedly raised the idea of using national currencies between Iran and Pakistan, saying that the lack of a banking system is the main obstacle to increase bilateral trade and increasing the difficulties of traders between the two countries in achieving mutual trade. Pakistan is the fourth largest exporter of rice in the world. Rice is cultivated on 2.89 million hectares of land, which accounts for 10 percent of Pakistan's total arable land, and in 1997 alone was worth more than \$ 2 billion.

According to daily Business Recorder, the Rice Research and Development Board (RR&DB) of Pakistan's Punjab province has proposed the federal government for planning a strong banking system, such as Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), for barter trade of goods to increase rice export to Iran.

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JCPOA Has No Reasonable Alternative

TEHRAN (MNA) - Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has said that the Iran nuclear deal must be preserved because it has no alternative.

In a tweet, the Russian Embassy in London has quoted Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying that the "JCPOA has no reasonable alternative."

Zakharova has also been quoted as saying that without the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), "peace and security become more vulnerable."

Today's comment by the foreign ministry spokeswoman comes a day after she was also quoted by the Russian envoy to London on Twitter as saying that her country is interested in returning the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) into a stable and predictable channel.

The Russian FM spokeswoman also called for "creating conditions for normalizing international cooperation with #Iran in economy, trade, scientific research, and technology, including peaceful atom."

شماره آگهی ۱۱۵۷۲۶۶

State Printing Office of Iran (SPOI)

Tender of purchasing 50 tons transparent white laser polycarbonate in sheet

Tender NO : 2000001065000017

Refer to Page 2

م.الف ۱۲۵۸

Iran Has Most Sophisticated Technologies in Air Defense

TEHRAN (IP) - The Commander of Iran's Army Air Defense Force underscores that Iran has the most sophisticated technologies in the field of air defense.

Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifar, Commander of Iran's Army Air Defense Force, said on Sunday: "With its indigenous equipment, Air Defense force is at the cutting edge of technology and knowledge in the world, and its scientists have succeeded in achieving the most sophisticated technologies in the field of air defense."

He added that good measures had been taken concerning self-sufficiency and indigenization of defense systems, which led to the Air Force's strength.

Raisi, Imran Khan Have Phone Conversation

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President-elect Ebrahim Raisi says the security of the neighboring Afghanistan should be provided by people of the country, adding that foreign forces only bring insecurity to the region.

Raisi made the remarks in a Sunday phone conversation with Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, during which the two sides discussed various issues of mutual interest.

Iran's president-elect expressed concern about the ongoing situation in the neighboring Afghanistan, saying, "The security of Afghanistan is important to us and this security should be established by Afghans themselves."

Raisi noted that "collective security" in the region could be only established through cooperation of all regional countries, adding, "The experience has shown that foreigners only sow insecurity under the guise of establishing security, and institutionalize instability."

Fighting has raged between the Taliban and Afghan forces across several provinces of Afghanistan and the militant group claims to have seized more than 100 out of nearly 400 districts in the country.



Some observers are concerned that the Taliban may go on to topple the Afghan government. Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian president-elect cited Palestine as the factor of convergence in the Muslim world and said effective and constant defense for the oppressed Palestinian people would guarantee "sustainability of regional security."

The Pakistani premier, for his part, expressed concern over the situation in Afghanistan.

He said diplomacy was the best way to solve the crisis in Afghanistan but, he added, it will not be easy under the circumstances.

Imran Khan expressed hope that he would meet with the Iranian president-elect in the near future.

Raisi, the incumbent Judiciary Chief of Iran, was elected Iran's eighth president after he garnered about 62 percent of the votes in the June 18 election.

VP Calls for Expansion of Cooperation Between Tehran, Tokyo

TEHRAN (IP) - Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar, said: "The people of Iran and Japan have many historical and cultural commonalities, which provide a good ground for expanding cooperation and consensus between entrepreneurs and women of the two countries."

Speaking at the webinar "Supporting Women Entrepreneurs in the Corona Age with Emphasis on the Digital Market," the vice president pointed to cooperation with Japanese institutions and entrepreneurs, adding: "We have good cooperation with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in various fields, including supporting entrepreneurs and women."

"Economic pressure on the Iranian people, entrepreneurs and women continues, but these pressures



have strengthened their will to improve the economic situation," Vice president for Women and Family

Affairs said, referring to unfair sanctions against Iran during the Corona outbreak.

Masoumeh Ebtekar called for the cooperation of Iranian and Japanese entrepreneurs and said: "Women in both countries not only did entrepreneurship and create jobs for other women and even men, but they also sowed the seeds of hope in the next generation."

Referring to the role of Iranian and Japanese women in combating the spread of corona, the vice president underlined: "They shared their experiences with others using new tools such as digital marketing."

Ebtekar added that Corona mobilized people to help each other. Corona not only forced us to change our lifestyle but also strengthened our humanitarian outlook.

Foreigners Never to Be Happy With Strong Afghanistan

TEHRAN (MNA) - Stating that foreigners will never be happy with a strong Afghanistan, the Head of Cultural commission of Iran Parliament said that they are always trying to show the world a false image of Afghanistan through war and terror.

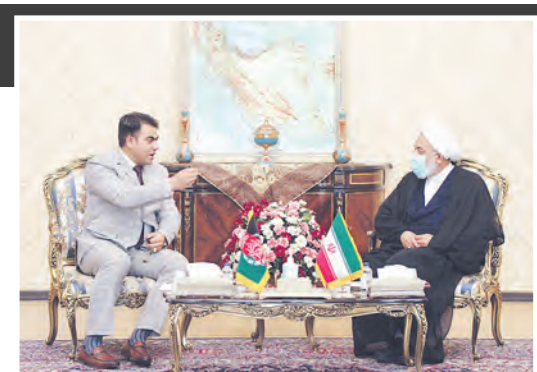
Morteza Aghatehrani made the remarks in his meeting with Chairman of the Cultural Commission of the Afghan Parliament Amir Gul Shaheen.

Referring to the religious and racial similarities between Iran and Afghanistan, Aghatehrani said, "Iran and Afghanistan are longtime neighbors with a common history and culture."

"In light of these commonalities, the two countries have a special reason to strengthen the relations in various fields," he added.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported the preservation of Afghanistan's independence and territorial integrity and considers the presence of foreign forces in the region as a cause of instability and insecurity," Iranian MP noted, adding, "Understanding the problems of the Afghan people over the past four decades has led the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully support this eastern neighbor, and now nearly three and a half million Afghans live, study and work in Iran."

The head of the parliament's cultural commission emphasized the cultural and economic empowerment of Afghan women, saying, "Parliament welcomes the exchange of experiences and joint cooperation for the cultural and economic empowerment of Afghan women and the holding of training courses in Iran."



Referring to the current developments in Afghanistan, Aghatehrani said, "Foreigners will never be happy with a strong Afghanistan, and they are always trying to show the world a false image of Afghanistan through war, terror and Islamophobia."

Amir Gul Shaheen, for his part, called Iran an important strategic neighbor for Afghanistan, saying, "The people of Afghanistan will not forget the immediate and humanitarian aid of the Iranians."

"Strengthening the cultural, political and trade relations between the two countries will improve the level of relations," he added.

Shaheen thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its full support of the Afghan people.

4th Int'l Online Congress of "Smart Tehran" Kicks Off

TEHRAN (MNA) - The Fourth International Online Congress of "Smart Tehran" began in Tehran on Monday.

The 4th Online Congress "Smart Tehran" with the motto of "Digital Transformation, Digital Services, Smart Cities in COVID-19 Era and Beyond" kicked off on Monday with a focus on smart cities during and post-coronavirus periods through video conference.

Senior domestic and international technology managers and figures will address the Congress, and specialized meetings, tutorial workshops and also talk shows will be held on the sidelines of organizing the Congress.

Specialized meetings, smart city views and special talks are some of the programs that will be held in this Congress.

Vice-President for Science and Technology and Head of National Elites Foundation Sorena Sattari, Head of Information Technology Organization of Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (ICT) Amir Nazemi, Chairman of Tehran City Council (TCC) Mohsen Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mayor of Tehran Pirouz Hanachi, Head of ITC Organization of Municipality of Tehran Mohammad Farjoud and Senior Advisor for Digital Technologies and Smart Cities of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Calum Handforth will deliver speech at the first day of the Congress.

It should be noted that this prestigious Congress will run until June 6. The first edition of the Congress was held in 2017.

