

Health Ministry Announced on Tuesday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 86,207 with 166 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

IRAN NEWS

Iranian Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Expressed Condolences to Iraq Over Deaths In a Blaze at Nasiriya Hospital's Coronavirus Ward, the Second Incident to Hit a COVID Unit at An Iraqi Hospital

VOL. XXVII, No. 7271 TEHRAN Price 40,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

WEDNESDAY JULY 14, 2021 - TIR 23, 1400

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Legal Leniency Will Be Extended to Include Security, Media Crimes Convicts

TEHRAN (IFP) - The spokesman for Iran's Judiciary says the body's new chief has ordered officials to prepare a list of all security crimes convicts, with details on the type of their crime and their punishment.

The spokesman said these convicts will now benefit from commutation of punishments under required conditions.

"The approach of the new Judiciary Chief [Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei], as we have seen it, is that when implementing the law, there will be no difference between security convicts and others and trials must strictly follow legal standards. In the new approach, legal leniency, within the framework of the regulations, will cover security and media [crimes] convicts, that means the leniency will hinge on the behavior of the convict and his/her expression of regret and compensation for his/her past," said the spokesman Gholam-Hossein Esmaili.

"At the very beginning of tenure of the new Judiciary Chief, Mohseni Ejei, he ordered [officials] to prepare a list of all security [crimes] convicts in the country detailing the type of their crime and their punishment as well as their behavior, during the period they have been serving their conviction, and their current status, and each of these convicts, who is eligible and qualified to benefit from the legal leniency, it will be applied to them, within the framework of regulations."

Islamabad to Enhance Energy Cooperation With Tehran

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - Pakistan's Minister for Energy has expressed the commitment to work for further enhancing energy cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran as per the MoU signed during the recent visit of Pakistani Prime Minister to Iran.

According to an official statement Muhammad Hamad Azhar said this during a meeting with Ambassador of Iran Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini here on Monday.

The two sides discussed matters relating to cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector. "Hamad Azhar while underscoring the importance of Iranian electricity import to the neighboring districts of Balochistan especially Gawadar, said that it is playing pivotal role in provision of electricity to these area," the statement said.

It said the minister also expressed the commitment to work for further enhancing cooperation between both countries in the energy sector as per the MoU signed during the recent visit of Pakistani Premier to Iran. The Iranian Ambassador informed the minister that Iranian side is ready to deliver more electricity to Pakistan and necessary infrastructure in this regard is built by his country.

He informed that close coordination between the relevant organizations dealing with import of electricity is needed for early materialization of the project.

Tehran Urges for NAM Unity To Promote Multilateralism



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has urged the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members to reject unilateralism and promote multilateralism in order to collectively tackle the complex challenges facing the movement.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif delivered a speech at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) mid-term

Ministerial Meeting on Tuesday 13 July 2020, the full text of which is as following:

"Mr. Chairman,

The surging global challenges we face today have reinforced the need for greater collective action at the international level. In fact, multilateralism is no longer the prudent alternative. Rather, it is the only viable response to the world's pressing crises. There can be no doubt that the Non-Aligned Movement—as a prominent intergovernmental platform—can provide a good opportunity to enhance and strengthen global partnerships at a time of rising unilateralism and protectionism in the international arena.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the greatest test of worldwide solidarity in generations. It has reminded us of how interdependent we actually are, and how crucial international cooperation is to our collective health, prosperity and security. This pandemic—as any other—calls for a strong coordinated international response that can rapidly expand access to tests, treatments and vaccines while recognizing extensive immunization as a public good that must be available and affordable for all, including—and perhaps especially—developing countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently and continuously demonstrated its commitment to multilateralism as the tenet of a robust foreign policy. As such, we continue to advocate the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in West Asia. In this context, we are engaged in active cooperation with the UN in peace efforts in Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan. We proposed the "Hormuz Peace Endeavor—HOPE" as well as a "Regional Dialogue Forum" in the Persian Gulf, as inclusive approaches to cooperation and dispute settlement.

And globally, we have demonstrated our resolute commitment to dialogue and diplomacy by actively participating in different international fora to tackle a multitude of international challenges, including in recent months the negotiations to revive and resuscitate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This, in spite of abject failure of Europe to provide the promised economic dividends to our people following the unlawful U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA, and the reluctance of the new U.S. administration to abandon Trump's failed "maximum pressure" policy.

Multilateralism has been undermined and its practice threatened by unilateralism and bullying practices of certain powers. The extreme unilateral adventurism of the U.S. is the most important challenge that almost all of us have been facing—one way or another. It continues to undermine the rule of law at the international level and threatens peace and stability throughout the world. While some nations are threatened by economic terrorism and military aggressions, others bear the brunt of a crude American protectionist impulse.

The blind and unbridled support for apartheid in Palestine, and the denial of the basic rights of the Palestinian people, further exacerbate the unstable situation in the entire Middle East region. The very few Arab countries who have aligned themselves with these and other US schemes not only betray the Palestinian people, but further jeopardize peace and security in the whole region.

To defend multilateralism, it is imperative to reject and prevent any perceived benefit and advantage drawn from unlawful unilateral actions and to reject any pressure in contravention of international law and UN Security Council resolutions.

And, today it is more incumbent upon NAM than ever to form a united front to reject unilateralism and promote multilateralism in order to collectively tackle all the complex challenges facing our movement today."

Over 2,400 Expatriate Elites Working With Iranian Companies, Universities

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iran's Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has signed a cooperation agreement with the Leader's Representative Office in Universities to establish associations of foreign nationals graduated in Iran.

The graduates' associations aim at empowering foreign nationals graduated from Iranian universities, among other objectives. "The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has had a vast scope of activities concerning Iranian expatriates. We are focused on countries in North America, Europe and East Asia to expand our work in this field. Under agreements with the General staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, graduates from 400 top universities in the world have [also] been covered [in the list of recognized universities, where students are exempt from the military service]," Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari said at the signing ceremony.

"Currently, more than 2,400 Iranian expatriate elites have been attracted [in the associations]. Some 30 percent of these people are faculty members in universities and a large portion have either launched their own startups or are active in knowledge-based and creative companies."

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ViewPoint

By: Hamid Reza Naghashian



JCPOA Talks Really In Final Stage?

After weeks of talks between P4+1 and Iran in Vienna over the fate of Iran's nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, it seems it is approaching its final stage as Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has claimed.

On Monday Khatibzadeh has claimed the delegations in Vienna talks are reaching the final stage of the negotiations, which are aimed at reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with world powers that was thrown into a state of limbo after US illegally withdrew from the accord and Tehran took remedial measures to reduce its commitments as per the agreement. "We have come a long way so far, but the rest of the way is not going to be an easy path," he added.

The sixth in-person round of the negotiations in Vienna came to an end on June 20, two days after Iran's presidential election that resulted in the victory of Ebrahim Raisi.

Six rounds of talks in Vienna have reportedly made progress but yielded no final deal.

The United States and European powers warned Iran last week that its latest uranium-enrichment efforts could imperil those negotiations.

Iran has already announced that the country's stance on the JCPOA "will not alter with a change of administration."

"We hope the other parties [to the JCPOA] would be able to make their decisions. In that case, we would achieve an agreement, which would be desirable for all," Khatibzadeh said.

Khatibzadeh added that all participating delegates believe that good advances have been made in the talks, "but they are also in agreement that some key issues must be first dealt with by higher authorities in their respective countries."

He added that Iran's position has not changed since the commencement of the talks in Vienna.

"We demand the removal of sanctions followed by verification before our country restarts fulfilling its commitments. On the other hand, the United States as the violator of the JCPOA, must give necessary assurances [that it will not leave the deal again]," Khatibzadeh said.

Khatibzadeh's claims come while there are different views in the U.S. and the West which are in contradiction to what Khatibzadeh has said.

The NATO Secretary-General has reportedly 're-stressed Allies' continued calls on Iran to uphold and fully implement all its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg wants Iran to fully implement all its obligations under the JCPOA while the U.S. and Europeans have ignored fulfilling their obligations.

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EU Distances Itself From Slovenia PM's Remarks

BRUSSELS (Dispatches) - The EU foreign policy chief says the speech delivered by Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa at a summit organized by the anti-Iran Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group does not represent the official position of the 27-nation bloc.

Josep Borrell made the comments in a statement to reporters on Monday, two days after Jansa —whose country holds the rotating EU Council presidency — made a controversial video address to the annual MKO meeting.

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh earlier denounced the presence of Western politicians in the virtual event, saying they "sell themselves cheap for a Europe-hosted circus arranged by a once Saddam-backed terrorist cult with Iranian blood on its hands."

Slovenian Ambassador to Tehran Christina Radi was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, where she was handed over an official letter of protest.

In the letter, Tehran voiced its vehement condemnation of the Slovenian premier's move, while strongly rejecting all baseless allegations leveled against the Islamic Republic during the meeting.

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Next Gov't to Have Dynamic Relations With East, West

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian Parliament Speaker's Special Aide for the International Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian that the next Iranian administration will have dynamic and active ties with east and west world countries.

"Reviewing the background, performance, and Stances of the President-elect Ebrahim Raisi, in his view, a balanced foreign policy, active and dynamic relations with the East and West of the world and having special

attention to all neighbors and Asia are the priorities of foreign policy," he wrote in a post on Instagram.

