

**IRAN NEWS Felicitates Its Muslim Readers on the Auspicious Eid al-Adha and National Holiday. Meanwhile Due to the COVID-Related Restrictions, the Next Issue Will Hit The News-Stands on Monday**

# IRAN NEWS

**President Hassan Rouhani Yesterday Inaugurated 585 Production and Infrastructure Projects of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad Throughout Iran Via Videoconferencing**

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**2 DOMESTIC**

**Afghan Elites to Foil U.S.' Sinister Plots**



> SEE PAGE 2

**3 DOMESTIC**

**High Oil Prices Not To Benefit Producers In Long-Run**



> SEE PAGE 3

**4 INTERNATIONAL**

**Thai Police Fire Rubber Bullets, Tear Gas At Protesters**



> SEE PAGE 4

**8 SPORTS**

**Hamilton Wins British GP, Accused of Dirty Driving**



> SEE PAGE 8

## Iran Reserves Right To Defend Itself Against Satellite Attacks

TEHRAN (PresSTV) - A new report by an Iranian analytical news website says the Islamic Republic, which has been hit by various attacks coordinated by Israel through satellite technology, reserves the right to take countermeasures by targeting the source of such assaults.

In a report on Sunday, the Nournews website said the Islamic Republic has been the target of various attacks, including acts of terrorism against its nuclear facilities and assassination of its nuclear scientists, through the use of satellite technology by the Zionist regime.

"Following the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh last year, the Zionist media in a wide-ranging propaganda acknowledged the regime's use of new satellite technologies to carry out this assassination. Based on this, they sought to assert their superiority in this area," the report said.

"Information received by Nournews also indicates that the Zionist regime, in addition to other cases, has misused space and satellite technologies for military and terrorist purposes, which is a clear violation of space security guidelines."

**See Page 7**

## Iran Hands Over 306 Pakistanis

CHAGAI (Dispatches) - Iranian authorities on Sunday handed over 306 Pakistanis to the local administration at Taftan border in Chagai district.

According to official sources, these Pakistanis had been arrested in different parts of Iran for not having valid travel documents. Later, they were handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency for interrogation.

The detained people wanted to proceed to Europe via Iran. The sources said the detained Pakistanis were screened and they tested negative for coronavirus.

The deported Pakistanis included 243 from Punjab, 28 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 14 from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 11 from Sindh and 10 from Balochistan.

Meanwhile the Iranian authorities had handed over 180 more Pakistani migrants last week to the local administration at the Taftan border in Chagai district. According to Pakistan daily The Nation, these people were arrested in different parts of Iran for not having authorized documents.

Last month, Iran had handed over 92 illegal immigrants to Pakistan. Reportedly, these Pakistanis had entered Iran through illegal crossings without valid documents which led to their apprehension.

Previously in May, Iran had handed over 63 Pakistani nationals to authorities for illegally entering the country.

## Resistance Key to Ending U.S. Intervention in Islamic Nations



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei says a Jihad-like struggle and continued resistance is what can prevent America and other international aggressors from interfering in the affairs of the Islamic countries.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a message released on July 17, 2021 on the occasion of the start of the Hajj rituals.

*The following is the full text of the Leader's message:*

**In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon Muhammad, his pure Household, his chosen companions and those who follow them until the Day of Judgment

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters throughout the world,

This year too, the Islamic nation has been deprived of the great blessing of Hajj. Thus, eager hearts filled with sadness and sorrow was deprived of the banquet at the honorable House that God, the Wise and Merciful, built for people.

This is the second year that the season of happiness and spiritual exaltation associated with Hajj has turned into a season of separation and regret. The tribulation of the pandemic and perhaps that of the policies dominating over the Holy Ka'bah have deprived the eyes of the eager believers from seeing the Islamic nation's symbol of unity, greatness and spirituality. Thus, this glorious, honorable summit has been covered with clouds and dust.

This is another test, which like the other tests that have come to pass in the history of the Islamic nation that will be followed by a bright future. What is important is that Hajj remains alive in its true home - in the hearts and souls of Muslims - so that now that its physical form is temporarily inaccessible, its exalted message not be diminished.

Hajj is an act of worship that is filled with mysteries and secrets. The exquisite formation and combination of movement and quietude in it builds the identity of the Muslims and the Muslim community and displays its beauties for the people of the world.

On the one hand, it helps the hearts of God's servants to spiritually ascend by remembering God, reciting supplications and being humble. And this brings them closer to God. On the other hand, it creates a bond between the Muslim brothers gathering together from the four corners of the world, and this bond manifests itself through their similar garments and harmonious moves.

It displays the most important symbol of the Islamic nation with all its meaningful, transcendent rituals, and it shows the determination and greatness of the Islamic nation to all ill-wishers.

This year, the Hajj ritual at the Great House of God is not possible, but paying attention to the God of the House, to remembering Him, to humility, to supplicating Him and to asking for His forgiveness is possible. Being present in Arafah is not within our reach, but enlightening supplications are. It is not possible to stone Satan in Mina, but rejecting the power-seeking devils is possible everywhere. The harmonious gathering of individuals around the Ka'bah is not attainable, but the harmonious gathering of hearts around the illuminating verses of the Holy Qur'an and holding fast to the rope which God stretches out [Qur'an, 3:103] is a perpetual duty.