Tehran, Muscat Discuss Boosting Ties

TEHRAN (MNA) - The issue of concluding a twinning agreement between Tehran and Muscat, the capitals of the two countries, was discussed by the Iranian ambassador in Oman and the head of Muscat Municipality.

Ali Najafi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Oman, met and held talks with Issam Saud Hareb Al Zadjali, head of Muscat Municipality. The facilitation of Iranians' economic activities in Muscat, was among the various issues discussed by the two sides during the meeting.

The issue of concluding a twinning agreement between Tehran and Muscat, the capitals of the two countries, was also raised by the head of Muscat Municipality.

Earlier, Ali Najafi had met with other senior Omani officials to discuss political, security, economic, and consular issues.

Rents in Suburbs of Tehran Rise by '70%'

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - While the Central Bank of Iran claims a less than 38 percent increase in housing rents around Tehran, field surveys by Mehr News Agency show that the increase is about 60 to 70 percent.

The central bank's latest report shows that in June this year, compared to the same month last year, housing rents in Tehran grew by 33.9% and areas around Tehran by 37.6%.

According to the government's decree, rent rates should not grow above 15 percent around Tehran.

Mehr News Agency, citing field surveys and interviews with real estate firms, reported that rents around Tehran have increased significantly.

It said fares were "breaking records."

Mexico Urges Boosting Sport Cooperation With Iran

TEHRAN (IP) - The Mexican ambassador in Tehran, in a meeting with the president of the Iranian Tennis Federation, emphasized the expansion of sports cooperation between the two countries.

The Mexican ambassador to Iran, Guillermo Alejandro Ponte, and the President of the Iranian Tennis Federation, Davood Azizi, met and stressed increasing sports cooperation between the two countries, including tennis.

Azizi, in a meeting with the Mexican ambassador to Iran, said that there is a readiness to implement joint programs with the Mexican Tennis Federation.

He also considered the holding of the Diplomat Cup tennis tournament as one of the programs of this federation and said: "This event was supposed to be held last year (2020) due to the interest of ambassadors and diplomats, but the corona pandemic delayed it, but due to the positive attitude of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we are planning to hold this event."

The Mexican ambassador to Iran also said: "I am interested in the development of sports relations between Iran and Mexico, especially in the fields of tennis and football, and in this regard, I will do my best and certainly the development of relations will lead to more prosperity in sports."



شناسه آگهی ۱۱۵۷۲۶۶

State Printing Office of Iran (SPOI)

Tender of purchasing 50 tons transparent white laser polycarbonate in sheet

Tender NO : 2000001065000017

State printing office of Iran intends to purchase the aforementioned polycarbonates through a public tender. Therefore, participants in the tender should first receive their tender documents from Jul. 03-2021 to 12:00 hours on Jul.08-2021 in the Governmental portal address at : www.setadiran.ir and after register needed documents in mentioned address , physically submit envelope A to the secretariat of the company before the end of administrative hour(12:00 PM) on Jul.25-2021. Tender documents presented after the stated deadline will not be accepted.

The guaranteed amount for participating in the tender is 14/300/000/000 Rials(55/000 EUO) and should be presented in the form of a bank guarantee in envelope A.

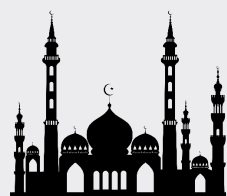
All stages of bid , including receiving tender documents ,submitting price proposal of tenders and opening the envelopes ,will be done through the portal of Government's electronic procurement system at the following address : www.setadiran.ir.

It is necessary that tenders , if not taken membership previously , should carry out the registration stages in the mentioned website and receive the signed and sealed electronic certificate for participating in the tender. For more information , please contact the governmental portal phone numbers at 1456 ,registration office Tel: 88969737 and 85193768. Envelopes opening date is on Tuesday Jul.27-2021 at 10:00 AM in Transactions Commission Room of State Printing Office of Iran.

Meanwhile , the cost for publishing the advertisement shall be borne by the tender winner.

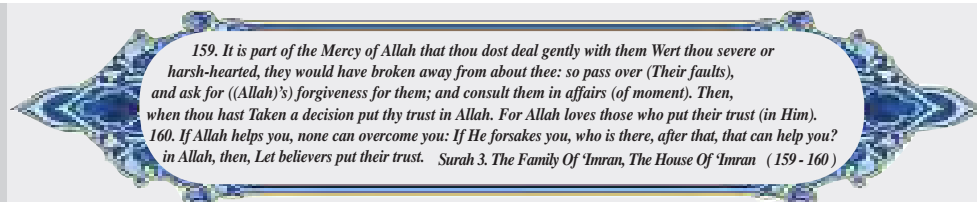
Address : State Printing Office of Iran, No: 29, Next to Khayyam Park, Iqbal Lahouri St., Imam Husein Square, Tehran, Iran, Postal code : 1714744153, Tel : 33349079

م.الف ۱۲۵۸



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:09
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:44
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:10
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	05:55



Rome Can Share Its Experiences in Cooperative Sector With Tehran

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – First Secretary and Head of the Economic and Commercial Office of Embassy of Italy in Tehran says his country can share its valuable experiences in field of cooperative sector with Iran and the two countries can cooperate together.

In an exclusive interview with the news website of Iran Chamber of Cooperative on the occasion of International Cooperative Day, Mr. David Baloni briefed the interviewer about the performance of Italy in its cooperative sector.

International Co-operative Day is an annual celebration of the co-operative movement observed on the first Saturday in July since 1923 by the International Co-operative Alliance.

Baloni pointed to the role of cooperative in the economies and said cooperatives are more resistant than other types of businesses and can help the resistance and sustainability of economies of countries in the critical times, and for this reason his country emphasizes support of this sector.

He then pointed to the relations of both countries and said the trade volume between Iran and Italy has declined considerably since 2017 after re-imposition of the unilateral sanctions by the U.S., adding that despite this condition, Italian government has tried to prevent the exit of Italian companies from Iran as much as it could in order to keep the trade relation level sustainable.

He then pointed to the major trades between the two countries, saying that due to recent changes in Iran's economy and the country's focus on the non-oil trade, Italy has been more focused in recent years on various industries especially in the field of providing technology and industrial machineries and it has tried to help Iran in this field.

Baloni reiterated that SMEs form the backbone of Italy's economy and they help the national economic growth. He noted that SMEs in Italy are various and are run



mostly by families, and cooperatives are mostly included in this category. He added but Italians believe cooperatives are more resistant than other models of the businesses and can help the economies of the countries in the critical conditions and for this reason it is backed by the Italian government.

He stated that cooperative sectors of Iran and Italy can cooperate and broaden the cooperation in this sector and cooperation with Iran in cooperative sector is very important for Italy. Baloni said there are several common grounds for cooperation between Iran and Italy like transfer of knowhow and sharing the successful experiences.

Then Baloni explained the stand of cooperative in the body of the Italian government and said it is sub-set of the labor ministry. He then pointed to the stand of women in the cooperative sector of Italy and said the role of women is very colorful in this sector. He said Italy believes the presence of women in the cooperatives will boost productivity, creativity and effectiveness in the economy and the government tries to improve the role of women in all components of the economy in the country.

He expressed readiness of his country to share its experience for transfer of knowhow and achievements and to cooperate in this field.

Baloni also added that Italy is currently moving towards green economy and it can help Iran in providing it with green technology. He said Italy held some events in 2020 to promote Iran's economic and trade capacities for its Italian counterparts and expressed hope those events would continue in 2021.

Gov't Awards \$344m Pet Coke Contract to Domestic Refinery

TEHRAN (PressTV) - A chunk of pet coke is on display during a ceremony in the Iranian Oil Ministry on July 4, 2021 to award a contract to Shazand Refinery for production of 90,000 tons per year of the raw material that is widely used in steelmaking processes.

Iran's Oil Ministry has contracted a domestic refinery for production of a bulk of the petroleum-based needle coke it needs to make graphite electrodes for steel making processes.

Oil Ministry's news service Shana said in a Sunday report that the Shazand Refinery (IKORC) had been commissioned to produce 90,000 metric tons of needle coke per year.

Iranian steelmakers have largely relied on foreign suppliers for the coke they need as a raw material in making graphite electrodes. Those electrodes are widely used in the electric arc furnaces where a scrap from metal is melted to produce new steel.