The vice-speaker of the Iranian Parliament said the swearing-in ceremony for President-elect Ebrahim Raisi will be held on Thursday, August 5.

The arrangements for the swearing-in ceremony are being made, Ali Nikzad added.

A number of foreign guests are expected to take part in the event.

Tehran Confirms Talks With U.S. Over Prisoner Exchange

TEHRAN (MNA) – The negotiations of Tehran and Washington over exchanging prisoners are underway, and more information will be released after achieving results, the Iranian Government Spokesman said on Tuesday.

While speaking in his weekly presser on Tuesday, the Iranian Government Spokesman spoke about Washington's claims over releasing all Iranian prisoners in this country and other countries.

Negotiations are underway in this regard, and more information will be released after achieving results, Ali Rabiei said.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly reiterated its readiness to exchange all political prisoners in return for the release of all Iranians imprisoned at the behest of the United States across the world, he said.

During the Trump administration, it was the Iranian side who announced its readiness to hold negotiations in this regard but the Trump administration refused to come to the negotiating table, insisting on taking the Iranians hostage, Rabiei added.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had proposed the exchange of all Iranian and American prisoners, and the Biden administration has been considering this issue since taking power, he also noted.

Elsewhere, he referred to the attendance of Americans in the virtual meeting of



MKO terrorists who have killed thousands of Iranians, he said, "This is an opportunity to identify hypocritical politicians, especially Americans who only interested in their own interests and do not consider the interests of their own country."

Today, once again, Iran is on the verge of reviving JCPOA, he also said.

Even after the insane withdrawal of the United States from JCPOA, Iran's firm belief in dialogue and constructive interaction thwarted plots of enemies who were after Iran's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, he stressed.

Answering a question about the latest developments in Afghanistan, Iran's eastern neighbor, Rabiei said that necessary measures have been taken to take care of borders.

Some of the Afghan forces, who took refuge in Iran, have been returned to the country under observance of the central government of Afghanistan.

Saying that currently, Abu Nasr Farahi and Islam-Qala customs in Iran and Afghanistan border are under the control of the Taliban group, Rabiei said that but Milak border crossing between Iran and Afghanistan in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan is open for resuming trade between two countries.

EU Supports MKO Terrorist Grouplet

TEHRAN (IP) - If Europeans are honest in their human rights claims, why do they support the MKO terrorists, says Iran's judiciary spokesman.

Gholamhossein Esmaili, the spokesman for the Judiciary Branch in his weekly press conference, in reaction to the European Parliament's request to the Council of Europe for imposing sanctions against Iranian officials for alleged human rights violations, said: "Nowadays, we are witnessing that the terrorist group MKO (Mojahedin-e-Khalq) who have assassinated thousands of people in Iran holding conferences in European capitals, with officials from those countries taking part."

"He added: "If Europeans are honest in their human rights claims, why do they support these terrorists while they confess their crimes, and cooperate with Saddam's Baath regime during the 8-year imposed war against Iran."

Judiciary Branch spokesman said: "We do not consider the claim of protection of human rights in the Western



countries to be sincere, Europeans' human rights violation is so huge and their claims against other countries are 100% politically motivated without any legal basis," Esmaili said.

Esmaili elsewhere in his remark said that Europe's claims on human rights are of no value to the Islamic Republic

of Iran's legal community.

The official underlined that hearing new ideas from people, particularly the elites, is the Judiciary's aim, and some recent calls with elites were made within this framework.

Also speaking at his Press conference, Esmaili noted that the judiciary's main mission is serving people base on the "Judicial Transformation Document."

The Judiciary's approach is that there is no difference between political or nonpolitical convicts, so Esmaili said the law must be implemented.

Mohammad Mossadegh has been appointed as the first deputy chief of the Judiciary, the spokesman said.

U.S. Sanctions Must Be Removed Effectively

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the sanctions imposed by the U.S. must be lifted effectively.

The considerable parts of the texts of the JCPOA revival agreement have been prepared, Khatibzadeh said, adding that the parts that have not been completed have a specified status that shows the differences.

We are approaching the end of the Vienna talks, he said, noting that some unresolved issues still remain, but the significant point is that the resolved issues are much more than unresolved.

He added that we have gone a long way so far, but it is not going to be an easy path.

He expressed hope that the other parties can make their own decisions, in which case "we can also reach an agreement that will be desirable for all."

In Vienna, all delegations acknowledge that relatively good progress has been made and are all determined to reach a deal to revive the JCPOA, the official said.

They also accept that some key issues should be investigated by decision-making authorities in countries, he further noted.

It has been repeatedly stated that once the nuclear deal is fully implemented and verified, Iran will resume full implementation of its commitments, he underlined.

Japan Donates over 2m Doses of AstraZeneca Vaccine to Iran Through COVAX

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Japan has donated 11 million more coronavirus vaccine doses to several countries including Iran through the COVAX facility.

The Japanese government made an announcement on Tuesday about the provision of approximately 11 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured in Japan to several countries through the COVAX facility.

After all coordination are done, 2.9 million doses, the largest number ever, will be delivered to the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it said.

This donation comes in light of the friendship between Japan and Iran and based on the current status of COVID-19 in Iran, it added.

Belarus-Iran Cooperation Viewed As Promising



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Belarus and Iran have everything in place to expand cooperation, Head of Iran's Islamic Council working group on cooperation with the National Assembly of Belarus Aboulfazl Amui told reporters following his meeting with Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives of the Belarusian National Assembly Valery Mitskevich.

"Today we have got a very good opportunity to visit the parliament of Belarus and to discuss a broad range of issues on our cooperation agenda. Iran and Belarus have a history of good relations, and we believe that now we have very good opportunities, potential to intensify our cooperation and reach a new level," Aboulfazl Amui said.

Iran strongly condemns sanctions against countries, he said. "During today's talks we saw that Belarus is also interested in promoting cooperation between our countries. We officially conveyed the invitation of the speaker of the Iranian parliament to the speaker of the House of Representatives to take part in the inauguration ceremony of the Iranian president," the head of the working group added.



IN HIS EXALTED NAME

Beh-Abad Combined Cycle Power Plant Yazd Province

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co.(PJS) intends to award construction of Beh-Abad Combined Cycle Power Plant (the Power Station) with nominal capacity of 500 MW on Built, Operate and Transfer (BOT) schemes, consisting of one combined cycle Block, all ancillary and auxiliary equipment, common systems and the necessary interfaces, located in Yazd Province, to a qualified and competent investor through an international Bid. Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS) (the Off-Taker) will prepare a short list of bidders possessing the necessary qualifications via this invitation to prequalification after the required process and evaluation. Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS) will then select an eligible Investor (successful bidder) possessing the required financing and technical capabilities and will award the engineering, procurement, construction and total financing of the Project to said investor (the Company).

Development and Construction periods: 30 Months

Authorization period: 12 years and 6 Months after calculated

Commercial Operation Date of the Block

Construction Security: Five percent (5%) of The EPC Contract

Transfer Security: 90 % of Last 24 Monthly Invoices

Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain prequalification documents, within seven (7) calendar days after the first posting of this invitation notice till fourteen (14) calendar days after the last (second) posting of this invitation notice, in the following way:

A representative of the applicant, carrying a valid proxy letter, may refer in person to Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Co. (PJS), No.28 Shabnam Dd., Rafiea Alley, East Atefi St., Nelson Mandela Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Tel.: +98-21-2620-8045, +98-21-7946-3122 (Mrs Salehi),

Fax: +98-21-2620-8051

Deadline for submitting the completed Prequalification Documents is fifteen (15) calendar days after the deadline of obtaining the Prequalification Questionnaire based on second posting of this invitation notice.

Iran Wants to Join to Caspian Sea Legal Regime Convention

MOSCOW (IP) - In a meeting with the Iranian ambassador to Russia, the Iranian Attorney General emphasized accelerating Iran's joining to the Caspian Sea's legal convention.

To submit the report on the first meeting of the Attorney Generals of the Caspian littoral states hosted by Russia, the Ambassador of Iran to Russia, Kazem Jalali, met with Iran's Attorney General, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri.

"The five Caspian Sea littoral states (Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and the Republic of Azerbaijan) can have close relations in various fields," Montazeri said.

The Attorney General added: "One of the critical issues between these countries is the legal regime of the Caspian sea, which the Islamic Republic has prepared to join the convention, but has not yet signed."

The ambassador also said: "One of the dangers that the Caspian Sea will face in the future is misuse of natural resources of the sea and its environmental issues."

Jalali added: "Prosecutors general of the Caspian littoral states can protect it with judicial cooperation."

Caspian Sea littoral states signed a joint declaration on protecting the environment and biological resources of the Sea on Wednesday, 07 July 2021, in St. Petersburg of Russia. Caspian Sea Legal Regime Convention signed by the 5 littoral states of the Caspian Sea Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan in 2018.

1st Consignment of Oil Derivatives Exported to Oman From Bandar Lengeh

BANDAR ABBAS (IRNA) - Head of Ports and Maritimes in West Hormuzgan Province said that the first consignment of oil derivatives (bitumen) was exported this year from Bandar Lengeh customs (Southern Iran) to the port of Al Suwaiq of Oman.