We who are the followers of Islam - and who enjoy a large population, vast lands, countless natural resources and nations that are aware and awake - must build the future with our assets and resources. Over the last 150 years, Muslim nations have not had any role in deciding the fate of their countries and their governments. Apart from a few exceptions, they have all been led and governed by transgressing western governments while being subject to their greed, interference and malevolence. Scientific backwardness and political dependence in many countries is the product of that passivity and incompetence.

Today, our nations, our youth, our scientists, our religious scholars, our civic intellectuals, our politicians, our political parties and our people must make up for that dishonorable, embarrassing past. They must stand firm and resist the aggression, interference and wickedness of western powers.

All that the Islamic Republic of Iran is saying that has caused the world of Arrogance to become despondent and infuriated is actually an invitation to this kind of resistance. This is a resistance in the face of the interference and evil of America and other transgressing countries so as to take the fate of the world of Islam in one's own hands by relying on Islamic teachings.

Naturally, America and its cohorts are sensitive about the word "resistance" and have decided to show all kinds of hostility to the "Islamic Resistance Front." Some regional governments' cooperation with them is a bitter reality that strengthens those malicious acts as well.

The straight path shown to us by the Hajj rituals, by "Sayy," "Tawaf," "Arafah," "Jamarat" and the jubilation and unity in Hajj, is to rely on God, to pay attention to the never-fading power of God, to have national self-confidence, to believe in struggle and endeavor for religion, to show firm determination when moving forward and to have abundant hope for victory.

The truth of the realities in the Islamic region bolsters this hope and builds up this determination. From another perspective, the bitter events in the world of Islam, scientific backwardness, political dependence, and economic and social problems direct us toward a great duty and an untiring endeavor.

**See Page 7**

## Tehran Slams Israeli Aggression Against Palestinians

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has strongly denounced Israeli violence against Palestinian worshipers at the al-Aqsa Mosque, saying the regime has left no choice for Palestinians but to put up resistance against such aggression.

"The aggression occurring on the eve of Eid al-Adha is strongly condemned, and Iran expresses its disgust at the approach," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a press conference on Monday.

He said Iran will continue to make every effort to prevent such acts of violence and aggression, noting that the united voice of the Islamic world can be helpful.

On the recent opening of the Emirati embassy in Tel Aviv, Khatibzadeh said the Israeli regime assumes that it can gain some legitimacy for itself through such acts while it is indeed at the nadir of its legitimacy.

He said Israel, as a regime that has been the source of violence and terror in the region for decades, cannot gain any legitimacy through such acts.

"The United Arab Emirates should know that they are responsible for the unrest and for what would happen in this region due to the presence of the regime occupying al-Quds," the spokesman added.

**See Page 7**

## Munya Dismisses Bomet's Claim of Tea Export to Iran

NAIROBI (Dispatches)- Kenya's Agriculture Cabinet secretary Peter Munya has dismissed Bomet County's claim of having exported tea to Iran, saying the records show that no beverage from the region has passed through the Mombasa port.

Mr Munya said the trade sanctions by the U.S. has made it impossible for Kenya to directly export tea to Iran.

However, Bomet governor Henry Barchok dismissed the minister's claims, saying they shipped the first consignment to Teheran last month after reaching a deal.

Bomet announced last month that it entered into a deal with an Iranian buyer for direct exports of the beverage from the region as it seeks to improve farmers' earnings.

"The reports of Bomet having exported tea to Iran is fake. From the information we have, no tea has ever reached the port of Mombasa from there," said Mr Munya last week. However, Dr Barchok said the county shipped out tea last month, which is currently en route to the Middle East state.

**See Page 7**

## Iran Sets Record for Daily COVID-19 Jobs

**IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK**

TEHRAN - The Minister of Health and Medical Education says that on July 18 alone, 400,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine were injected and a new record has been set for vaccination (in Iran).

Saeed Namaki on Sunday expressed hope that the pace of vaccinations in Tehran and metropolises will increase and that all centers will serve uninterrupted holidays.

In a high-profile announcement, he said that during the holidays, interruptions in the country's vaccination process and non-injections are considered "violations."

Iran has already imported 23 shipments of foreign coronavirus vaccines of more than 12 million doses, nearly half of which arrived this month.

The government's delay and delay in importing the coronavirus vaccine has led to strong protests from experts and the public, especially in recent days when the fifth wave of coronavirus has risen in the country.

So far, fewer than 6.2 million people in the country have received at least one dose of the vaccine and under 2.3 million both doses of the coronavirus vaccine.

**See Page 7**

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## Major General Bagheri Felicitates Counterparts on Eid al-Adha

TEHRAN (MNA) – Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri congratulated the advent of Eid al-Adha to counterparts at the Islamic countries.

"I have the honor to felicitate Eid al-Adha, the great Muslim celebration of the flourishing of faith and divine nature, to the military officials of Islamic countries in the world," Major General Mohammad Bagheri said in his messages of felicitation.

"I hope that by adherence to the guiding verses of Holy Quran and teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam Hazrat Muhammad [PBUH], we will see the growing prosperity of Islamic nations, their victory against enemies of Islam, and promoting the health of Muslims against the coronavirus," he added.

## Afghan Elites to Foil U.S.' Sinister Plots

TEHRAN (MNA) – A top advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution says the US has "sinister intentions" for Afghanistan but Afghan elites will foil all of them.