Government estimates show that Iran will need 94,000 tons of needle coke in 2025, the year when Iran's total steel production is expected to reach 55 million tons.

Shana's report said Iranian contractors will need to invest 290 million euros (\$344 million) to carry out the needle coke project by the IKORC.

The project will also help IKORC, one of the largest refineries in Iran, to significantly reduce its mazut output and optimize its environmental and manufacturing standards, according to the refinery's CEO Gholamhossein Ramazanpour.

Launched in 1993 in central Iranian city of Shazand, the IKORC, which is also known as Arak Oil Refinery, has a capacity for processing 250,000 barrels per day of crude.

Ramazanpour said a separate unit will be set up in the refinery for production of needle coke, adding that construction works and installation of equipment is expected to finish within the next 12 months.

Iran Increases Production of COVIran Barekat Vaccine

TEHRAN (IP) - Iranian officials announced an increase in the COVIran Barekat vaccine production capacity.

Hojjatullah Niki-Maleki, head of the information center of the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO), wrote on his Twitter page on Sunday: "Currently producing 200,000 doses of vaccines per week."

Niki-Maleki added: "So far, two million and fifty thousand doses of vaccine have been delivered to the Ministry of Health of Iran, and since this week, the production capacity has been increased."

"We will try to keep our promise to produce more than 50 million doses of vaccine until the end of September," Niki-Maleki wrote.

Niki-Maleki also wrote: "Once domestic needs are met, we also want to export it."

Crypto Mining Blamed for Critical Electricity Situation

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Head of Iran's state electricity company Tavanir has blamed a fresh surge in illegal crypto mining activity in the country as a main cause of shortage in power supplies during hot summer days.

Mohammad Hassan Motavallizadeh said on Sunday that Iran has been facing a "critical electricity situation" mainly because more people had become active in mining crypto currencies through devices smuggled into Iran in recent months.

"This year a significant flow (into Iran) of illegal cryptocurrency mining devices has caused a surge in electricity consumption resulting in the current critical electricity conditions," said Motavallizadeh.

Weather forecasts suggested temperatures in Tehran and other semi-arid regions in Iran could rise to 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) on Monday. That came as people in the capital faced hours of power cuts on Sunday several weeks after the city had seen brief blackouts.

Motavallizadeh said nationwide electricity consumption in Iran had increased by a fifth this year compared to the summer last year.

He described the surge as significant while blaming it on a jump in crypto mining activity in recent months.

Figures by Tavanir show that Iran's electricity usage has exceeded 65,000 megawatts (MW) in peak hours of consumption in recent days. Authorities have intensified their crackdown on unlicensed crypto mining activity. Footage released in the local media last week showed police launching a raid on a large facility located to the west of Tehran where over 7,000 mining devices had been operating.

Having one of the cheapest electricity rates in the world, Iran is estimated to be responsible for some 7% of the global cryptocurrency production.

Cooking With The Same Memorable Taste

MAGGI culinary products have been a part of families for over 120 years, preparing delicious homecooked meals and setting healthy eating habits as a tasteful cooking assistant. In today's world, by stressing human interactions, societies seek to create and share memorable moments. Family meals best example such attempts. Based on this definition, the purpose of a meal surpasses that of survival, and acts as a window permitting an experience of the color and aroma there is to life. For this reason, nowadays, along with stressing the nutritional value, all are making an effort to improve their joy of having a meal.

MAGGI's culinary products, with their combination of vegetables and spices from all around the world, have been adding incredible aroma and taste to food, and by simplifying the process of cooking, these products are multiplying the joy of having a meal. Stressing the importance of a homecooked meal in guaranteeing nutritional health and a balanced diet, MAGGI's portfolio consists of a variety of different soups, fully-



cooked and semi cooked noodles, various spices, and sauce which simplifies the process of cooking a healthy meal for all. This tasteful cooking assistant is one of the much-loved products of the world's largest food and beverage companies which has returned to Iranian kitchens as a locally produced product after 9 years. After passing the first phase of taste testing studies conducted years ago (2005), MAGGI products were produced in Turkey's Karacabey and imported into Iran. However, Nestlé's local production strategy and MAGGI's popularity in the Islamic Republic of Iran market, drove Nestlé Iran to move towards the direct distribution of this product category, and launch the production line of MAGGI's various spices, soup, and sauce powder in 2020. Alireza Sarabchi, Nestlé Iran's Head of Communications, Marketing Services, and Regulatory and Scientific Affairs, elaborated upon local production of MAGGI culinary products, stating: "MAGGI products consist of compounds inspired by the richness of the Iranian food and taste, and has been produced according to the nutritional needs of the society. Hence, to preserve the refined taste and quality of Iranian food, after extensive research conducted by local and international experts on the country's agricultural, vegetable, and spice farms, we proudly announce that raw materials used in the

production of MAGGI products are all natural and locally sourced." Nestlé Iran experts can carefully evaluate the quality of the processed product based on international indices throughout the entire value chain given the local sourcing of raw materials. In addition to the above, MAGGI products are industrially dried and preserved, and are free of preservatives of any sort. In this method, the omission of water and moist in processed products, will not only prevent the product from going bad, but it also will effectively preserve the nutritional value of the product. Additionally, Nestlé's nutritionists have continuously improved the nutritional indices and value of MAGGI products according to the dietary needs of the society. Thus, the most important distinction of MAGGI product is in its commitment to the strictest level of health and quality standards. It is worth noting that these products are trans fat free, and in addition to the amounts of salt, sugar, and saturated fats, the amount of vegetables, grains, and lentils used in the formulation of MAGGI products is continuously reviewed as well. Currently, MAGGI's product basket in the Islamic Republic of Iran consists of semi-cooked soups, including vermicelli, barley, barley and mushroom, barley and tomato, and barely and vegetables with a pleasant fiber and vitamin-rich thickness, rice and stew flavors infused with spices and vegetables popular to the Iranian taste, and béchamel sauce that adds a delicious flavor to food.



29 Killed in Philippine Military Plane Crash

MANILA (Dispatches) - At least 29 people were killed and 50 injured Sunday when a Philippine military aircraft carrying troops crashed and burst into flames after missing the runway in the country's south, officials said.

Nearly 100 people, most of them recent army graduates, were on the C-130 Hercules transport plane which was trying to land on Jolo island in Sulu province around midday. One of the soldiers were seen jumping out of the plane before it hit the ground and exploded into flames, said Major General William Gonzales, commander of the Joint Task Force-Sulu. It was one of the country's deadliest military aviation accidents.



Tigray Demands Troop Withdrawals for Ceasefire Talks

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters) - Ethiopia's Tigray region wants a full withdrawal of troops from Eritrea and the neighbouring state of Amhara before it can engage in any talks with the federal government about a ceasefire, it said in a statement on Sunday.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the regional authority driven out last year by Ethiopian forces and troops from neighbouring Eritrea, returned to the region's capital Mekelle on Monday to cheering crowds.

Their return was followed by a unilateral declaration of a ceasefire by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government, a move dismissed by TPLF spokesperson Getachew Reda as a "joke".



Taliban Seize Key Kandahar District



Taliban Seize Key Kandahar District KABUL (Dispatches) - The Taliban have captured a key district in their former bastion of Kandahar after fierce night-time fighting with Afghan government forces, officials said Sunday, sending scores of families fleeing from the area.

The insurgents have pressed on with their campaign to capture territory across Afghanistan's rural areas since early May when the US military began its final pullout of troops from the violence-racked country.

The fall of Panjwai district in the southern province of Kandahar comes just two days after US and NATO forces vacated their main Bagram Air Base near Kabul, from where they led operations for two decades against the Taliban and their Al-Qaeda allies. Over the years, the Taliban and Afghan forces have regularly clashed in and around Panjwai, with the insurgents aiming to seize it given its proximity to Kandahar city, the provincial capital.

The leader of the Taliban, Hibatullah Akhundzada, hails from Panjwai. The province of Kandahar is the birthplace of the Taliban, who went on to rule Afghanistan with a harsh version of Islamic sharia law until being overthrown by a US-led invasion in 2001.

Panjwai district governor Hasti Mohammad said Afghan forces and the Taliban clashed during the night, resulting in government forces retreating from the area.

"The Taliban have captured the district police headquarters and governor's office building," he told AFP.

Kandahar provincial council head Sayed Jan Khakriwal confirmed the fall of Panjwai, but accused government forces of "intentionally withdrawing".