The first consignment of oil derivatives in the form of 700 tons of (bitumen) was exported to Al Suwaiq (coastal town in northeastern Oman) in cooperation with the relevant provincial organizations, Qasem Askari told media on Tuesday.

This consignment is worth 25 billion rials, and 20,000 tons of bitumen will be exported to Oman every month.

The exports of this consignment of bitumen were conducted by the offshore oil sector and the port of Al Suwaiq of Oman. The company was set up in 2014 with the aim of producing all kinds of bitumen with a capacity of 126,000 tons in Bandar Lengeh County of Hormuzgan Province.

Hormuzgan is the first bitumen exporter in the country and bitumen was being exported from Bandar Abbas.

Bandar Lengeh is a port city and capital of Bandar Lengeh County, in Hormuzgan province of Iran on the coast of the Persian Gulf. Iran produces approximately 5,000,000 tons of bitumen annually, half of which is exported to the Middle East, South Asia, East and Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe.

Iran Red Crescent Society Ready to End Relief Items to Iraqi Hospital Inferno

TEHRAN (IRNA) - President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Karim Hemmati offered readiness for sending relief items to Iraq to help them with regard to deadly fire in Imam Hossein Hospital in Nasiriyah.

Speaking in a phone conversation with his Iraqi counterpart Yasin Ahmed Abbas, Hemmati said he expressed IRCS readiness to help Iraq.

He sympathized with Iraq over the deadly accident.

Based on unofficial reports, fire in Imam Hossein Hospital in Nasiriyah has so far claimed the lives of 60 people and many other were trapped in the hospital. Many of the COVID19 patients were hospitalized at the accident site.

Meanwhile Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi expressed regret over the fire in Imam Hossein Hospital in Nasiriyah district in Baghdad and offered Iran readiness for helping injured people. Speaking in a phone call with Iraqi Health Ministry officials, Masjedi said Iran is ready to help those who were injured in the accident.

He expressed condolences and wished immediate recovery for the injured Iraqis.

Iran, Sweden Explore an End to Yemeni Crisis

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Ali-Asghar Khaji, a senior aide to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and Sweden's Special Envoy for Yemen Peter Semneby, in a meeting in Tehran on Monday, explored avenues to find a settlement to years of crisis in Yemen.

During the meeting, which was also participated by Swedish ambassador to Tehran, the two sides discussed the latest Yemeni developments both inside the country and internationally.

They also reviewed the ways to put an immediate end to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Establishment of ceasefire in Yemen, lifting the siege on the country, and removing the danger of oil leakage from Safer tanker were also on the agenda of the meeting.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:41
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:17
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:00

173. Men said to them: "A great army is gathering against you": And frightened them:
But it (only) increased their Faith: They said: "For us Allah sufficeth, and He is the best disposer of affairs."
174. And they returned with Grace and bounty from Allah. no harm ever touched them:
For they followed the good pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Lord of bounties unbounded.
Surah 3. The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran (173 - 174)

Iran Garment Exports Decline to \$60m Per Year

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Deputy Head of Tehran's Union of Garment Manufacturers and Sellers says Iran's garment exports were very considerable in the past but in recent years it has declined.

Speaking at a presser, Majid Eftekhari said that in recent years Iran's garment exports have declined to \$50m to \$60m but the figure rebounded last year to \$113 and it was due to the devaluation of the national currency and its comparatively cheap price.

He added that neighboring states like Iraq and Afghanistan are the major destinations for exports of Iranian apparel and countries like the Central Asian and Arab states are the other destinations for the products of this industry but the current banking restrictions have created hurdles for exports.

He went on to say that we see traders of other countries enter Iran and buy different products like garment and carpets with Iranian national currency and take them to other countries and most of them are not even registered anywhere.

Eftekhari also pointed to the problems of this industry in the country and blamed the shortage of the raw material and smuggling as the major problems that this industry is facing. He said industry ministry has imposed some unwise and uncalculated restrictions for import of raw material and it has even helped the price of the domestic raw material to rise by 40 percent. He stated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the world, some commodities in countries like China and Bangladesh had no demands and they are now ready to be offered in the market and it will make the condition tough for Iranian garment producers.

He also pointed to the figures released by the officials regarding the decline in the amount of smuggling of the apparel into the country from \$1.8b to \$600m, and added



that the imports are divided in two parts of official and smuggling. He said that official import of the apparel is banned and if the statistics regarding to the decline of smuggling to \$600m is true, then some changes should have been seen in the domestic market and production.

Eftekhari said that the number of involved people in the apparel industry has been around 300,000 people in the country and so far no major change has happened in it and for this reason one can cast doubt on the statistics regarding the smuggling.

He said after imposing ban on imports of apparel to save the forex, many international brands decided to produce their products in Iran and for this reason apparel production in the country picked up. He reiterated that the slim advantage in the apparel production is vanishing due to the shortage in raw material and lack of modern machineries.

Eftekhari reiterated that raw material in Turkey is up to 30 percent cheaper than Iran and it can boost the smuggling, adding that due to the economic condition of the households, they are after cheaper commodities because the final cost of Iranian products is more expensive.

He then asked the government and the next president to support this industry, adding that many websites are busy with selling the smuggled garments online.

Tehran to Host Webinar On Iran-Sri Lanka Trade

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine and Agriculture (ICCIMA) is to hold a webinar on reviewing trade opportunities of Iran and Sri Lanka on July 29.



According to the international department of the ICCIMA, the webinar of "Reviewing Trade Opportunities and Capacities of Iran and Sri Lanka" will be held on Monday, July 19.

In the webinar, Iran's Ambassador to Sri Lanka Mr. Hashem Ashje Zadeh, the commercial expert of Embassy of Sri Lanka in Tehran and provincial representatives of the ICCIMA are to participate.

The webinar is to explore ways of exchanging information for developing economic cooperation.

MAPNA Group Launches First Phase of Exploiting High-Side Freight Wagon

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The first phase of high-side freight wagons of the multifunctional transportation company of MAPNA Group started its operation in the form of a full train.



The CEO of MAPNA Multifunctional Transportation Company Mr. Seyed Morteza Ali Ahmadi said that 10 high-side freight carriages in the last days of the spring were delivered by MAPNA Pars Wagon Company and the testing operation and exploitation of them by using MAP24 MAPNA locomotive were conducted successfully in Ardakan.

He went on to say that MAPNA Group in the rail transportation sector and with investment has activated seven prestigious and expertise companies for serving rail services, and the chain of this service in exploiting the rail network and fleet has been completed by launching the multifunctional transportation company as the 8th company in the rail transportation along with its manufacturing locomotive, wagon, renovating and maintenance of the fleet as well as the engineering services in the metro affairs with the goal to complete the value chain of rail services.

Ali Ahmadi added that this company is the first rail company of its own kind that provides all services of the fleet internally, and in case of appropriate condition in the rail network, it will launch a full rail train.

He added that in the first phase of the contract, MAPNA Pars Wagon Company is to deliver 400 high-side freight carriages, adding that MAPNA Pars Company is to totally deliver 1,000 wagons in three phases and lots of 400, 300 and 300.

Iran 2nd Largest Global Producer of Sponge Iron in 2020

TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran was the second largest global producer in 2020 of sponge iron, a pre-reduced ferrous material used to make steel, according to latest figures by the World Steel Association (worldsteel).

The figures cited in a Monday report by Iran's state-run metals conglomerate IMIDRO showed that sponge iron production in the country reached 30.2 million metric tons last year, up 5.96% against 2019.

By order of the President

Shahr Babak Copper Cathode Production Plant Was Opened



By the order of the President, the copper cathode production plant of Babak Iranian Copper Company with a capacity of 50,000 tons per year was opened. In this ceremony, four other industrial projects were opened, all of which are in Kerman province and are subsidiaries of the specialized parent company of Midco Holding. The President expressed satisfaction with the opening of five major industrial projects in one day in one province. He said: "This shows the efficiency of the nation and the government." Dr. Rouhani thanked the staff and researchers who succeeded in implementing this project. He inaugurated the above plans by appealing to the holy souls of the Imams. In part of the ceremony, the CEO of Pasargad Bank and then the CEO of Midco Holding presented a report on the growing trend of Midco subsidiaries. Dr. Pourmand referred to the slogan "Development begins in the mine." "More than 15,000 direct jobs and almost 20 times more indirect jobs have been created at Midco," he said. The average age of Midco staff is 34 years. 97% of them are native to the city and province. In another part of the ceremony, the CEO of Babak Iranian Copper Company presented a report from the copper cathode production factory to the esteemed President of the Republic within four minutes. Engineer Mirzaei pointed out the compatibility of this design with other common methods of copper extraction. He said: "This project has been exploited for the first time in the world with this scale." He added: The production capacity of this factory is 50,000 tons per year. Part of this production is used in the downstream industries of the same company to produce copper pipe products. In the end, he thanked all the colleagues and partner companies that have contributed to the realization of this important and wished success.