Slamming the U.S.'s military campaign in Afghanistan and 20 years of occupation, Ali Akbar Velayati said "America has committed severe crimes and left behind great losses in Afghanistan instead of bringing development, and prosperity and now, the US is leaving the country of proud Muhahidin with humiliation."

"Although they are still trying to destroy the remaining prosperity and divide the honorable people of Afghanistan with evil provocations, the elites and intellectuals of Afghanistan will thwart these conspiracies as they know the US's sinister intentions."

The Secretary-General of the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening made the remarks on Monday while addressing a conference dubbed "Afghanistan, Sustainable Peace and Security" in Tehran.

The history of Afghanistan is full of sacrifices and resistance of its people against colonialists and occupiers, from Soviet Army to US and NATO occupation, he added. The Afghan people have always stood against any aggression or excessive demand



and the armies of the West and the East, that have been armed to the teeth, have failed against the will and resistance of these people, Velayati noted.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always called for strengthening brotherly ties with the Afghan nation that has had a major role in the Islamic civilization, said the advisor.

The experience of the past 40 years shows that provocations by foreign states had led to the eruption of war between different ethnic groups; the same groups that had lived here peacefully for hundreds of years, he added.

### There Will Be No New Deal With U.S.



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - A former Iranian diplomat, Hassan Kazemi Qomi says Tehran intends to create a new regional security and cooperation order and strengthen its allies.

In an interview with Etemad Online (link is external) he said that this policy is based on collective security in the region with the participation of regional states, without the presence of the United States.

Explaining his take on the upcoming Iranian government's foreign policy, Kazemi said the new policy is based on friendship in the region as well as strengthening the "resistance front," the Islamic Republic's jargon for an alliance of anti-American forces.

Kazemi, who was ambassador to Iraq from 2005 to 2010, clearly ruled out signing a new agreement with the United States beyond the JCPOA. He also ruled out the idea of accepting the financial reforms mandated by the inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force (FATF) against money laundering and funding terrorism.

Pressed by the reporter on how he proposed to lift US sanctions and rescue the hard-pressed Iranian economy, Kazemi repeated what hardliners have always said about self-reliance and barter trade.

Kazemi said the presence of foreign forces in the region, particularly the "interventions" by US forces in regional countries has led to tensions and insecurity.

He repeated past Iranian accusations that the emergence of Takfiri forces such as the Islamic State group in the region was also an outcome of the US presence in the region.

Adding that Iran's new foreign policy priority under president-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Ebrahim Raisi is boosting ties with regional states, Kazemi said in the 82-minute-long interview that Tehran will attach special priority to improving its ties with Saudi Arabia as the most important regional state.

Referring to three rounds of talks between Iran and Saudi diplomats, Kazemi said that Riyadh is primarily interested in solving the problem of Yemen after five years of conflict that has threatened Saudi Arabia's security. He stressed that the Yemeni crisis has a political rather than military solution.

Asked if the improvement of ties with Riyadh is linked to the negotiations over reviving the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), Kazemi said the two matters are two separate issues. "Iran has said that it will not include its regional ties in the negotiations over the nuclear issue. Including it in negotiation over a new [nuclear] deal means imposing something on Iran the U.S. has failed to gain through other means. Naturally, the Islamic Republic should not accept that."

## Gov't Offices in Tehran, Alborz to Shut Down Due to Pandemic

TEHRAN (MNA) – Government Spokesman said that all departments and organizations based in Tehran and Alborz provinces will be closed from July 20 to 25 for a period of almost one week due to the rising trend of coronavirus pandemic.

According to a proposal of the National Coronavirus Combat and Prevention Headquarters and also approval of Iranian President, all departments and organizations in Tehran and Alborz provinces will be shut down from July 20 to 25.

Based on a directive issued in this regard, travel from these two provinces to other cities and provinces of the country will be strictly forbidden and violators of the rule would be fined and they will be forced to return to their cities, Ali Rabiei added.

The issue of continuity of travel ban to the red- and orange-coded cities in terms of severity of the pandemic still remain in place according to the Smart Management Plan and further information in this regard would be announced to dear citizens, Government Spokesman Rabiei emphasized.

## Iran's Nuclear Activities Peaceful

TEHRAN (IP) - The deputy chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian parliament stated that all Iran's nuclear activities were peaceful.

Abbas Moghtadaei referring to a recent allegation of western countries and the Israeli regime about the nature of Iran's nuclear activities, noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully aware of the Israeli regime's challenges; Israelis could not overcome defenseless Gazans and never dare to

threaten a powerful country like the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the sidelines of the open session of Iran's parliament, Moghtadaei stressed that the occupying Israeli regime would better pay attention to its own challenges and brutality.

"Iran, as a powerful player in the region, will continue its scientific progress," the deputy chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the Iranian parliament highlighted.

## Normalization of Relations Between UAE, Israel, Betrayal of Palestinian Cause

TEHRAN (IP) - A member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iran's Parliament said that the normalization of relations between the United Arab Emirates and the Israeli regime was a betrayal of the Palestinian and Muslim's wishes to liberate Quds.

Abolfazl Amouei, in a reaction to the opening of the Israeli embassy in the United Arab Emirates, said some Arab countries started to normalize their relations with the Israeli regime to help anti-democracy movements in the region, stabilizing bases of their rules.

He stated that while the Palestinian people have been under constant attack by the Israelis, the UAE government continues to normalize its relation with the regime.