Scores of families of Panjwai fled their homes after the Taliban captured the district, an AFP correspondent reported.

"The Taliban fired on our car as I was fleeing with my family. At least five bullets hit my car," Giran, a resident of Panjwai told AFP as he took refuge in Kandahar city.

"The Taliban are on top of the mountains and firing at any moving vehicles. The Taliban don't want peace."

Assadullah, a commander of border police in the area, said it was only the police force that was fighting against the insurgents. "The army and the commandos who have better military equipment are not fighting at all," he said. Panjwai is the fifth district in Kandahar province to fall to the insurgents in recent weeks.

Fighting has raged across several provinces of Afghanistan and the Taliban claim to have seized more than 100 out of nearly 400 districts in the country.

Afghan officials dispute the claims but acknowledge that government troops have retreated from some districts. It is difficult to independently verify the situation.

The exit of foreign troops from Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, has fuelled concerns the insurgents will ramp up their campaign to capture new territory.

Le Pen Re-Elected as Head of France's Far-Right

PARIS (Dispatches) - Marine Le Pen won re-election as head of France's far-right National Rally Sunday at a party congress, where she is seeking new impetus for her 2022 presidential bid after performing badly in regional polls.

The National Rally (RN), which had been tipped for strong gains in last month's regional elections, was left floundering after failing to win any of the 13 regions in mainland France.

The results raised questions about Le Pen's strategy of trying to detoxify her party's brand and position it as a more mainstream right-wing force.

But she faced no challenge for the party leadership, with her quest for a fourth term winning the backing of 98.35 percent of members in an online and postal ballot, RN announced on the second day of its congress in the southern city of Perpignan.

Addressing reporters, the 52-year-old trained lawyer said she felt "extremely combative" about her chances of winning the presidency on her third attempt.

"I have no doubts about what needs to be done for France," said Le Pen, who used a keynote address later Sunday to rally party faithful for the 2022 campaign. Polls show the election coming down to another duel between Le Pen and centrist President Emmanuel Macron, who defeated the anti-immigration candidate handily in the second round of the 2017 vote.

But that scenario is no longer seen as a foregone conclusion.

Macron is also seen as being weakened by the poor performance of his Republic on the Move (LREM) party in the regional election.

LREM, which was founded in 2016, finished last of the big parties, winning just 7 percent of second-round votes in a contest characterised by record low turnout.

Both Le Pen's and Macron's parties have downplayed the significance of the regional elections, saying they are a poor predictor of the presidential vote.

The big winners were the traditional parties of the right and left, the Republicans and the Socialists, which were quashed by Macron's centrist insurgency in 2017 but appear to be regaining ground.

National Rally leaders have rejected suggestions that Le Pen's strategy of toning down the party's once strident rhetoric against immigration and the EU have cost it support.



Kremlin Says Provocations Like UK Warship Episode Demand Tough Response

MOSCOW (Reuters) - A British warship's entry into what Moscow considers Russian territorial waters near Crimea last month is the kind of provocation that demands a tough response, the Kremlin said on Sunday.

President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that Russia, which fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of the warship to chase it out of Black Sea waters off the coast of Crimea, could have sunk the warship.

Moscow challenged the right of HMS Defender to pass through waters near Crimea, something London said it had every right to do. Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 but most of the world still recognizes it as part of Ukraine.

Peskov, speaking on state television on Sunday, said the incident was "a well-planned provocation" and that Putin's reaction had made it clear that any repetition would provoke a response.

"It is obvious that the reaction will of course be tough," Peskov said.

He echoed Putin's accusation that Washington and London had planned the episode together.

"I think that our intelligence agencies of course know who took that decision. But, of course, I think the essence of such operations is planned by all the same senior comrades - those over the ocean," Peskov said.

Tensions are running high as Ukraine and NATO countries hold military drills in the Black Sea, monitored by Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Peskov said the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was a destabilizing element that led to confrontation, but that Russia remained open to dialogue with the body.

Reporting by Alexander Marrow; Editing by Alex Richardson and Barbara Lewis

Chile Begins Drafting New Post-Pinochet Constitution

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - Chile officially starts writing a new constitution Sunday to replace the one it inherited from the era of dictator Augusto Pinochet and is widely blamed for deep social inequalities that gave rise to deadly protests in 2019.

The country's biggest protests in 30 years of democracy won Chileans a referendum last October in which a majority voted for a new constitution to be drawn up by a body of elected members.

This 155-member body, elected in May and called a "constitutional convention," will on Sunday officially start its work of crafting a new Magna Carta for a new Chile.

It is a representative collection of Chileans—lawyers, teachers, a housewife, scientists, social workers, vets, writers, journalists, actors and doctors—many of whom had themselves partaken in the protests.

The youngest is 21.

Half are women, by design, and 17 seats were reserved for representatives of indigenous groups.

The assembly holds the power to draft a new path for the country after decades of political and economic power concentrated in the hands of an elite, many from the right and defenders of the old constitution's free-market guarantees.

"They come from the same schools, they go to the same three universities and most of them have lived in Santiago, in the most affluent neighborhoods," Marcela Rios, assistant representative of the United Nations Development Program in Chile, told AFP of the old guard.

The new constitution-drafters, in contrast, come from a diverse array of backgrounds, mainly with leftist leanings, and many gained their support base from years of social work in their communities.

"Diversity is a good thing but it also presents challenges that will require concessions" for any agreement to be reached, said constitutional law expert Javier Couso from the University Diego Portales.

Independent candidates swept the May elections, taking 46 percent of the seats as voters turned their backs on traditional political parties.

Center-left parties, who broadly canvassed on greater state control of natural resources and more social spending, received a third of the votes cast.

The right garnered just over 20 percent, meaning it will have no veto on the body that requires a two-thirds majority to approve the draft constitution.



10 Killed in Myanmar Clashes Between Army and Anti-Junta Fighters

YANGON (Dispatches)

- At least 10 anti-junta fighters and civilians were killed during clashes with the military in central Myanmar, villagers said Sunday, as locals increasingly take up arms against the regime in the coup-racked country.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since a February coup that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's government, with 890 people killed in a junta crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group.

In some areas civilians have formed "defence forces" to combat the State Administration Council, as the junta dubs itself, often using hunting rifles or makeshift weapons cobbled together from household items.

The central Sagaing region has been the site of multiple skirmishes between defence forces and the military, and on Friday fighting broke out in Depayin township. Residents told AFP that military trucks entered their area and opened fire on a village near the jungle hoping to flush out members of the local defence force.

"We heard the shooting of artillery 26 times," said a villager, who added that anti-junta fighters tried to retaliate but could not fend off the attack.

"They shot everyone who they saw on the road and in the village. They did not just have one target," he said.

Civilians were among the dead, he added.

Villagers waited until Saturday to venture out of their homes to assess the casualties, said another witness, who helped to collect the bodies around Depayin township. "We found in one place eight people were killed, and in another area two were dead," he said.

Local media reported a higher death toll, though it could not be independently verified by AFP.

State-run media offered a different account of the skirmish, saying the military was patrolling the area when they were ambushed.



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(adviser)

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J, balcony
green yard
Fully Furn

Parsian

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S/p, S, J, & F.F

Darrous (\$2600)
3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F

Niavaran (\$2300)
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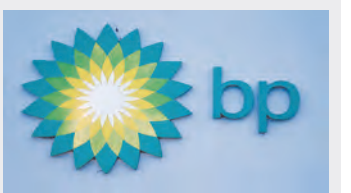
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BP Mulls Quitting Iraq, Lukoil Wants to Sell Up

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Iraqi Oil Minister Ihsan Abdul Jabbar said in a video posted on the ministry's Facebook page that BP (BPL) was considering withdrawing from Iraq, and that Russia's Lukoil (LKO.H.MM) had sent a formal notification saying it wanted to sell its stake in the West Qurna-2 field to Chinese companies.

Abdul Jabbar said the investment environment in Iraq was unsuitable for retaining major investors. The statements were made during a parliamentary session on June 29 to which Abdul Jabbar was invited, oil ministry sources said.



UAE Rejects Unfair OPEC+ Output Deal

DUBAI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates on Sunday criticized the current oil production deal among OPEC+ alliance members as "unfair", offering to extend the agreement only if its production is reviewed.

In a row that could put at risk the energy market's post-coronavirus recovery, the UAE's push to increase its production baseline is reported to have derailed last week's meeting of the alliance of oil-producing countries.