The full text of Babak Mes Iranian CEO's speech is as follows:
in the name of God

I send greetings to the pure souls of the late Imam and the martyrs of Islam. On behalf of the noble people of Shahr-e Babak, the audience in the meeting and the

hard-working officials of the city, I greet the Supreme Leader and the President. The power of God is visible in Kerman province and Shahr-babak city. Copper ores have a special luster. I thank God. Let me proudly introduce another symbol of the ability of Iranian specialists to serve the Iranian people. Babak Mes Iranian Company, a subsidiary of Midco, was established in 2011. Using the most advanced technology in the world, this company has succeeded in constructing the largest copper production unit by bioleaching tank method. This project will be inaugurated today by your Excellency. This industrial method is more environmentally friendly than other conventional methods. In this design, using special thermophilic bacteria, copper in various concentrates is produced without melting process and with a purity of more than 99.997%. Other advantages of this method compared to existing methods include lower production costs, simplicity of the process despite its advanced, no emission of sulfur dioxide gas and much less use of water and energy. The combination of these components, ie the use of bioleaching tank technology, has made this factory able to introduce an irreplaceable and environmentally friendly example of copper production to the world. Mr. President; The copper cathode factory has been built on a 110-hectare land with an investment volume of 4,000 billion toman in the potential area of Shahr-e Babak, Kerman, which has directly employed 400 people. The plant will also increase the country's copper cathode production capacity by 50,000 tons per year. I need to remind you that this company has explored the upper hand industries of the copper industry by constructing a factory for the production of copper concentrate, as well as downstream industries by building a copper pipe factory with a capacity of 12,000 tons per year. By exploiting the current plan, the copper value chain in Midco from the mine to the final product will be completed. I wish success and health to all the servants of this border and environment.

Peace be upon you and God's mercy



GECF, Iran Envoy Discuss Cooperation

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), the global platform of the leading gas producing nations, on July 11 welcomed H E Hamid Reza Dehghani, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Qatar, and his accompanying delegation at the GECF Secretariat.

The high-ranking visitors were welcomed by Yury Sentyurin, Secretary General of the GECF. Iran's enduring legacy in GECF's success was reflected in the presence also of several Iranian colleagues from various departments and offices of the GECF Secretariat.

The 17th largest country in the world by landmass holds a special place in the GECF as it is one of the Founder Member Countries and boasts one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world.

The two sides also discussed new areas of cooperation, which ranged from initiating scholarships for students from GECF's Member Countries to creating a link between energy-focused research institutes.

According to the Ambassador, Iran intends to harness this vast natural resource for the advancement of the world's economy and society, and the GECF is the ideal platform to achieve this in order to realize the UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 7 of 'Affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all'.

"The GECF is a unique platform in that no other similar organization exists where Member Countries can come together in the spirit of cooperation, positively shape policies, and speak in unison about matters related to natural gas," said Dehghani.

During the meeting, Secretary General Sentyurin familiarized Ambassador Dehghani with the Forum's vision and mission and key deliverables such as the GECF Global Gas Outlook 2050. The Secretary General also outlined the agenda of activities for 2021 including the upcoming 6th GECF Summit of Heads of State and Government, which is slated to be held in the State of Qatar in 2021.

Dutch PM Apologizes for Easing of COVID-19 Curbs

AMSTERDAM (Reuters) - Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte conceded on Monday that coronavirus restrictions had been lifted too soon in the Netherlands and he apologized as infections surged to their highest levels of the year.

Rutte last Friday reimposed curbs on bars, restaurants and nightclubs in an effort to stop a spate of infections among young adults, just two weeks after most lockdown measures were lifted as cases were falling.

The government also cancelled all multi-day festivals and events with large crowds until Aug. 14.



Myanmar's Suu Kyi Hit by New Charges in Mandalay Court

YANGON (Dispatches) - Myanmar's deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi is facing four additional criminal charges, filed in a court in the country's second biggest city Mandalay, her lawyer said on Monday.

The legal team has little information about what Suu Kyi was accused of but the charges included corruption and that two were also leveled at Min Thu, a former minister in her government, lawyer Min Min Soe told Reuters.

"There are corruption charges. We do not know why do they sue? Or for what reasons? We will find out about it," she said.



Cuba Blames Unrest on U.S. Asphyxiation as Biden Backs Protests



HAVANA (Dispatches) - Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Monday blamed historic protests this weekend on U.S. "economic asphyxiation" and social media campaigns by a minority of counter-revolutionaries while U.S. President Joe Biden said he stood with the Cuban people.

The protests erupted amid Communist-run Cuba's worst economic crisis since the fall of former ally Soviet Union, with the tightening of decades-old U.S. sanctions exacerbating shortages of food and medicine as well as power outages amid a surge in COVID-19 infections.

"In the last few weeks the campaign against the Cuban revolution has increased in social media, drawing on the problems and shortages we are living," Diaz-Canel said in a televised address alongside his Cabinet.

A minority of counter-revolutionaries were fomenting unrest, he said, denouncing vandalism that took place across various cities on Sunday in Cuba's biggest anti-government demonstrations in decades.

"They threw stones at foreign currency shops, they stole items ... and at police forces, they turned over cars - a totally vulgar, indecent and delinquent behavior," he said.

The streets of Havana appeared quiet on Monday morning, although Special Forces patrolled its seafront boulevard.

Biden in a statement on Monday said the United States stands with the people of Cuba in their call for freedom and relief from the coronavirus pandemic and decades of repression.

"The Cuban people are bravely asserting fundamental and universal rights. Those rights, including the right of peaceful protest and the right to freely determine their own future, must be respected," Biden said.

"The United States calls on the Cuban regime to hear their people and serve their needs at this vital moment rather than enriching themselves," said Biden, who during his White House campaign promised to ease sanctions but has yet to do so.

The United States had tightened sanctions on Cuba under Donald Trump, Biden's predecessor, including restricting key remittances in the middle of the pandemic.

Diaz-Canel did not directly address the U.S. statement, issued during his address. But he attacked what he called Washington's hypocrisy for expressing concern when it was fueling the crisis in Cuba with its trade embargo.

"Is it not very hypocritical and cynical that you block me ... and you want to present yourself as the big savior?" he said. "Lift the blockade ... and then we will see what this people, that has achieved an immense social work despite what is practically a war economy, is capable of."

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador gave Cuba backing on Monday, saying the U.S. economic embargo on the island should be ended to help its people.

Afghan Special Forces Moved in on Taliban

KANDAHAR (Reuters) - Soldiers from Afghanistan's Special Forces paused for a short prayer late on Sunday night on a deserted stretch of highway in the southern province of Kandahar. They do so each time they prepare to face Taliban militants in battle.

The highly trained troops had been called in to flush out insurgents who attacked regular forces and local police hours earlier, only to find that the Taliban had disappeared into the darkness leaving behind a few civilians and wounded soldiers.

"We received a report that the enemy had infiltrated here and wanted to overthrow the district," Major Mohammad din Tasir, a member of the special forces unit deployed in the Taliban's former stronghold of Kandahar, told Reuters after the operation.

The report had suggested up to 300 Taliban fighters were present in the area, he said.

"Unfortunately, what we heard in the report and what we saw on the scene did not match."

Tasir said the absence of Taliban fighters showed that claims by the group that they now controlled up to 85% of the country's territory were exaggerated. It also underlined the difficulty in facing an enemy that mixes open assaults on



checkpoints, villages, towns and cities with hit-and-run tactics that tend to avoid heavy casualties.

Recent territorial gains by the Taliban come as foreign troops led by the U.S. military withdraw from Afghanistan after 20 years of war, leaving the task of pulling the country from a spiralling security crisis to local forces.

On Monday, the U.S. general leading the war in Afghanistan, Austin Miller, will relinquish his command, in a symbolic end to America's longest conflict.

Kandahar is one of many provinces to see a recent surge in offensives by the Taliban, which says it wants to be involved in running the country peacefully although it has always opposed the presence of foreign forces.

In the last week the group has been advancing in the west of the country near the border with Iran and has surrounded the central city of Ghazni.

The Special Forces unit had been called in after insurgents attempted to take control of Khan Baba village in the Dand district of Kandahar, unleashing RPGs and heavy machinegun fire at Afghan security forces and local police.

Colombia Says No "Hypothesis" in Haiti Plot

BOGOTA (Reuters) - Colombian police said they could not share any hypothesis about the murder of Haitian President Jovenel Moise and that they respect the Haitian state's autonomy, after 18 Colombians tied to the case were arrested and three more killed.

Moise was shot dead early on Wednesday at his Port-au-Prince home by what Haitian authorities describe as a unit of assassins formed of 26 Colombians and two Haitian Americans. Haitian police said on Sunday they had arrested another key suspect.

The death of the president has plunged the troubled country into deeper turmoil, and U.S. officials traveled there on Sunday to assess the situation and meet three politicians who have staked competing claims to take charge of Haiti.

On Sunday, Haitian police said they had detained one of the suspected plot masterminds, 63-year-old Christian Emmanuel Sanon, a Haitian man whom authorities accuse of hiring mercenaries to oust and replace Moise. They did not explain Sanon's motives beyond saying they were political. read more

"We cannot construct any hypothesis," General Jorge Luis Vargas, head of the Colombian national police, told journalists in Bogota. "We respect the judicial autonomy of the Haitian state and its authorities."

Families of some of the Colombians, many ex-soldiers, have said their relatives were hired as bodyguards, not as mercenaries, and that they did not kill Moise.

The men were initially contracted to protect Sanon, and were later presented with a warrant to arrest Moise, Haiti's National Police Chief Leon Charles said Sunday.