Emphasizing that the normalization of relations with the Israeli regime is not approved by the people of the region, he added that the people in the region emphasize the liberation of Quds and consider the normalization a betrayal to the Palestinian cause.

The UAE, Bahrain agreement with the Israeli regime was formally signed on September 15, 2020 in the presence of former U.S. President Donald Trump, while the two small Arab states revealed their long-standing secret relationship with the Israelis.

## Power Outages Cause Steel, Cement Prices to Rise Sharply

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Hormozgan Steel Company's managing director says the sudden and unplanned power outage of this industrial unit has endangered the lives of workers and damaged more than 438 billion tomans to Hormozgan steelmaking and has led to an increase in the price of steel in Iran.

Meanwhile, some lawmakers have also reported that recent power outages in Iran have increased the price of cement from a bag of 15,000 tomans to 70,000 tomans.

Attallah Maroufkhani said that the regional electricity company had cut off electricity "without prior notice and without coordination" and "played with the lives of many employees of the companies."

He warned of the danger to five employees of the company when carrying molten cauldrons by overhead cranes with sudden power outages, saying that "these people have fortunately vigilantly resolved the danger."

Maroufkhani added that for Hormozgan Steel Company, the financial loss caused by the sudden outage without the electricity program was more than 200 billion tomans and the

total losses of the company after a week of complete blackout is more than 438 billion tomans" and "if the current trend continues until the end of July, more than 700 billion tomans of damage caused by the power outage will be inflicted on the company."

## U.S. Causes Afghanistan's Crisis

TEHRAN (IP) - The member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Iran's parliament said the US intervention in Afghanistan in the past two decades had plunged the country into a crisis, so the United States should be held accountable by the international community.

Fada-Hussein Maleki stated that neighboring countries should not keep silent over US bullying.

Referring to Afghanistan's insecurity due to US withdrawal, Fada-Hussein Maleki added that the US had not supported the Afghan government and left the Afghan people alone.

Emphasizing the Islamic Republic of Iran's readiness to resolve the crisis in Afghanistan, he added that the Afghans, their government, and the Taliban must decide for their own country through negotiations. Stressing the need to establish border security between Iran and Afghanistan, the MP said that long before the Afghan crisis, Iran's Army and IRGC forces had been stationed on the two countries' borders, so there have been no security border problems.

The member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of the parliament emphasized that the Ministry of Interior and other organizations will hold meetings to monitor the issues of Afghan refugees.

## Telegram Rejects Restrictions On Security Issues, Filtered

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - The Minister of Communications and Information Technology accused telegram's social network of "non-compliance with security issues" in Iran and said this was the main reason the judiciary blocked Telegram.

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi told an open session of the Islamic Consultative Assembly on Monday, that his ministry did "everything the government wanted" and that "more than 70 percent of the requests" were implemented on Telegram, but that because the messenger "refused to limit security issues, the security apparatus complained to the judiciary about Telegram, which led to its blocking."

## \$21b in Exports of Iranian Oil, Oil and Gas Products in 2020

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's oil and condensate exports were 2.5 million barrels per day during the pre-sanctions period, falling to 320,000 barrels last year, according to figures from companies tracking tankers.

The Central Bank of Iran published a report on the \$21 billion exports of Iranian crude oil, oil and gas products in 2019, down about 27 percent from 2019.

In 2018 and 2017, it was \$60 billion and \$62 billion, respectively.

Thus, Iran's exports of oil, oil and gas products dropped by one-third of the pre-sanctions period last year.

Iran's oil and condensate exports were 2.5 million barrels per day during the pre-sanctions period, falling to 320,000 barrels last year, according to figures from companies tracking tankers.

BP statistics show that Iran's gas exports in 2019 fell slightly from the previous year to about 16 billion cubic meters, but are up about 33 percent from 2018.

There have been no reports on exports of petroleum products, but Iranian customs statistics show that the country's gasoline exports have increased six-fold in the past year compared to previous years, reaching about \$3 billion.

Apart from gasoline, Iran also exports liquefied petroleum gas (LPGs), gasoline and mazut (furnace oil), but there are no statistics on the amount of exports and revenues.

## Fars Province Hit by 5.7-Magnitude Earthquake

TEHRAN (IFP) - An earthquake measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale has struck Iran's southern province of Fars on Sunday afternoon.

The quake occurred at 19:04 local time on Sunday afternoon near the city of Khesht, some 90 kilometers from the port city of Bushehr.

The epicentre, with a depth of 11 km, was an area on the border between the provinces of Fars and Bushehr.

The quake has been felt by people in Fars, Bushehr, and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad provinces.

Iran is one of the most seismically active countries in the world, being crossed by several major fault lines that cover at least 90% of the country. As a result, earthquakes in Iran occur often and are destructive.

On November 12, 2017, the western province of Kermanshah was hit by a major 7.3-magnitude quake that killed 620 people.

The deadliest quake in Iran's modern history happened in June 1990. It destroyed the northern cities of Rudbar, Manjil, and Lushan, along with hundreds of villages, killing an estimated 37,000 people.

Bam in the country's southeastern province of Kerman witnessed a strong quake in December 2003 which killed 31,000 people.



## PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	13:10
■ Evening (Maghreb)	20:38
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	04:23
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:04

181. Allah hath heard the taunt of those who say: "Truly, Allah is indigent and we are rich!" - We shall certainly record their word and (their act) of slaying the prophets in defiance of right, and We shall say: "Taste ye the penalty of the Scorching Fire!"  
182. "This is because of the (unrighteous deeds) which your hands sent on before ye: For Allah never harms those who serve Him."  
Surah 3, The Family Of 'Imran, The House Of 'Imran (181 - 182)

## High Oil Prices Not To Benefit Producers In Long-Run

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN - Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh says rising international oil prices won't benefit producers in the long-run as he warns against impacts of the prices on the oil production economy.**

"You know that higher oil prices will make everyone happy in the short-term but in the long-run it won't be gratifying," said Zanganeh on Sunday following a virtual ministerial meeting of an alliance of international oil producers known as OPEC+.

Zanganeh said that higher oil prices, as pursued by some oil producing nations, will encourage more activity in sectors like shale oil, where production is considered most expensive, while it would give a new momentum to the alternative sources of energy like the renewables.

"If we consider the combination of alternative energies and expensive productions, which become economical with higher prices, the surge would not be a good news for (producers)," the minister was quoted as saying by state TV's news service IRIB News.

Zanganeh's remarks came after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries



and allies finally reached an agreement to ease cuts on the global oil supply by 0.4 million barrels per day each month starting August and ending December.

The agreement came as the OPEC+ raised baseline production for several members, including the United Arab Emirates, to encourage them to sign off on the new supply deal.

Iran has been exempt from supply cut agreements agreed between OPEC and allies in recent years. Zanganeh said, however, that the OPEC+ would need to consider the impacts of Iran's return to the markets once the country is relieved from sanctions targeting its oil sales.

"Iran's return to the market will be a major development which would be influential and whenever this takes place I think OPEC+ will not be able to ignore it," said Zanganeh.

## First Solar Charging Station for Electric Cars Unveiled in Alborz Province



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN-** The first solar charging station for the electric cars was unveiled at the MAPNA Electric and Control Engineering and Manufacturing Company (MECO) on Sunday at the town of Fardis, in Alborz Province, in presence of the CEO of MAPNA Group.

The manager of EV and Infrastructure Development Center at MECO in the unveiling ceremony of this station said that the process of design and manufacture of the solar charging device took place in one year which is used for the charge of the electric cars.

Mr. Adel Dameshqi also said that it was decided this charging stations to be installed in the streets because today most European countries use such a system.

Referring to this point that in this method that energy is provided in clean way, he said that provision of energy through the sun has effective role in reducing pollution.

Dameshqi further said that the increase in the number of power stations for providing energy for the electric cars may lead to air pollution and distancing from power stations can lead to decrease in air pollution.

He added that if the country can use solar and wind energy for energy of electric cars, then it will witness significant decrease in the air pollution.

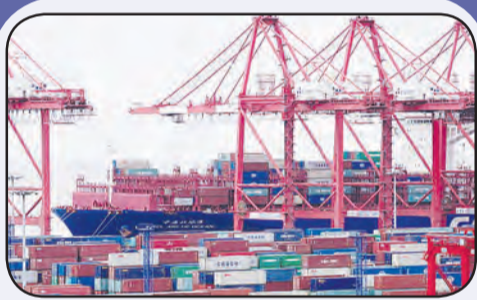
He said the amount of energy of solar charging energy is almost 3 kilowatts which can be increased.

Dameshqi added that it takes almost three hours for any vehicle to be charged by the solar energy and if this period is to be shortened, the solar panels should be used.

He said for design and manufacture of this solar charging station, eight domestic experts cooperated whose cost was around 200m tomans.

Dameshqi further said the company will install this type of solar charging station in all provinces by the yearend and currently production of 200 solar charging devices is underway. He concluded some countries like Pakistan, Armenia and Iraq are struggling with electricity problem and they are negotiating with MAPNA Group for purchasing solar recharge devices.

## Iran Exports to African Trade Partners Up 350% in Q1



IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** Iran's exports to its African trade partners in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-June 20) has increased by 350 percent in terms of value, said the Director-general of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries.

According to Farzad Piltan, the weight of exports, however, went up by 144 percent in the mentioned three months.

Piltan added that in the same period, Ghana with \$ 151 million, Algeria with \$ 58 million, South Africa with \$ 32 million, Tanzania with \$ 25 million, and Nigeria with \$ 18 million were in 1st to the fifth row of Iranian exports among African countries.

Sudan, with less than \$ 17 million, Kenya topped \$ 14.5 million, Ivory Coast with \$ 12 million, Somalia with \$ 4 million, Somalia with around 1 million and \$ 500 thousand were in sixth to 10th of Iran's exports among African countries, Director-general of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)'s Office of Arabian and African Countries said.

He said Iran's biggest export to Ghana was the biggest in this period as its grew by 370 percent.

Piltan added that easing the COVID-19-related restrictions and restoration of ties and trade events between Iranian and African counterparts has been of the major reasons for the rise of Iran's exports to the African states in the first quarter.

Iran's non-oil trade in the first quarter of the current year was 38,379m tons of goods worth over \$20.9b.

## FTZ's Trade Balance Positive for 3 Consecutive Years

**TEHRAN (MNA) -** The secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council says the trade balance of the country's free trade zones (FTZs) and special economic zones has been positive over the past three years.

"With the measures taken for the promotion of exports in the country, the trade balance of the free trade and special economic zones has become positive over the past three years," Hamidreza Momeni said.

Speaking at a meeting of Bushehr free trade zone's strategic council, Momeni said: "However, there are still weaknesses in the first and second generation of the country's free trade and special economic zones, which we will try to minimize by improving the infrastructure in these zones."