The current deal "would prolong the UAE's unfair reference production baseline until December 2022, from the existing agreement end date of April 2022", the energy and infrastructure ministry said, quoted by state news agency WAM.

The UAE, with its heavy investment in expanding capacity, is "willing to extend the agreement further, if required, but requests that baseline production references be reviewed to ensure that they are fair to all parties as/when an extension is agreed to", it said.

Videoconference talks were held Friday between the 13 members of OPEC proper led by Saudi Arabia, followed by a technical meeting and discussions between the 23 members of OPEC+.

The wider grouping includes Russia, the world's second-largest oil producer. The hitch in discussions came "due to the UAE raising a last-minute objection to the Russian-Saudi Arabia deal reached earlier", according to analysts from Deutsche Bank.

"The UAE, which has raised its production capacity since 2018 when the individual baselines were set, insisted on having its baseline lifted by 0.6 million barrels per day (bpd) to 3.8 million bpd, thereby allowing them a unilateral production increase within the current quota framework," according to Ole Hansen from Saxobank.

"Negotiations... will be difficult as OPEC+ knows that if the UAE is allowed to produce from a different base, other members may protest," said Louise Dickson from Rystad.

OPEC said the meeting had been adjourned and would reconvene on Monday at the cartel's Vienna headquarters.

Bloomberg news agency reported Thursday an agreement had been floated that would raise production by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) each month from August onwards, reaching an extra two million bpd by the end of 2021.

This would fit the broad strategy followed by OPEC+ since May: gradually increasing output which it had drastically cut in reaction to the collapse in demand at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Since the beginning of the economic crisis, the group has held almost monthly meetings to coordinate their response. Their strategy has succeeded in steering prices back upwards -- they are now at levels not seen since October 2018.

The alliance has to navigate a complex market, characterized by an uptick in demand which may yet turn out to be fragile, as well as the possible complication of a return of more Iranian exports in the medium term.

In addition, current high prices are prompting grumbles from large crude consumers, such as India. Abu Dhabi's muscular position is also pitting it against its long-time ally and neighbour Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter.

China, Ukraine Sign Deal to Strengthen Infrastructure Cooperation

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China and Ukraine have signed an agreement to strengthen cooperation in the infrastructure sector, accelerating economic ties between the two countries, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said on Sunday.

The two countries will encourage domestic enterprises and financial institutions to actively cooperate on road, bridge and rail transit projects, and provide necessary help and support for the implementation of cooperative projects, which are expected to have broad development prospects, according to the agreement.

The agreement was signed by Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine Oleksandr Kubrakov on June 30. The deal shows that both sides have made enormous efforts to push ahead with pragmatic cooperation based on mutual understanding and support despite some disruptions, experts said.

In January, the Ukrainian government decided to sanction four Chinese companies and three Chinese citizens who participated in a deal involving Ukrainian aerospace company Motor Sich, which drew strong opposition from China.

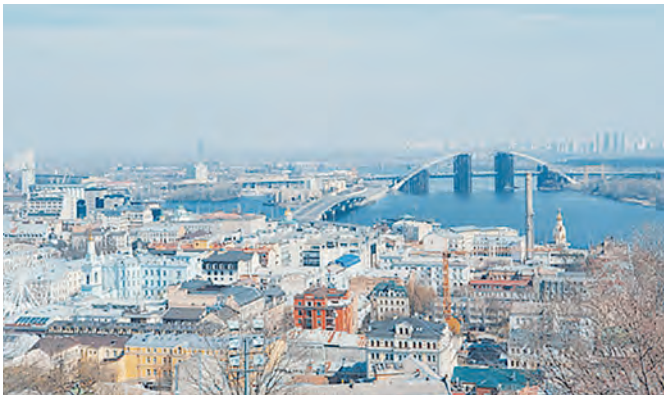
The US, which blacklisted the Chinese firm involved, has sought to undermine the deal, creating pressure on Ukraine. At the end of last year, Chinese investors in Motor Sich sought international arbitration against Ukraine with a demand for compensation of \$3.5 billion. "If Kiev can recognize the situation and get rid of the country's dependence on the West, the prospects for China-Ukraine cooperation are good," Song Kui, president of the Contemporary China-Russia Regional Economy Research Institute, told the Global Times on Sunday.

On June 25, Ukraine withdrew its signature from a joint statement on the human rights situation concerning Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, a move that was welcomed by China.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said that the action reflected Ukraine's spirit of independence and its respect for facts, and it conforms to the purposes of the UN Charter and basic norms governing international relations.

Economic and trade relations between China and Ukraine have developed smoothly, and cooperation in infrastructure has shown good development momentum, experts noted.

New contracts signed by Chinese companies in the Ukrainian engineering market have exceeded \$2 billion for two consecutive years, making positive contributions to the country's economic development, data from the MOFCOM showed.



S. Korean Businesses Voice Concern Over Digital Tax

SEOUL (Dispatches) - South Korea's business community expressed concerns on July 2 about a global move toward additional taxes on technology companies that would affect Korean tech giants such as Samsung Electronics and SK hynix.

The Federation of Korean Industries, an organization that represents the interests of Korean businesses, said in a statement: "We express concerns about the side effects of an agreement on the digital tax announced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD]."

"It appears that almost all sectors of industries are subject to the tax, which could strain normal operations of businesses that are not related to acts of tax evasion," the federation said. The Korean business group said discussions about digital taxes had initially started with the aim of preventing tax evasion by digital service companies.

According to the Ministry of Economy, the OECD announced an agreement on the digital tax, which would take effect in 2023 and impact global businesses that surpassed 27 trillion won (\$23.79 billion) in annual sales with operating margins of over 10 per cent.

The aim of the digital tax, known as Pillar I, is to ensure that companies operating in multiple countries pay taxes in all the countries where they provide services and earn profit, not just in their home countries.

Around 100 businesses are expected to be subject to the new tax.

According to the agreement, companies subject to the tax will have to pay 20 to 30 per cent of the profit they generate in different countries beyond a 10 per cent baseline.

Samsung and SK hynix appear to be subject to the Pillar I digital tax, according to the ministry.

The Pillar II tax, a 15 per cent global corporate tax rule, would additionally apply to multinational companies with consolidated sales of over 1.1 trillion won.

This is a response to the phenomenon of multinationals circumventing taxes by establishing subsidiaries in countries with lower corporate tax rates.

"Pillar II also would limit sound competition in tax payment among countries, which could hinder the free operations of businesses," the Federation of Korean Industries said. "We hope the OECD will come up with a more reasonable measure by listening to opinions from the private economic sector."

Lebanon Medicine Importers Warn Foreign Drugs Running Out

BEIRUT (AFP) - Lebanon's medicine importers Sunday said they had run out of hundreds of essential drugs and warned of more shortages, as the country's dire financial crisis batters the health sector.

Lebanese are grappling with a raft of shortages, including petrol, as the caretaker government discusses lifting subsidies it can no longer afford amid what the World Bank says is one of the world's worst financial crises since the 1850s.

The local currency has lost more than 90 percent of its value on the black market, but the central bank had been providing importers with dollars at a much more favorable official rate to cover a large part of the cost of imported drugs.

Medicine "imports have almost completely ground to a halt over the past month", the association of pharmaceuticals importers said in a statement.

The syndicate said the central bank has not released the promised dollars to pay suppliers abroad, who are owed more than \$600 million in accumulated dues since December, and importers cannot obtain new lines of credit.

"Importing companies' stocks of hundreds of medicines to treat chronic and incurable diseases have run out," it warned. "And hundreds more will run out through July if we cannot resume imports as soon as possible."

Syndicate head Karim Gebara told AFP some drugs to treat cardiac diseases, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer and multiple sclerosis were already out of stock. If nothing is done, "the situation will be catastrophic by the end of July" depriving "hundreds of thousands of patients" of their medication, he warned.

On Thursday, President Michel Aoun said he had agreed with ministers and the central bank chief to "continue subsidising medication and medical supplies" selected by the health ministry according to priority.

The Lebanese state is providing less than five hours of electricity a day in most areas, as it struggles to come up with the foreign currency for fuel imports.

Standard & Poor's Improves Uzbekistan's Rating Forecast to Stable

TASHKENT (Dispatches) - The world-rating agency Standard & Poor's (the "Agency") in its last report maintained Uzbekistan's sovereign rating at "BB-" level, but improved the forecast for the country from "negative" to "stable".