Photos said to be of Sanon meeting with a group of men, including another suspect in the case, Haitian-American James Solages, began circulating on social media late on Sunday. Reuters could not verify the authenticity of the images.

A man by Sanon's name is listed online as a doctor who has worked in Florida, where a security company that Haitian authorities say hired suspects in the case is based.

Most of the detainees were held after an overnight shoot-out on Wednesday in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, and three killed.

Pro-Western Party Wins Moldova Election

CHISINAU (Reuters) - Pro-Western Moldovan President Maya Sandu's PAS party won the country's snap parliamentary elections, data from the central election commission showed on Monday, on a platform of fighting corruption and carrying out reforms.

Sandu hopes to win a majority in the 101-seat chamber to implement reforms she says were blocked by allies of her pro-Russian predecessor, Igor Dodon.

After the counting of 99.63% of ballots, only three political forces will be represented in the new chamber, the data showed. PAS had 52.60% of the vote, while its main rival, Dodon's Socialists and Communists bloc, had 27.32%.

The party of Ilan Shor, a businessman convicted of fraud and money-laundering in connection with a \$1 billion bank scandal, received 5.77% of the vote. Shor denies wrongdoing.

The West and Russia vie for influence in the tiny ex-Soviet republic of 3.5 million people, which is one of Europe's poorest nations and has suffered a sharp economic downturn during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sandu, a former World Bank economist who favours

closer ties with the European Union, defeated Dodon last year but was forced to share power with the parliament elected in 2019 and the government run by lawmakers aligned with Dodon.

In April, Sandu dissolved parliament, in which PAS had 15 lawmakers while Dodon's Socialists had 37. Together with allies he controlled a majority of 54 deputies.

"I hope that Moldova will end today a difficult era, the era of the rule of thieves in Moldova. Our citizens must feel and experience the benefits of a clean parliament and government that cares about people's problems," Sandu said on Facebook.

She said that after the final count of votes she intended to form a new government as soon as possible.

The distribution of seats in parliament is not yet clear, as the votes cast for the parties that did not win enough votes to enter parliament will be distributed among the winners.

Moldova, sandwiched between Ukraine and EU member Romania, has been dogged by instability and corruption scandals in recent years, including the disappearance of \$1 billion from the banking system.



Nepal Court Ousts PM, Reinstates Dissolved Parliament



KATHMANDU (AFP) - Nepal's top court ousted the sitting prime minister and reinstated the dissolved parliament Monday, plunging the Himalayan nation into further political uncertainty.

The country has been in a political crisis for months amid infighting between Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and senior leaders of his party.

"The dissolved parliament will be reinstated," the court wrote in its judgment. Oli first moved to dismiss parliament in December, but it was reinstated by the Supreme Court, which called his move unconstitutional.

The 69-year-old then lost a vote of confidence in the lower house of parliament. But he was reinstated as PM after the main opposition parties were unable to obtain a majority of support in the bicameral parliament.

Oli tried again to dissolve parliament in May, but his decision was challenged by lawmakers and political activists in the top court.

The court said in its judgment that the main opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba should replace Oli by late Tuesday, as he had presented "a claim (of majority) ... as the prime minister".

Deuba has to win a vote of confidence in the lower house within a month to retain the prime ministership.

Deuba, the head of the Nepali Congress, earlier claimed to have the support of 149 members of the 275-seat lower house.

Political analyst Lok Raj Baral told AFP the court had stopped Oli from "doing as he pleases".

"Political stability ahead depends on an alliance among sharply divided political parties and their factions," he added.

The Oli government came to power in 2018 with a two-thirds majority. There was optimism that his strong mandate at the polls would end years of instability and short-lived governments exacerbated by a devastating earthquake in 2015.

Deuba was elected as Nepal's prime minister four times between 1995 and 2018, including during the brutal, decade-long Maoist insurgency.

Elahieh Apt (\$2400)
200sq.m, 3bdrs
S/p, Sauna
J, balcony
marble fl
Fully Furn

Shanon (adviser)

Vanak Villa (\$4500)
1000sq.m
5bdrs, S/p
S, J, balcony
marble floor
Fully Furn

Parsian

Apt (\$2700)
Zaferanieh
220sq.m, 3bdrs
S/pool, Sauna
L.balcony, J
marble floor
Fully Furn

Jordan Apt (\$1400)
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Darrous Apt (\$1800)
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Bitcoin Is Steady

LONDON (Dispatches) - Led by bitcoin, most major cryptocurrencies have spent the past seven days in relative tranquility. Bitcoin and ether have been trading -0.69% and -4.46% on the week respectively, according to crypto data aggregator COIN360. The biggest movers are Binance's BNB, which has added 6.95% over the same period, and Dogecoin, which is down by 8.28%.

Bitcoin is still facing resistance at \$33,576 though on-chain metrics

are becoming more bullish. For instance, "bitcoin exchange balances have started to show signs of sustained outflows," tweeted blockchain data and intelligence provider Glassnode.

Approximately 40,000 BTC, or \$1.37 billion, have been withdrawn over the last three weeks, reversing weeks of inflows that coincided with the 50% market crash. The withdrawals suggest that traders are moving their funds to outside wallets and aren't looking to sell in the near term.



EU Pauses Tax Plan, But Ireland Sticks to Its Guns

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union has agreed to delay a corporate tax plan for the bloc following pressure from the U.S. administration and in a bid to facilitate a broader global tax deal, but EU member Ireland reiterated its criticisms of the wider reform.

The world's 20 largest economies endorsed on Saturday a plan for a global overhaul of corporate tax that would introduce a minimum tax rate and change the way large companies like Amazon and Google are taxed, based partly on where they sell their products and services rather than on the location of their headquarters.

The reform, if finalized in October, would need parliamentary approval in the more than 130 countries that support it, including the U.S. Congress where it could face opposition from the Republicans. All EU member states must also approve tax reforms - including the envisioned global deal.

In an attempt to eliminate one possible hurdle to the global deal, the EU bowed to U.S. pressure and said on Monday it would delay its own plan for a separate levy on online sales, which the U.S. administration had feared could have led to more criticism of the global tax overhaul in the U.S. Congress.

"We have decided to put on hold our work on our new digital levy," EU commission spokesman Daniel Ferrie told a news conference in Brussels on Monday, noting the bloc will reassess the situation in autumn. The tax proposal had been planned for later in July.

The announcement coincided with U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's visit to Brussels and followed repeated pressure from her during a G20 summit at the weekend and before.

EU economics commissioner Paolo Gentiloni told journalists postponing the bloc's plan would make it easier to concentrate on achieving "the last mile" of the global deal.

However, there remain some holdouts against the global deal, including three EU countries - Ireland, Hungary and Estonia.

Ireland has said it cannot support the floor of 15% for the global tax rate, which is intended to stop multinationals shopping around for the lowest tax rate but would force Dublin to raise its 12.5% rate, which has been instrumental in convincing several companies to make the island their EU headquarters.

Yellen reiterated on Monday her call on all 27 EU countries to join the global deal. "We need to put an end to corporations shifting capital income to low tax jurisdictions, and to accounting gimmicks that allow them to avoid paying their fair share," she said in a statement.

But Irish Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe did not appear to have changed his criticism of the reform. After a meeting with Yellen, his spokesperson said he had repeated to her Ireland's support for the shift in the way multinationals are taxed but its opposition to the 15% minimum rate.

Donohoe said, however, that Ireland was committed to the process and was ready to engage in the coming weeks with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which is coordinating talks on the global reform.

Malaysia to Cut 2021 GDP Growth Outlook, Likely Close to 4%

KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) - Malaysia will lower its economic growth outlook for this year due to movement restrictions against Covid, the country's finance minister said, signaling the government may forecast expansion around 4%.

While there's optimism that the current surge in cases can be contained and lockdowns can be eased, the government still expects to lower its gross domestic product estimate for 2021, Finance Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz said Monday in an interview with Bloomberg TV.

"We're in the midst of revising to a lower number and will share the exact number after we get data from the ground," Zafrul said. Asked if the forecast could be cut to around 4%, Zafrul responded that it could be "around the range you mentioned."

The government has already said it will revise the outlook, currently at 6%-7.5%, next month. Pressure is mounting on Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin with lockdowns costing the economy 1 billion ringgit (\$239 million) a day and only 10% of the population fully vaccinated, while the largest party in his ruling coalition just withdrew its support for the premier. New Covid cases reached a record 9,353 on Saturday, with the Klang Valley --- which includes Kuala Lumpur -- accounting for about 60% of the total.

"Markets are priced up for a deteriorating economic outlook as the Covid wave shows no signs of subsiding," said Prakash Sakpal, senior economist at ING Groep NV in Singapore, who cut his 2021 GDP growth forecast for Malaysia to 4.4% from 5.3% last week. "Making the matter worse for the markets now is the elevated political uncertainty."



China "Recession" Risk Sparks Unease in Economic Circles

BEIJING (Dispatches) - A surprising move to cut the banking system's reserve requirement ratio (RRR) signals looming headwinds of a potential recession for China's economy while further widening a divergence from Washington's pro-tightening economic stance, according to economists.

The People's Bank of China will slash the RRR by 0.5 percentage points on Thursday, unleashing 1 trillion yuan (US\$154 billion) worth of liquidity into the interbank system, with the primary aim of using more credit to help support small, cost-pressured domestic businesses. It is the first such cut in 15 months.