The official noted that the country's free trade zones lack a comprehensive development plan which means the managers



of each zone act based on their own preferences.

Exports, transfer of technical knowledge, attracting domestic and foreign investment, and creating sustainable employment are among the expectations from free trade zones, and in order to prepare a comprehensive plan for the development of free zones, these issues should be considered for the next 50 years.

Noting that Bushehr free trade zone will be officially inaugurated by President Hassan Rouhani in near future, he expressed hope that this free trade zone can play a positive role in boosting trade with the country's southern neighbors.

Earlier this month, Momeni had announced that some new free trade zones are planned to be set up in the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 20, 2022).

## Iran Caviar Output Up 12-Fold in Seven Years

**TEHRAN (PressTV) -** Iran has boosted its caviar output by 12 times in seven years to reach over 12 metric tons of harvest in the year to late March 2020, according to the country's fishery chief.

Nabiollah Khunmirzaei said on Saturday that Iran currently exports half of its caviar output for a base price of \$800 per kilogram.

"The harvest can sell for \$1,200 to \$1,300 if it is offered in proper packaging," said Khunmirzaei as he insisted that the sturgeon roe produced in Iran is the best in the world in terms of quality.

The official said Iran Fisheries Organization (Shillat) has plans to further boost caviar output by expanding sturgeon farming to all provinces in the country.

He said a total of 175 aquaculture farms in 21 Iranian provinces are solely focused on caviar production.

Iran has an agreement with littoral states of the Caspian Sea to ban sturgeon fishing in the body of water.

However, rising sturgeon egg harvests from onshore farms over the past years have helped boost exports to markets where there is a high demand for Iranian caviar.

Khunmirzaei said new methods of farming caviar in cages in the sea have been tested in recent years. He said Shillat plans to expand those practices to further boost caviar harvest.

The official said Iran's sturgeon meat production reached 3,500 tons in the year to late March, up nearly six times against the year to March 2013.



## Report Shows Food Prices Jump 70% in Cities

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

**TEHRAN -** The price of basic food items in Iran's urban centers has grown by over 70 percent in one year, according to report published July 14 by the Statistics and Strategic Data Center of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare. The report found that consumers had faced 120 percent increases with chicken and butter, and an 80 percent hike in prices of cooking oil, milk, sugar, imported rice, and eggs.

The average increase of 71 percent of the items in the study – including Iranian and imported rice, chicken, milk, yoghurt, cheese, eggs, butter, cooking oil, bananas, oranges, borlotti beans, green lentils, cube sugar, sugar and imported tea – was above that the report called a "critical level."

The report suggested that an annual increase above 24 percent required immediate action to avoid a sharp increase in the overall inflation rate.

The Center warned in May that inflation would remain at around 45 percent during the summer and slowly goes down to under 40 percent towards the end of fall.

In 2016 inflation dropped to below 10 percent from 31 percent in 2012, following the lifting of international sanctions with Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers, the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action). It remained below 10 percent for a year, but jumped 20 percentage points in 2018 to 30 percent after the United States withdrew from the JCPOA and imposed draconian sanctions.

On top of increases in food costs, rents rose by up to 34 percent in the past year and clothing by 50 percent. Hamshahri newspaper Saturday quoted Vahid Shaghghi-Shahri, economics professor at Kharazmi University, that without reforms "a dark future will await the Iranian economy by the end of this decade."

## 30 Iranian Companies to Participate in Russian MAKS 2021

**TEHRAN (MNA) -** As many as 30 Iranian knowledge-based companies will showcase their scientific and technological achievements at the Russian MAKS Air Show 2021.

30 knowledge-based companies from the Islamic Republic of Iran will showcase their scientific and technological achievements at the MAKS Air Show 2021, which will be held between Tuesday, July 20 and July 25.

Iran has constantly taken part in the Russian air show.

During the Iranian delegation's stay in Moscow, in addition to participation in the air show, it is also scheduled that Iran Innovation and Technology House will open in Moscow.

The signing of a cooperation agreement with the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade, as well as the meeting (B2B) of Iranian knowledge-based companies with their Russian counterparts, are the other announced plans on the agenda of the Iranian delegation during their stay in Moscow.

The business meeting of Iranian knowledge-based companies with Russian counterparts was to be held on Monday evening.

## Bolsonaro Discharged From Hospital

SAO PAULO (Dispatches) - Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro was discharged from hospital on Sunday having spent four days receiving treatment for an intestinal obstruction.

The far right leader was originally taken to a military hospital in the capital Brasilia on Wednesday after suffering persistent hiccups that had lasted around 10 days.

Later that day he was transferred to the private Vila Nova Star hospital in Sao Paulo.

"I had to go on a diet, I did what I had to do. I wanted to leave from day one, but they wouldn't let me. I hope that in about 10 days I will be able to eat a rib eye steak," Bolsonaro told reporters as he left the hospital.



## Nepal's New PM Wins Confidence Vote

KATHMANDU (Reuters) - Nepal's new Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba won a vote of confidence in parliament on Sunday, days after the Supreme Court reinstated the legislature that was dissolved in May.

The 75-year-old, who has held the office four times before, won 165 votes - exceeding the 136 required - with 83 votes against him, parliament speaker Agni Sapkota said.