In its previous report issued last June, the forecast was decreased to "negative". This

decision was made due to the rapid growth of the foreign debt of the country.

In its report for this year, the Agency drew attention to the following factors in raising the forecast for the country:

Economic growth of 1.6% in 2020. According to an estimated forecast, in 2021 the economy of Uzbekistan is projected to grow by 4.8%, the main reason for growth being the service sector.

Imposition of limits on the State foreign debt. The Agency positively assessed the adoption of the Law "On State Budget" which sets the annual limit of foreign debt at USD5 billion and its maximum limit of 60% of GDP.

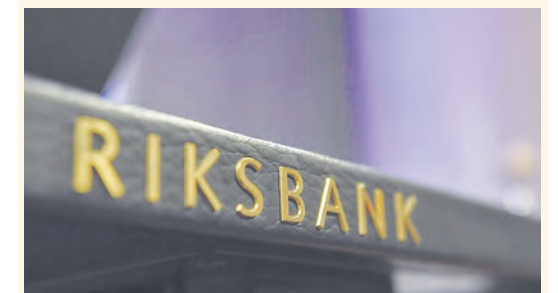
Improvement of Uzbekistan's fiscal position in 2020-2021. It was noted that the high price of gold in 2020 led to a lower overall budget deficit in support of State revenues and external balance.

Uzbekistan's external balance in 2020 ended better than expected. At the end of 2020, current assets in the public and financial sectors exceeded total foreign debt.

Implementation of a number of reforms in the country. The Agency highlighted measures towards increasing the independence of the judiciary, lifting restrictions on freedom of speech and increasing accountability to citizens, fighting corruption, increasing the transparency of economic data, liberalizing trade and the exchange rate, and reforms and plans to privatize State enterprises.

The report mentions that the rating can be decreased if Uzbekistan fails to stabilize its foreign debt growth over the next 12 months. On the other hand, Uzbekistan's integration into the global economy, improved growth potential in the economy and the level of fiscal and external reserves as a result of economic reforms may have a positive impact on Uzbekistan's rating.

Swedish, Norwegian Currencies Set To Firm Amid Economic Recovery



OSLO (Reuters) - The Swedish and Norwegian currencies will continue to make gradual gains against the euro and dollar during the next 12 months, propelled higher by the ongoing economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, a Reuters poll of analysts showed.

Vaccination against COVID-19 is accelerating in the Nordic region while international trade is rebounding, resulting in rapid economic growth for Sweden and Norway and lending support to their currencies.

Having plunged in March last year during the first wave of infections, the Swedish crown quickly regained lost ground and now trades around 5% stronger against the euro than its pre-pandemic level and 12% stronger against the U.S. dollar.

Economists polled by Reuters expected the Swedish currency to make an additional gain of around 2% against the euro and 5% against the dollar by mid-2022.

The Swedish Riksbank on Thursday kept its key policy rate on hold at 0.0% and also maintained its asset purchase plan, as was widely expected among analysts.

"By conducting an expansionary monetary policy, the Riksbank contributes to continued good development of the economy and to inflation attaining the target more permanently," the central bank's executive board said.

Norway's oil industry has been boosted by a rebound in crude prices and the central bank has pencilled in a rate hike for September, placing it at the forefront of developed economies in raising post-pandemic borrowing costs.

Norges Bank last year slashed rates to a record low 0% and intervened in the currency market to prop up the crown but now forecasts four hikes in the coming 12 months as it seeks to normalise monetary conditions.

The Norwegian currency, which weakened sharply last year, has returned to the same level against the euro as seen before lockdowns began 16 months ago. Against the dollar it is around 8% stronger than before the virus outbreak.

Oil Minister Ready to Help Next Gov't

TEHRAN (IP) – Iran Oil Minister stated that he would not withhold his consultation from the upcoming administration of next administration for Iran's return to the world crude oil markets.

Calling the current situation in the country difficult, Bijan Zangeneh said that he would not hesitate to help the government of Hojjatolislam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi.

"Any administration that takes office will face difficult conditions. We must all help minimize the pressure on the people," Zangeneh said.



Oxygen Shortages Hit Bangladesh as Hospitals Unable to Cope With Covid-19 Surge

DHAKA (Dispatches) - Empty oxygen cylinders are piling up almost as fast as bodies in the city of Khulna, which has become Bangladesh's coronavirus hotspot in a dire new surge.

The government has ordered a strict week-long nationwide lockdown in a bid to halt the spread of Covid-19, but Khulna's hospitals cannot cope.

Neither can relatives of the dead.

Mohammad Siddik leaned against empty cylinders under a hospital emergency porch, tearfully telling relatives in phone calls that his 50-year-old brother had died.

The 42-year-old businessman brought his brother to hospital as his condition deteriorated. But there was no bed and no oxygen, he told AFP.

"He passed away gasping for air in the hospital corridor," said Siddik.

"They didn't give him any oxygen until the end."

The southwestern district bordering India's West Bengal state has seen a sharp rise in coronavirus infections blamed on the more contagious Delta variant, which was first detected in India.

On Thursday, Khulna city recorded 46 virus deaths, according to an official count, while in earlier waves the daily death toll never went into double figures.

Most people in the city of 680,000 people say the real toll is much higher and, according to reports, graveyards cannot cope with the number of dead in nearby cities such as Satkhira.

The main state-run Khulna general hospital is one of four in the city treating coronavirus patients and has 400 beds but demand far outstrips supply.

"We have been dealing with enormous admission pressure in hospitals," said Niaz Muhammad, chief government doctor for the Khulna region.

He denied there was an oxygen shortage.

But another grieving relative also told how her brother had died without oxygen. Afroza, who gave only one name, shed tears in a hospital ward.

"If only they could have given a little oxygen to my brother, he would still be alive," she said.

Police and troops have patrolled the streets across Bangladesh, home to 168 million people, since Thursday to enforce the lockdown. Hundreds of people have been arrested each day for leaving their homes.

In Khulna, restrictions on movement have been in place since last month, as the



infection rate has soared.

But the city's factories are still open and many people say they are forced to go out to work.

Student Rafikul Islam said he walked seven kilometres (four miles) to his part-time factory job as there were no buses.

"Most shops and transport are shut down. But given Khulna's serious situation, we must maintain this. There is no other way. The situation is dire," he said.

Officially, Bangladesh has recorded just over 935,000 cases and 14,900 deaths in the past 15 months, but most people say the figures are drastically under-reported.

Mohammad Babu, who works in a Khulna cemetery, said he has never been so busy in his 32 years digging graves.

"The number of burials this year is much higher than at any time in the past," he said.

Health officials blame the surge on people's refusal to wear masks or keep social distance.

"People cannot be bothered to isolate and this spreads the infection even more," said Suhas Halder, spokesperson for Khulna's main coronavirus hospital.

Next Gov't Urged to...

FROM PAGE 1

In this meeting, Mohammadreza Ansari, the ICCIMA deputy head pointed to the chamber's expert views on the country's economic situation and offering specific executive strategies to solve the existing challenges as an important step and called on the heads of the ICCIMA specialized committees to take this proposal package seriously.

Further in the meeting, the attendees offered various proposals for resolving the country's current economic issues and the viewpoints were collected to be included in the mentioned proposal package to be reviewed and finalized.

Back in May, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie had stated that the private sector's expectations from the next government will be prepared in the form of a proposal package, during the 14th meeting of the ICCIMA board of directors.

Pakistani Businessmen...

FROM PAGE 1

The proposal was moved by the exporters at the 19th meeting of the Board held recently in Lahore.

They observed that Iran is a big market of Basmati rice but the absence of a banking channel between Pakistan and Iran is the only hurdle to export Pakistani commodities.

Iran imports 50 percent of the total domestic rice requirement and Pakistan can give a big push to its exports by entering into this market.

A 16-member delegation from the Pakistan Rice Exporters Association (REAP) traveled to Tehran in April 2018 to explore trade and investment opportunities in Iran and increase rice exports.

Pakistani exporters met with members of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines and the Mashhad Chamber of Commerce and Industries during their visit to Tehran.

According to Pakistani economic activists, Iran imported more than 800,000 tonnes of basmati rice from Pakistan before the 2010 sanctions.

Pakistani rice exporters say the lack of a communication channel between the two countries is one of the main reasons for the decline in bilateral trade.