But the move has left some economists wary on the nation's economic outlook. Some have predicted that gross domestic product (GDP) will grow by 5 to 6 per cent in the second half of 2021, year on year, after first-quarter growth jumped 18.3 per cent -- albeit against a low base comparison with last year when the coronavirus pandemic resulted in widespread lockdowns.

Ren Zeping, chief economist at Soochow Securities, said that the "window of China's monetary easing cycle" is opening amid weakening economic momentum. China freeing up 1 trillion yuan will help support businesses, but impact seen as 'negligible' to economy in near-term.

China's slowdown stems from weak consumer spending and because small and medium-sized firms -- the nation's biggest employers -- are struggling with the high cost of raw materials and reduced production. A surge in commodity prices are now at late-stage stagflation and in the early recession of the economic cycle," Ren said in a note published in Chinese media on Monday. "The second half of this year and the first half of next year will be the transition point ... the economy will slow down, quarter by quarter. Real estate and exports will cause the biggest drag on the economy."

In an earlier note on Saturday, Ren said: "New export orders have fallen for two consecutive months. In the second half of the year, as external demand gradually shifts from durable goods to services, and as overseas production capacity gradually recovers, high growth in exports [from China] may not be sustainable."

U.S. Consumers' Short-Term Inflation Outlook Jumps

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. consumers expect the economy to continue its rapid resurgence from the COVID-19 pandemic over the next year, with forecasts for inflation, earnings, income growth and spending all increasing in June, according to a monthly

survey released on Monday by the New York Federal Reserve.

One-year-ahead median inflation expectations jumped for the eighth consecutive month to 4.8% in June, up from 4.0% in May and marking a new series high since the survey was launched in 2013. At the three-year outlook, they were unchanged at 3.6%.

The internet-based survey taps a rotating panel of 1,300 households and is a useful barometer for the U.S. central bank as it weighs its inflation outlook.

The Fed's preferred inflation gauge has surged to the fastest annual pace since 1992 and is well above the central bank's 2% target, but policymakers remain divided about how long the higher inflation readings will persist as supply bottlenecks caused by the pandemic begin to fade.

Consumers also have increasing confidence in the jobs market, the survey showed. The average expectation that the U.S. unemployment rate will be higher one year from now dropped to a series low of 30.7% in June, down from 31.9% in May. The perceived odds of losing a job over the next year also fell to a series low.

Median expected earnings growth over the year ahead edged up 0.1 percentage point to 2.6% in June, the highest reading since the beginning of the pandemic, and those surveyed reported they felt they had better odds of finding a job if they became unemployed. Those expected odds rose to 54.2% in June from 54.0% in May, although that was still well below pre-pandemic levels.

There were, however, tentative signs that the booming housing market may be reaching its peak, with consumers' home price expectations remaining unchanged. That said, uncertainty about future home price growth rose to the highest levels ever.

OPEC+ Yet to Make Progress in Resolving Impasse



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - OPEC+ is yet to make progress closing divisions between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that last week prevented a deal to raise oil output, making another policy meeting this week less likely, OPEC+ sources said.

Russia has been working behind the scenes to bring Riyadh and Abu Dhabi back to the table to find a path to agreement, sources told Reuters. But a Russian source said on Monday a meeting this week was not expected.

A dispute between the two Persian Gulf OPEC allies was exposed last week, scuppering for now a deal that would have boosted output from August. Oil prices, already near their highest since 2018 due to a tightening market, rose further on the lack of a deal.

The spat forced the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other producers, known as OPEC+, to abandon talks on boosting production after days of negotiations.

The White House said last week the United States was monitoring talks among OPEC and its partners.

The Kremlin said on Monday that Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Joe Biden did not discuss OPEC+ or oil prices during a call on Friday.

In a joint statement on Monday, Saudi Arabia and Oman called for continued cooperation between OPEC and its allies.

OPEC+ agreed last year to record oil output cuts of almost 10 million barrels per day (bpd), or about 10% of world output, as the pandemic hit demand. The curbs have been gradually relaxed and currently stand at about 5.8 million bpd.

India's Consumption Story To Create \$15 Trillion Economy



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - The covid-19 led disruptions notwithstanding, consumption by India's middle class will help create a \$15-trillion economy in two decades, said Gautam Adani, chairman of Adani group, on Monday.

In his address to shareholders at the annual general meeting of Adani Enterprises, Adani also rejected "reckless, irresponsible reporting" about the company's shareholding in June which caused unexpected fluctuations in the market prices of his group's stocks.

Adani added that there should be no doubt about India's target to be a five-trillion-dollar economy in four years. "History has shown that, out of every pandemic crisis, there emerge several learnings -- and I believe that India and the world are wiser as we go through this pandemic," he said.

"India will be 5 trillion-dollar economy--and then go on to be a 15 trillion-dollar-plus economy over the next two decades. India will emerge as one of the largest global markets, both in terms of consumption size and market cap," Adani told shareholders.

Referring to the drop in share prices of the group companies, Adani said the group's focus is on creating long-term sustainable value. "Recently, a few media houses indulged in reckless and irresponsible reporting related to administrative actions of regulators. This caused unexpected fluctuations in the market prices of Adani stocks. Unfortunately, some of our small investors were affected by this twisted narrative in which some commentators and journalists seemed to imply that companies have regulatory powers over their shareholders and that companies can compel disclosure. In the long term, such diversions will not impact us," he said.

For the fiscal year 2021, the consolidated EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) of the group's listed portfolio was over ₹32,000 crore: a year-on-year growth of 22%. "All the Adani stocks generated returns over 100 percent -- and our businesses ensured that we returned close to ₹9,500 crore to you, our equity shareholders. This is a 166% increase in profit after tax on a year-on-year basis," he said.

Iranian Military Supply Water to Deprived Villages

TEHRAN (IFP) - The Ground Force of the Iranian Army and Judiciary officials along with relief teams have launched work to supply water to rural areas in the southeastern Iranian province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

That came after video was released showing a girl,

with a haggard face, crying and complaining of water shortage in the area where she lived.

A village in Sistan-Bluchestan, which has a population of just around a hundred, and where water is supplied manually, faced water shortage for almost two months.



Covid Triggered Biggest Increase in Hunger in Decades

PARIS (Dispatches) - The Covid pandemic caused an estimated 18 percent increase in the number of people facing hunger, a UN report released on Monday found, dealing a massive setback to efforts to ensure everyone has access to food.

The world was already off track to achieve its goal of eradicating hunger by 2030, but the report warned that Covid had now sent it back in the wrong direction.

The “economic downturns as a consequence of Covid-19 containment measures all over the world have contributed to one of the largest increases in world hunger in decades,” said the annual food security and nutrition report compiled by several UN agencies.

Although the full impact of the pandemic cannot yet be determined, the report estimated around 118 million more people faced hunger in 2020 than in 2019, an increase of 18 percent.

The rise in moderate or severe food insecurity was equal to the previous five years combined. “Nearly one in three people in the world (2.37 billion) did not have access to adequate food in 2020 -- an increase of almost 320 million people in just one year,” the report said.

One in 10 people were undernourished.

The increase in hunger was widespread as the economic downturn affected almost all low- and middle-income countries.

But the biggest impact was in countries where there were also climate-related disasters or conflict, or both.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is just the tip of the iceberg,” said the report.

“More alarmingly, the pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities forming in our food systems over recent years as a result of major drivers such as conflict, climate variability and extremes, and economic slowdowns and downturns.”



The UN agencies said there is a unique opportunity to reverse the dynamic this year however, thanks to two major food and nutrition summits plus the COP26 meeting on climate change.

The report was jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Big Oil Keeps Brakes On Spending Even With Crude Rally Windfall



LONDON (Dispatches) - Leading international energy companies are resisting the temptation to rush and spend an unexpected windfall from rallying oil and natural gas prices as they focus on longer-term energy transition challenges, executives and analysts said.

Benchmark crude oil prices more than doubled in the second quarter of 2021 from a year earlier and have risen further in recent weeks to close to \$78 a barrel, their highest in almost three years as OPEC and other major producers failed to strike an agreement to lift output.

That, along with higher global natural gas prices because of supply issues, will boost the coffers of oil companies after firms like Exxon Mobil, Royal Dutch Shell and BP sharply cut costs in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic last year.

“The cash flow for majors is looking very strong, they’re certainly firing on the oil and natural gas cylinders,” Redburn analyst Stuart Joyner said, adding that things could improve further once demand for refined products fully recovers.

The companies are expected to provide updates on their spending plans in second quarter earnings reports over coming weeks, but are unlikely to significantly shift tack with investors laser-focused on securing higher returns from the sector after a disappointing decade.

While the heads of top energy companies said last month \$100-a-barrel oil was achievable again in coming years, they added prices would be volatile, meaning there is little incentive, at least for now, to commit billions to projects that could take a decade or more to show a return on investment.

Also dampening the bullish mood is huge uncertainty over near-term energy demand due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in parts of the world and longer-term with the shift to lower carbon fuels to fight climate change.

“The international oil companies are still rebuilding their balance sheets,” Brian Gilvary, CEO of INEOS’ oil and gas division INEOS Energy and a former BP chief financial officer told Reuters.