He faces the immediate task of procuring vaccines and controlling the spread of COVID-19, which the government says has infected 667,109 people and killed 9,550. Public health experts say an under-reporting of cases in the country means the figures could be higher.



## Thai Police Fire Rubber Bullets, Tear Gas at Protesters



BANGKOK (Dispatches) - Thai police deployed rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannon against protesters in Bangkok Sunday as demonstrators defied Covid-19 restrictions to call for Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha's resignation and mark the one-year anniversary of a pro-democracy movement.

The kingdom is currently facing its worst Covid-19 wave, registering daily case records as hospitals buckle under pressure. Exacerbating the toll has been the government's slow procurement of vaccines, which has drawn criticism as Thailand's economy reels from increasingly severe restrictions on businesses.

Defying rules prohibiting gatherings of more than five people, protesters piled mock body bags flecked with red paint near the intersection of the capital's Democracy Monument. "We will die from Covid if we stay home, that is why we have to come out," shouted a protest organizer, who listed three demands.

"Prayut Chan-O-Cha must resign without any condition; the second is a budget cut to the monarchy and army to be used against Covid, and the third is to bring in mRNA vaccine." A giant banner with a picture of Prayut -- the mastermind of a 2014 coup -- was unfurled on the road, with protesters then stomping on his face.

As they marched on the Government House, they were led by a frontline group wearing gas masks and hard hats and were joined by motorbike drivers who hoisted the mock body bags.

But authorities deployed the main cannon early and blocked the main road, forcing protesters to retreat.

Authorities also fired rubber bullets and tear gas, according to AFP reporters on the ground.

It sent protesters scattering, coughing non-stop as they tried to rinse their eyes with saline solution. By late afternoon, the two sides were standing off as clouds of gas rose in the air.

It remains unclear how many were injured.

Exactly one year ago, thousands of protesters amassed at the Democracy Monument calling for Prayut's resignation, the rewriting of the constitution and reforms to the kingdom's long-unassailable monarchy.

Prayut had managed to hold onto power after 2019 elections -- which were held under an army-scripted constitution -- while popular opposition figures were increasingly hit with legal troubles.

That protest marked the beginning of a movement that has widened the discourse on taboo topics, including the role of the royal family -- protected under a draconian defamation law.

But as the impact of Covid-19 rapidly chipped away at Thailand's economy, the government's handling of the pandemic has become one of the movement's main grievances.

## Taliban Leader Favors Political Settlement to Afghan Conflict

KABUL (Dispatches) - The Taliban's supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada on Sunday said he "strenuously favors" a political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan even as the hardline Islamist movement has launched a sweeping offensive across the nation.

The announcement comes as representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents sat down for a new round of talks in Doha over the weekend, stirring hopes that the long stalled peace talks were being resuscitated.

"In spite of the military gains and advances, the Islamic Emirate strenuously favors a political settlement in the country," Akhundzada said in a message released ahead of next week's Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

"Every opportunity for the establishment of an Islamic system, peace and security that presents itself will be made use of by the Islamic Emirate," he added.

For months, the two sides have been meeting on and off in the Qatari capital, but have achieved little if any notable success with the discussions appearing to have lost momentum as the militants made enormous gains on the battlefield.

The Taliban leader said his group remained committed to forging a solution to end the war but slammed "the opposition parties" for "wasting time".

"Our message remains that instead of relying on foreigners, let us resolve our issues among ourselves and rescue our homeland from the prevailing crisis," he added. The insurgents have capitalized on the last stages of the withdrawal of US and other foreign troops from Afghanistan to launch a series of lightning offensives across large swathes of the country.

The group is now believed to control roughly half of the nation's 400 districts, several important border crossings, and have laid siege to a string of vital provincial capitals. The Taliban have long appeared to be united, operating under an effective chain of command, and carrying out complex military campaigns despite perennial rumours of splits among the organisation's leadership.

Questions remain over how firm of a hand the Taliban's leaders have with commanders on the ground and whether they will be able to convince them to abide by a potential agreement if signed.



## Turkey Condemns EU Court Ruling on Headscarf Ban

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey on Sunday slammed a ruling by a top European Union court allowing the banning of headscarves under certain conditions as a "clear violation of religious freedoms", adding the move would exacerbate prejudices against Muslim women in Europe.

The Luxembourg-based EU Court of Justice (CJEU) ruled on Thursday that companies in the bloc can ban employees from wearing a headscarf under certain conditions, if they need to do so to project an image of neutrality to customers.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement the ruling was a sign of rising Islamophobia at a time when it said Muslim women in Europe are being subjected to increasing discrimination for their religious beliefs.

"The CJEU decision, at a time when the Islamophobia, racism and hatred that have taken Europe hostage are rising, disregards religious freedom and creates a basis and legal cover for discrimination," the ministry said.

On Saturday, the Turkish presidency's communication director Fahrettin Altun condemned the move, saying "this wrong decision is an attempt to grant legitimacy to racism."

The issue of the hijab, the traditional headscarf worn around the head and shoulders, has been divisive across Europe for years, underlining sharp differences over integrating Muslims.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's Islamist-rooted AK Party, which came to power in 2002 blending a pro-Western, democratic market approach, has been criticised by Western allies in recent years for increasing authoritarianism and religious intolerance. The United States, Greece, Russia and church leaders expressed concern last year over his government's move to convert Istanbul's Hagia Sophia into a mosque last year.