Kenya and China are also among Pakistan's largest buyers of basmati rice. Twenty-five percent of these exports go to Africa.

Pakistan produces more than 7 million to 7.5 million kilograms of rice every year, of which more than 4 million kilograms are exported. This is about 70% of Pakistan's total rice production.

Iraqi Forces...

FROM PAGE 1

Several Iraqi power towers along the electricity transfer line from the eastern Diyala province to east Baghdad were also damaged in explosions that shut electric power.

Last month, the Iraqi ministry said a major power line in Kirkuk governorate was out of service after an act of "sabotage" which targeted two nearby electricity pylons.

Iraqi civilians have faced severe problems due to power outages caused by the attacks while they are already grappling with soaring temperatures in a year of drought and water shortages, in a country where summer temperatures reach over 50 degrees Celsius.

The recent attacks on Iraq's power distribution facilities coincide with the United States' targeting of the headquarters of the 14th Brigade of the PMU, also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, in what observers regard as Washington's efforts to revive Daesh and, in turn, prolong its illegal occupation of Iraq under the pretext of fighting the terrorist group.

Iraq's President Barham Salih says unity between the army, the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) and Peshmerga helped defeat terrorism in the country.

Women Hold Only 5.9% of Director-Level Jobs in Japan Gov't



TOKYO (Dispatches) - Women held just 5.9 percent of director-level jobs in the Japanese government's offices in Tokyo in fiscal 2020, underscoring the country's slow progress in closing the gender gap in the workplace.

The Cabinet Office released data Thursday showing the share of such positions held by female public servants only rose 0.6 percentage points from the previous year, falling short of the government's target of 7 percent.

Seven of the 18 ministries and agencies the data covers failed to reach the target. The worst performer was the National Public Safety Commission with 1.4 percent, followed by the Defense Ministry with 1.8 percent and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism with 2.1 percent.

The others were the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications with 3.7 percent, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries with 4.1 percent, the Board of Audit with 5.9 percent and the Finance Ministry with 6.3 percent.

The data show how deeply entrenched traditional gender roles remain in Japan and the difficulties facing empowerment of women. The country sits at 120th in the World Economic Forum's gender gap rankings, by far the worst among the Group of Seven industrialized nations.

The top performers in fiscal 2020 that ended in March were the National Personnel Authority with 13.1 percent, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology with 11.8 percent and the Cabinet Office with 11.5 percent.

The administration of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, for its part, adopted a new basic plan for gender equality in December including a target for women to hold 10 percent of director-level jobs in the government's Tokyo offices by the end of fiscal 2025.

The government plans to hold further discussions this year on concrete steps to increase the share of leadership roles held by women including adopting quotas.

Pakistan's Economy in Growth Mode

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - State Bank of Pakistan Governor Dr Reza Baqir said that Pakistan was achieving positive signs of economic recovery, and hoped that the country would not go back into the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program for any bailout package.

"Pakistan economy has turned around, and we are in growth mode," this was stated by SBP Governor Dr

He also said that the decision to convert the exchange rate from fixed to market-based mechanism had resulted in dividends for the economy, as rupee strengthened and buoyed investors' confidence.

Understanding the indispensability of remittances, which have swollen to more than \$2 billion per month, he said the Roshan Digital Accounts (RDA) initiative has generated 181,556 new accounts, pouring in a staggering \$1.56 billion.

"Let us work to improve inflows as our economy is growing at 4 percent," he said. He was confident that with positive signs of recovery, Pakistan would not go back to the IMF in future for any new bailout package.

Spelling out the economic outlook from the central bank's perspective, the governor said that Pakistan remained successful in containing Covid-19 waves that had opened new vistas of prosperity.

He defended his policies and said the current account deficit that had ballooned to \$19 billion at one point of time was now converted into surplus and the budget deficit was slashed down by 1 percent.

"Our foreign currency reserves stood at \$16 billion now that had increased from \$7 billion in 2019," he added.

Terming the stabilization program, a success story, he said steel and cement production had gone up, and the policy to finance housing and construction sectors led to a boom.

Baqir said SBP's policy support measures during Covid were "aggressive, protective, flexible and targeted." With falling domestic demand and inflation, the regulatory bank aggressively reduced interest rates, which worked very well.

"The SBP injected 5 percent of GDP liquidity to support jobs, public healthcare and investment in order to ward off bankruptcies during the pandemic."

The SBP brought schemes in collaboration with banks to extend principal and provide concession to lenders. It reduced the policy rate by 625 basic-points



in a short span of time.

The governor foresaw industrialization in the country, and hoped that the turf fund would enable businesses to import machineries, and broaden the mosaic of production.

He mentioned about the current account and fiscal deficit state when he was called upon to take over the affairs of the central bank. Despite pre-Covid straitened economic circumstances when the forex reserves had plummeted to \$7 billion with a current account deficit of \$19 billion, the path to recovery was

palpable when the pandemic struck and presented serious economic challenges in a depressed global and regional economic milieu.

SBP interventions like change from fixed to market-based exchange rate and discount rate interventions helped arrest the economic slide and improved the fundamentals of the economy. He explained economic recovery and relief measures like reduction in discount rates by 625 base points, which ensured that the liquidity losses did not become solvency issues.

He cited interventions like Temporary Economic Reform Facility (TERF) that had helped shore up industrial productivity in a demand depressed environment. The "Principal Loan Extension Programme" and "Rozgar Scheme to Prevent Layoffs," provided timely loan relief and working capital to entrepreneurs, as well as the worker class.

The cumulative relief granted was to the tune of five percent of GDP with 95 percent of the beneficiaries of loan extensions being small and medium entrepreneurs.

The above relief regime was supplemented with a munificent housing and construction finance package with an improvement from erstwhile Rs1.5 billion to Rs200 billion. The RDA was another achievement, encompassing 171 countries; 181,556 accounts and \$1.5 billion worth of deposits.

The measure was an excellent vehicle to connect seven to nine million overseas Pakistanis with the national economy. Measures like Roshan Apna Ghar and Roshan Samajhi Khidmat are being introduced through digital means to enable non-resident Pakistanis settled abroad to be part of the national economy.

The biggest achievement, according to the governor, was provision of relief and promotion of growth without an adverse impact on the fundamentals of the economy.

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Crystal Palace Appoint Vieira as New Manager

LONDON (AFP) - Crystal Palace announced former Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira as the club's new manager on Sunday, following a prolonged search for a successor to Roy Hodgson. Vieira, who won three Premier League titles as a player with the Gunners, has had mixed results in charge of New York City and Nice in his two previous managerial jobs. The Frenchman, who also won the World Cup and European Championship with his country, is highly regarded in England for his stellar playing career under Arsene Wenger at Arsenal.

Van der Poel Leaves Tour De France in Tokyo Quest

PARIS (Dispatches) - Mathieu van der Poel pulled out of the Tour de France on Sunday after a spectacular star turn in the overall lead came to a shuddering halt in the Alps. The Dutch Tour rookie spent six days in the yellow jersey, but now heads to Tokyo, where he will go for gold in his preferred mountain biking discipline. Grandson of French cycling legend Raymond Poulidor, Van der Poel set pulses racing with his gung-ho stage 2 win where he took the yellow jersey that his grandfather never wore despite eight podium finishes on the Tour.

Verstappen Celebrates Insane Win in Austria



VIENNA (Dispatches) - Max Verstappen reeled off his third win in a row from pole in the Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday to consolidate his world championship lead over Lewis Hamilton who after finishing fourth said his toiling Mercedes team were "miles away from Red Bull".

Hamilton's Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas took second with McLaren's Lando Norris a fine third after picking up a five second time penalty.

Verstappen's latest step towards ending Hamilton's hold on the drivers' title triggered a carnival atmosphere in Formula One's first capacity crowd since the coronavirus pandemic struck with most of the 100,000 in attendance decked out in his Dutch orange colours.

"To see so much orange in the stands is incredible, it's an extra motivation, thank you" he told his cheering congregation at the Red Bull-owned Spielberg circuit.

"The car was unreal," added the 21-year-old threat to Hamilton's bid for an unprecedented eighth world crown who was following up his win at the track last week.

"It's insane - I'm a bit amazed myself how today went. I didn't expect it to be like this. Incredible job by everyone to deliver something like this."

After his fifth win of the season Verstappen moved on to 182 points in the standings, 32 clear of Hamilton ahead of the seven-time world champion's home British Grand Prix at Silverstone on July 18.