Shell said last week it will increase returns to shareholders earlier than expected thanks to higher revenue, holding its annual capital expenditure at no more than \$22 billion.

For companies such as BP and Shell, France’s Total Energies and Spain’s Repsol, the coronavirus crisis has already accelerated the roll-out of new strategies aimed at lowering carbon emissions and growing renewables businesses.

So, unlike previous cycles when rising oil prices loosened purse strings, executives will likely stick to their spending discipline and focus on their energy transition strategies.

“Higher oil prices allow us to extract more value from our existing businesses, which in turn will generate more resources for our spending on transformation in line with our energy transition roadmap,” Repsol Chief Executive Josu Jon Imaz told Reuters in a statement.

EU Seeks to Rival China’s “Belt and Road” With Own Infrastructure

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - European Union foreign ministers agreed on Monday to launch a global infrastructure plan linking Europe to the world, its latest step after deals with India and Japan and a similar pledge by the Group of Seven richest democracies.

Suspicious of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative to link Europe to Asia via infrastructure in a bid for greater influence, the EU set out a formal path for an ambitious “connectivity” plan from 2022.

“We see China using economic and financial means to increase its political influence everywhere in the world. It’s useless moaning about this, we must offer alternatives,” German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told reporters at a meeting with his EU counterparts in Brussels.

“It is important that the European Union ... coordinates them very closely with the United States,” he said.

The EU has already signed partnerships with Japan and India to coordinate transport, energy and digital projects linking Europe and Asia. Both Tokyo and Delhi are worried about Chinese largesse that officials say makes poorer countries beholden to Beijing because they are forced to take on such large debts.

Through development banks, first-loss guarantees to private companies and by offering Western government



know-how, the G7, whose leaders met in England in June, also want to provide more transparency in infrastructure partnerships.

Montenegro, a member of the NATO military alliance and an aspirant to join the EU, is the highest-profile casualty of Chinese debt, Western officials say.

Montenegro borrowed nearly \$1 billion from

China in 2014 to fund a 41-km (25-mile) stretch of road, an amount that has threatened to bankrupt the country. It is now negotiating with Western banks to swap or refinance the debt, Reuters reported this month.

The EU strategy, called “A Globally Connected Europe”, makes no mention of China and Luxembourg’s veteran Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn cautioned on Monday about making China an adversary, noting that German carmakers sold more vehicles in China every year than in Germany.

But one EU diplomat involved in drafting the strategy said the eight-page document had “China written all over it”.

Since 2013, China has launched construction projects across more than 60 countries, seeking a network of land and sea links with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa. Beijing denies any intention to project power and has said the infrastructure corridor focuses on the needs of ordinary people.

Musk Defends Tesla’s \$2.6b Deal for SolarCity

WILMINGTON (Dispatches) - Elon Musk took the stand on Monday to defend Tesla Inc’s 2016 acquisition of SolarCity against a lawsuit by shareholders seeking to recoup the \$2.6 billion the company paid for the ailing solar panel maker.

Soon after taking the stand, Musk denied the deal was a bailout of SolarCity as Tesla shareholders have alleged. “Since it was a stock-for-stock transaction and I owned almost exactly the same percentage of both there was no financial gain,” he said, responding to questions from his attorney.

Musk’s testimony kicks off a two-week trial in Wilmington, Delaware, before Vice Chancellor Joseph Slight, who will decide whether the SolarCity deal was fair to Tesla stockholders.

The lawsuit by union pension funds and asset managers alleges the celebrity CEO strong-armed Tesla’s board to buy SolarCity, just as it was about to run out of cash. Musk owned a 22% stake in SolarCity, which was founded by his cousins. At the time of the purchase, he also owned about a 22% stake in Tesla.

Shareholders asked the court to order Musk, one of world’s richest people, to repay to Tesla what it spent on the deal, which would represent one of the largest judgments ever against an individual. However, even if the judge finds the deal was unfair, he could award a much lower amount of damages.

Musk, wearing a dark suit, white shirt and dark tie, testified that for years before the SolarCity deal he saw the solar panel company as a natural part of the transition to sustainable energy.

He touted the deal at the time as central to his “Master Plan, Part Deux,” which aims to reshape transportation by using sustainable energy to power fleets of self-driving electric vehicles.

Musk said on Monday that he did not control the appointment of board members or their compensation and that they negotiated the SolarCity deal and its economic terms without his influence.

Asked by his attorney, Evan Chesler, to describe his relationship with the board of directors Musk said: “I’d say good. They work hard and are competent. They provide good advice and are rigorous in acting on behalf of shareholders.”

On cross-examination, shareholder attorney, Randall Baron warned Musk that “we plan to spend a lot of time with you. It’s going to be a grind.”

Musk grimaced, poked at the six-inch thick binder exhibit and replied “I can tell by the binder.”

Legal experts said the judge will be looking for evidence that Musk threatened board members or that directors felt they could not stand up to him.

The shareholders’ lawsuit accuses Musk of dominating deal discussions, pushing Tesla to pay more for SolarCity and misleading shareholders about the deteriorating financial health of the solar panel maker.

Central to the case will be allegations that Musk, with his 22% stake in Tesla at the time of the deal, was nonetheless a controlling shareholder. If he was, it would impose a tougher legal standard and increase the likelihood the deal was unfair to shareholders.

“It would be a surprise to most people if the court were to come out and say that he doesn’t control here,” said Brian Quinn, a professor at Boston College Law School. “Because he certainly acts like he does.” Tesla’s directors settled allegations from the same lawsuit last year for \$60 million, paid by insurance, without admitting fault.

Slight’s will likely take months before he issues a ruling.

JCPOA Talks Really...

FROM PAGE 1

The West and the U.S. should take into consideration this point that the era of hit-and-run and imposing its will on Iran has ended and the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer give in the excessive demands. As the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution has emphasized, the West should fulfill all its obligations and the U.S. should lift all sanctions and after its verification, then Iran will observe its JCPOA obligations.

Unfortunately President Hassan Rouhani’s government has ties all domestic affairs to the fate of the JCPOA but Iran has proved that it can survive the U.S. unilateral and cruel sanctions and now under the principled President-elect Raisi, it is hoped the country would not give in the U.S. pressure and it will fight for its rights and happiness of the nature without tying the domestic affairs to the fate of the JCPOA.

The West should know this fact that now Iran is ready to be administered by a revolutionary government as it will not play in the game of the West like the current pro-West government. Iranian negotiating team should seal the fate of the JCPOA talks in Vienna and it should avoid prolongation of the talks because prolongation of the talks is what the West wants because it harms the national economy which is waiting for the outcome of the Vienna talks.

Iran will accept to return to its JCPOA obligations only all sanctions are removed; as the Supreme Leader has stressed, removal of the sanctions and its verification is Iran’s redlines and no Iranian official is allowed to ignore it under different pretexts like what happened in the 2015 JCPOA deal which let the West have upper hand to decide unilaterally to leave it without paying its price.

EU...

FROM PAGE 1

Radi was notified that Jansa’s participation in the virtual meeting organized by a terrorist group that is loathed by the Iranian nation and his groundless remarks run counter to international diplomatic norms and to the spirit of bilateral relations.

The Slovenian ambassador was also reminded that supporting a terrorist group is in violation of the UN Charter, internationally-recognized principles and human rights values.

Meanwhile, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in a phone call with Borrell asked for a clarification of the EU’s stance regarding the declarations of the Slovenian prime minister.

Borrell said he had told Zarif that “in our institutional setting, the position of a prime minister — even if he’s from the country that holds the rotating Council presidency — does not represent the position of the European Union.”

Over 2,400 Expatriate...

FROM PAGE 1

Sattari added that Iran has also granted Iranian nationality to foreign elites.

“In addition to facilitating foreign elites’ residence, we have managed to grant Iranian nationality to some elites from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Spain and other countries. Last year, scholarships were also offered to the 100 top applicants in Afghan university entrance exam, and interestingly, the top 70 came to Iran,” he said.

During the ceremony, Head of the Leader’s Representative Office in Universities Mostafa Rostami thanked the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology as well as the National Elites Foundation, which is also headed by Sattari.

“Low cost of education in the Islamic Republic of Iran and cultural affinity of many regional students with the culture of our country are among the benefits of our educational system for regional elites,” Rostami said.

During the ceremony, the head of the International Exchanges Center of the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology also said it has launched a platform that enables Iranian expatriates to contact universities and research centers inside the country.

“Currently, some 10,000 Iranian expatriates use this application. This scale of interest is despite a host of requirements needed to sign up to the application. For example, Iranians using this application must have been graduated from one of the top 200 universities in global rankings,” said the center’s head Mahdi Ghalenoei.

“In line with the policy of using the potential of Iranian expatriate elites, using their help to expand exports of technological products is on the agenda.”

Asher-Smith Pulls out of Final Tokyo 2020 Warm-Up

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's Dina Asher-Smith has withdrawn from the British Grand Prix event in Gateshead on Tuesday, her last race before the Tokyo Olympics, due to a tight hamstring.

The 25-year-old sprinter was due to run in the 200 metres at the Diamond League meeting as part of her buildup to the July 23-Aug. 8 Olympics but said she had to make the "smart" decision and not take any risks.

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ISSN 1024-6053

P.O. Box: 15875-8551

Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St.,

Golestan II St, Golestan St. Marzdaran

Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Printed by: Honar Sarzmin Sabz

Distributed by:

Cities of Iran Cultural and

Artistic Institute

Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl

Lee Wins Scottish Open

LONDON (Dispatches) - Australia's Min Woo Lee edged out Thomas Detry and Matt Fitzpatrick in a three-way playoff to win the Scottish Open in wet conditions at the Renaissance Club.

With his second European Tour victory, Lee secured one of three places on offer at next week's British Open at Royal St George's, alongside Belgium's Detry and Englishman Jack Senior. A torrential rainstorm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, caused play to be halted for 1-1/2 hours in the late afternoon, before Lee finished with a seven-under-par round of 64 to set the clubhouse target at 18 under.

Bucks Trounce Suns to Cut NBA Finals Deficit to 2-1

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The Milwaukee Bucks scorched the Phoenix Suns 120-100 in Game Three of the NBA Finals in front of an electric home crowd, cutting the deficit in the best-of-seven series to 2-1.

The Bucks had not been at their best in the previous two games in Phoenix but were a different team with home-court advantage, ending the first half with a 15-point lead as two-time league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo put up 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds.

Unlike Game 2, Antetokounmpo got efficient help from co-stars Jrue Holiday and Khris Middleton, who combined for 39 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds on 14-for-28 shooting (8 of 17 from 3-point range). Just as important, they led a perimeter defensive effort that held Chris Paul, Devin Booker and Mikal Bridges to 33 combined points three nights after that Suns trio torched the Bucks for a total of 81 points.

In the heart of America's Dairyland, for once home cooking in Milwaukee tastes pretty sweet.

The Bucks dominated their first home NBA Finals game since 1974, defeating the Phoenix Suns 120-100 in a must-win Game 3 on the strength of Antetokounmpo's 41 points, 13 rebounds and six assists in 38 minutes. Following a 42-point effort in Game 2, Antetokounmpo joined LeBron James, Shaquille O'Neal and Michael Jordan as the only players in the last 50 seasons to log back-to-back 40-point Finals games.

Jordan holds the record with four straight 40-point games in the 1993 Finals.

"I'm not Michael Jordan," Antetokounmpo said Sunday, "but all I care about right now is getting one more."

The Suns still lead the series, 2-1. The Bucks host Game 4 on Wednesday at 9 p.m. ET on ABC. Milwaukee is now 17-3 at home in the playoffs over the past four seasons, the one constant in a complicated history.

Skupski Partners

Krawczyk to

Wimbledon Mixed Title

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain welcomed a new Grand Slam champion in the form of Neal Skupski as he partnered American Desirae Krawczyk to the mixed doubles title at Wimbledon.

The seventh seeds beat all-British duo Harriet Dart and Joe Salisbury 6-2 7-6(1) on Centre Court.

It was Krawczyk's second successive Grand Slam success after she and Salisbury won the French Open in June.

Dart and Salisbury were hoping to become the first all-British pair to win the mixed doubles event at Wimbledon since Jo Durie and Jeremy Bates in 1987.

Osaka Gets Own Line of Barbie Dolls

LONDON (Dispatches) - Four-time Grand Slam singles champion Naomi Osaka now has her own line of Barbie dolls.

The 23-year-old world No. 2 tennis player, who has used her position to call attention to issues of police violence and racial inequality, became a part of Mattel Inc's push to make its iconic toy line more diverse with dolls based on different role models and professions.

"It's such an honor to be a part of the Barbie Role Model series, and to remind young girls that they can make a difference in the world. I want young girls everywhere to feel empowered to dream big," Osaka, who grew up idolizing 23-times Grand Slam champion Serena Williams, said in a statement.

Mattel's tie-up with Japan's Osaka is the latest example of brands becoming more comfortable with taking a stand on social issues and banking on partnerships with female athletes to pull in new customers.

In April, Gap Inc's Athleta brand signed four-time Olympic gymnastics champion Simone Biles for a new apparel partnership, with a focus on diversity and inclusion.

Mattel also has Barbie dolls modeled on U.S. soccer player Alex Morgan and Olympic fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad.



As a sign of how well Fiserv Forum served the Bucks after two straight double-digit losses in Phoenix, Antetokounmpo made 13 of his 17 free-throw attempts. Only once in his playoff career had he shot such a high percentage on at least 10 free throws. He was even more effective in the paint, where he made 14 of 18 field-goal attempts. This was all-time level stuff from a player long criticized for his postseason play.

"It definitely was a turning point for me. Those shots felt great," Holiday said after the game. "Those going in, I kind of felt like the momentum was going their way before that -- I kind of got the momentum back on our side."

The Suns trailed by 22 heading into the final quarter and were unable to make a game of it heading to the buzzer.

"We knew what type of game it was going to be, we knew that we had to come here, play good basketball, compete as hard as possible and I was just trying to be aggressive," Antetokounmpo said.

The 26-year-old forward ended with 41 points, 13 rebounds and six assists. He scored 42 points in Game Two and is only the sixth player to have 40-or-more points in consecutive NBA Finals games.

The Suns made just nine of 31 three-point attempts and coughed up 14 turnovers.

The teams meet again in Milwaukee on Wednesday for Game Four.

Djokovic First Player to Qualify for ATP



LONDON (Dispatches) - Novak Djokovic became the first player to qualify for this year's ATP Finals after the world number one tied Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal's record with his 20th major at Wimbledon on Sunday.

Djokovic defeated Italy's Matteo Berrettini 6-7(4) 6-4 6-4 6-3 in the final to seal a sixth Wimbledon title and qualify for the Nov. 14-21 ATP Finals in Turin.

"I am happy to have qualified for Turin so early," Djokovic, who will play in his 14th ATP Finals, said in a statement.

"Italian fans are very much into tennis so I am sure it will be a great event with a fantastic atmosphere."

The Serbian will look to win the season finale for the sixth time, aiming to match Swiss ace Federer's record at the event.

The 34-year-old, who is on course to finish the year as the top-ranked player for a record-breaking seventh time, has won 34 out of 37 matches this year.

Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, the 2019 ATP Finals champion, is next in line to qualify in the second position for the Turin event, followed by local favourite Berrettini.

Messi Dedicates Copa Title to Family, Country and Maradona



us and above all to 45 millions Argentinians who have suffered so with this dreadful virus," Barcelona megastar Messi wrote on Instagram.

Argentina is approaching a 100,000 Covid-19 death toll and weeks before the start of the Copa tournament Buenos Aires refused to co-stage the event with Colombia owing to the surge in pandemic cases. South American confederation CONMEBOL ultimately transferred hosting rights to Brazil at the last minute despite that country having seen more than half a million virus deaths, the second highest global tally after the United States.



Racist Abuse of England Players Is Unforgivable

LONDON (Dispatches) - Gareth Southgate has condemned the "unforgivable" racist abuse aimed at the three England players who missed penalties in Sunday's Euro 2020 final defeat against Italy.

Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka were the victims of sickening social media taunts in the aftermath of the 3-2 penalty shoot-out loss at Wembley.

While some people identifying as England fans used racial slurs in blaming the trio for the defeat, other offensive messages were accompanied by "Forza Italia" hashtags.

England's players have made a strong stand against racism at the tournament, taking a knee before all their games including Sunday's final.

"For some of them to be abused is unforgivable," England boss Southgate said at a press conference on Monday.

"Some of it has come from abroad, we have been told this, but some of it is from this country.

"We have been a beacon of light to bring people together and the national team stands for everybody. We felt the energy and positivity from the fans and I'm incredibly proud of that."

Having infamously missed a crucial penalty in England's Euro 96 semi-final shoot-out defeat against Germany, Southgate knows what it is like to endure taunts and jibes after such an agonising loss.

Many past and present England players, including David Beckham and Raheem Sterling, have been vilified by Three Lions fans after major tournament failures. Southgate said ensuring his stars were supported after the penalty heartbreak was "top of his thinking".

Berrettini Confident Of One Day Winning Title at Wimbledon

LONDON (Dispatches) - Matteo Berrettini learned some harsh lessons during his defeat by Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final on Sunday but is sure he can grow from the experience and return to lift the trophy.

Although world number one Djokovic was the overwhelming favourite to win the title, an upset victory for the 25-year-old Berrettini had not been completely ruled out by pundits.

After all, with his booming serves and crushing forehands, the Italian came into the showpiece match on Centre Court having won the Wimbledon lead-up event at Queen's.

But, despite Djokovic losing the opening set on a tiebreak, Berrettini nearly always looked second-best in the match. "Obviously now I'm disappointed," the seventh seed, who was bidding to become the first Italian to win the Wimbledon singles title, told reporters.

"I'm pissed because I lost, because I think I didn't play my best match. But I have to say it's thanks to Novak in a way that he... made me play in this way. That's his strength probably. That's why he's one of the best."

Berrettini was, however, keen to see the positives in his strong run on grass this season and was confident he would return to claim the title at the All England Club.

"I know that I can win this title. I'm not sure if I'm going to do it, but I know I can do it," Berrettini said. "So that's what I'm going to do in the next weeks, in the next months and years: try to lift the trophy."

Berrettini was beaten by Rafa Nadal in his maiden Grand Slam semi-final at the 2019 U.S. Open and also lost to Djokovic in the French Open quarter-finals last month.