Hamilton, without a win since Barcelona in early May, had forecast after qualifying Saturday that beating Verstappen looked unlikely.

Aside from his Red Bull rival's superior pace, damage to Hamilton's car late on in the race cost him a likely second place.

"We're miles away from them Red Bull. We need all hands on deck. They have brought a lot of upgrades over the last few races - and we haven't brought any," he said.

Verstappen enjoyed a flawless Sunday afternoon drive in the Austrian mountains alive with the sound of his supporters come to watch his latest step towards a possible world title.

He was clean away at lights out from Norris but by turn three the safety car had to be deployed after Esteban Ocon's race came to a premature end when his Alpine was nudged by Antonio Giovinazzi's Alfa Romeo.

Racing got back under way on lap four with Verstappen gliding clear with Norris fending off an attack on his second spot from Sergio Perez in the other Red Bull.

The Mexican, in his 200th Grand Prix, paid dearly for his audacity, going off on to the gravel to drop to 10th.

On lap 20 Norris was dealt a double blow.

He was told race stewards had handed him a five second penalty over the Perez incident, and was then overtaken by Hamilton despite valiantly trying to fend off his compatriot.

"Such a great driver, Lando," Hamilton told his pits.

After all the leaders had pitted for the first time Verstappen was over 15sec clear of the chasing Hamilton, with Bottas now up to third.

Down in midfield it was Perez's turn to pick up a five second penalty for aggressively shutting out the Ferrari of Charles Leclerc.

Bottas was told by the pits not to overtake Hamilton whose car had picked up damage to his rear left tyre.

But by lap 52 the Finn heard over the radio he was clear to race his teammate and, fighting for his job next season, duly nipped past him.

Norris meanwhile, having served his time penalty, had Hamilton's wounded Mercedes in his cross hairs and he duly swept past to cement his fourth podium finish.

This latest win for Verstappen, who also picked up the point for the fastest lap, has Mercedes with their backs to the wall ahead of Hamilton's home British Grand Prix on July 18.

Czech Captain Darida Ends Int'l Career



PRAGUE (Dispatches) - Czech skipper Vladimir Darida has ended his international career after the Czech Republic bowed out of Euro 2020 at the hands of Denmark, the national team said Sunday.

The 30-year-old Hertha Berlin midfielder, who has scored eight goals in 76 international games, led the Czechs in all three group stage games at the Euro.

He missed the last-16 game against the Netherlands with an injury and came on as a late substitute in Saturday's 2-1 quarterfinal loss to Denmark.

"The national team bid farewell to the Euro. I then bid farewell to my teammates," Darida said on the Czech Football Association's website.

Darida, who began his career at Viktoria Pilsen, and broke into the national team just before Euro 2012, at which he was part of a squad that reached the quarter-finals.

"In this last Bundesliga and international season, I have spent 140 days out of home because of games and training camps," Darida said.

"I want to spend much more time with the family and my little son," he added.

Turkey Winger Under Joins Marseille

PARIS (Dispatches) - Roma have loaned Turkey winger Cengiz Under to French club Marseille for a year with an option to buy, both clubs confirmed on Sunday.

"Under joins the Ligue 1 side on an initial temporary basis until 30 June 2022," the Serie A club said, announcing a loan fee of 500,000 euros (\$593,000) maximum based on certain factors.

"The agreement also includes an obligation for Marseille to make the transfer permanent based on the fulfilment of certain requirements." A transfer fee of 8.4 million euros (\$9.9 million) has been set with the Italian club receiving 20 percent of any subsequent moves the player makes.

The 23-year-old arrived in Italy from Istanbul Basaksehir in 2017 and has scored 17 goals in 88 appearances.

He spent the 2020-21 season on loan with Premier League side Leicester City.

For Turkey he has scored nine goals in 32 games, playing in Euro 2020 as they lost all three of their group games, scoring just once just.

"Very versatile, Cengiz Under is a dynamic winger, technical, adept at playing 1-on-1 with an ability to attack," Marseille said.

"His qualities have made him one of Turkey's most promising players and, once he has adapted to our environment, he will be able to make his mark in Jorge Sampaoli's squad," they added.

Bucks Don't Rule Out Antetokounmpo Return For NBA Finals

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) - The Milwaukee Bucks are still hoping two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis Antetokounmpo could return from injury in time to boost their championship series bid against the Phoenix Suns.

The Greek star missed the last two games of the Bucks' Eastern Conference Finals victory over the Atlanta Hawks after hyperextending his left knee in game four.

With game one of the NBA Finals set for Tuesday, Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said Antetokounmpo was "day-to-day" with the injury.

Mourinho Laments Terrible Loss of Spinazzola



imagine how terrible it is for me who Mourinho told TalkSport.

MILAN (Dispatches) - New Roma coach Jose Mourinho on Sunday lamented the "terrible loss" of Italy left-back Leonardo Spinazzola with a ruptured left Achilles tendon.

The 28-year-old picked up the injury during Friday's 2-1 Euro 2020 quarter-final win over Belgium in Munich, the day Mourinho arrived in Rome.

"It's a terrible loss for Italy, but won't have him for about six months,"

"(Chelsea's) Emerson Palmieri is a good player, with experience. But Spinazzola was playing in an incredible way."

Former Tottenham boss Mourinho returns to Italy 11 years after leading Inter Milan of the treble -- Champions League, Serie A and Coppa Italia.

On Sunday, the 58-year-old Portuguese posted a video on Instagram at the team's Trigoria training centre, where he remains in quarantine.

"Two more days to stay away from the players," said the former Real Madrid, Manchester United and Porto coach.

"But it's OK. The weather is amazing, I can be out, I can see the training sessions, I can organize and speak with the assistants that are taking care of them."

"So all good. We all feel sorry about the loss of our Spinazzola for a few months, but that's football and we have to be ready to start next week."

Hamilton Blames Car Damage for Big Points Loss



VIENNA (Dispatches) - Mercedes' seven times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton said car damage had cost him second place and precious points in Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix.

The Briton had been running in second place but finished fourth, with Mercedes giving the go-ahead for team mate Valtteri Bottas to overtake, in a race won by Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

The Dutch youngster, who has now won three races in a row and five in total this season, is 32 points clear in the championship.

"I had already said before the race that it would be very hard to beat Max, of course," Hamilton told Sky Sports television.

"It's frustrating to lose so much downforce in the rear of the car and not be able to hold on to second place. So a lot of points lost today."

Hamilton said he had not been driving over the kerbs any more than anyone else and had no idea where the damage had occurred.

"I would have been second. I was in second when all of a sudden it obviously broke. It would have been an easy second, generally. But obviously not able to catch those guys ahead," added the Briton.

Hamilton won three of the first four races of the season, but Red Bull have now won the last five.

The next race is at Silverstone, a home track for Hamilton who can hope for the capacity crowd to be mostly cheering for him.

The 36-year-old was not about to spread any false optimism, however.

"We're miles away from them," he said of Red Bull. "We've got a lot of work to do. We need all hands on deck, which I know there already are."

Bucks Oust Hawks To Face Phoenix in NBA Finals



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Khris Middleton scored 32 points to power the Milwaukee Bucks into the NBA Finals on Saturday with a series-clinching 118-107 win over the Atlanta Hawks.

The third-seeded Bucks beat the host Hawks in the best-of-seven series 4-2 to book their first appearance in the league championship since 1974.

Milwaukee will face the Western Conference champion Phoenix Suns in the finals which begin today.

The Bucks won despite the absence of two-time league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, who sat out with an injured left knee.

The 26-year-old Greek forward hyperextended the knee when he landed awkwardly in game four of the series.

The Hawks got their top player Trae Young back after he missed the previous two games with a bruised foot. But Young struggled to score in game six, finishing with just 14 points.

Jrue Holiday stepped up for the second straight game to help fill Milwaukee's offensive void with Antetokounmpo out. Holiday flirted with a triple double, finishing with 27 points, nine rebounds and nine assists.

Brook Lopez, who was the star of Thursday's game five win with 33 points, delivered 13 points on Saturday for the Bucks.

The young Hawks, who last made it to the finals 60 years ago when they were based in St. Louis, were trying to force a seventh game.

Cam Reddish came off the bench to score a team high 21 points, Bogdan Bogdanovic had 20 points and John Collins finished with 13 points and 11 rebounds in the loss.