Ankara has repeatedly accused European nations of not doing enough to prevent discrimination against Muslims, saying it will start publishing an annual report on what it calls examples of Islamophobia around the world.

## Merkel Shaken as Flood Deaths Rise to 188 in Europe

BERCHTESGADEN (Dispatches) - German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the flooding that has devastated parts of Europe as "terrifying" on Sunday after the death toll across the region rose to 188 and a district of Bavaria was battered by the extreme weather.

Merkel promised swift financial aid after visiting one of the areas worst affected by the record rainfall and floods that have killed at least 157 in Germany alone in recent days, in the country's worst natural disaster in almost six decades.

She also said governments would have to get better and faster in their efforts to tackle the impact of climate change only days after Europe outlined a package of steps towards "net zero" emissions by the middle of the century.

"It is terrifying," she told residents of the small town of Adenau in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate. "The German language can barely describe the devastation that's taken place."

As efforts continued to track down missing people, the devastation continued on Sunday when a district of Bavaria, southern Germany, was hit by flash floods that killed at least one person.

Roads were turned into rivers, some vehicles were swept away and swathes of land buried under thick mud in Berchtesgaden Land. Hundreds of rescue workers were searching for survivors in the district, which borders Austria.

"We were not prepared for this," said Berchtesgadener Land district administrator Bernhard Kern, adding that the situation had deteriorated "drastically" late on Saturday, leaving little time for emergency services to act.

About 110 people have been killed in the worst-hit Ahrweiler district south of Cologne. More bodies are expected to be found there as the flood waters recede, police say. The European floods, which began on Wednesday, have mainly hit the German states of Rhineland Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia as well as parts of Belgium. Entire communities have been cut off, without power or communications.

In North Rhine-Westphalia at least 46 people have died. The death toll in Belgium climbed to 31 on Sunday.

The scale of the floods mean they could shake up Germany's general election in September next year.

North Rhine-Westphalia state premier Armin Laschet, the CDU party's candidate to replace Merkel, apologised for laughing in the background while German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke to media after visiting the devastated town of Erftstadt.

The German government will be readying more than 300 million euros (\$354 million) in immediate relief and billions of euros to fix collapsed houses, streets and bridges, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz told weekly newspaper Bild am Sonntag.



## Cuban Gov't Holds Mass Rally in Havana After Protests

HAVANA (Dispatches) - Raul Castro was among thousands who attended a government-organized rally in Havana to denounce the U.S. trade embargo and reaffirm their support for Cuba's revolution, a week after unprecedented protests rocked the communist-run country.

Government supporters gathered on the city's seafront boulevard before dawn to wave Cuban flags and photos of late revolutionary leader Fidel Castro and his brother Raul. The latter retired as Communist Party leader in April but promised to continue fighting for the revolution as a "foot soldier".

The rally was a reaction to demonstrations that erupted nationwide last Sunday amid widespread shortages of basic goods, demands for political rights and the island nation's worst coronavirus outbreak since the start of the pandemic.

The government admitted some shortcomings this week but mostly blamed the protests on U.S.-financed "counter-revolutionaries" exploiting economic hardship caused by U.S. sanctions.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel, who also heads the Communist Party, told the crowd that Cuba's "enemy has once again thrown itself into destroying citizen's sacred unity and tranquility." He said it was no small matter to call a rally as the country saw increasing numbers of COVID cases: "We convened you to denounce once more the blockade, the aggression and terror."

People carry a poster with photographs of Cuba's late President Fidel Castro, Cuba's President and First Secretary of the Communist Party Miguel Diaz-Canel and Cuba's former President and First Secretary of the Communist Party Raul Castro during a rally in Havana, Cuba, July 17, 2021. REUTERS/Alexandre Meneghini

Authorities said similar rallies were held nationwide. "This revolution will continue for a long time," said Margaritza Artega, a state social worker who attended the rally in Havana.

Workers had been convened by neighborhood block committees, known as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, she said, and a state bus had picked her up at 4 a.m.

Shortly before the rally in Havana officially began, authorities removed a man shouting anti-government slogans including "freedom" from the crowd.



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## Oil Market Sees Improved Demand

CAIRO (Reuters) - Iraqi Oil Minister Ihsan Abdul Jabbar said on Sunday that the oil market has seen an improvement in demand and a decline in surplus and stockpiles.

His statement follows an agreement by OPEC+ ministers on Sunday to boost oil supplies from August. "The meeting emphasized strengthening collective cooperation, praising the countries' compliance with the agreement, and the positive development in increasing demand for crude, as well as the decline in stocks and oil surplus, which is a positive and influential indicator," Abdul Jabbar said.



## China's Economic Outlook Stabilizes

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The Chinese state's commitment to reining in credit growth, deflating asset bubbles, and cutting off state support for unproductive firms while also encouraging the development of Chinese financial markets and opening the capital account support the sustainability of China's growth model.

Reduced financial-stability risk is partially a function of a noticeably reduced concentration of the state on meeting inflated 'hard' growth objectives. The latest Five-Year Plan target of doubling the size of the economy between 2020 and 2035 implies a more manageable average annual growth of 4.5% over 2022-35 assuming growth in GDP of 8.6% (our updated forecast) this year.

Such structural reforms ease still significant economy-wide debt risks and increase likelihood of a 'soft' rather than 'hard' landing after the significant private- and public-sector debt accumulated since the global financial crisis. As economic growth recovered slightly to 1.3% Q/Q in the second quarter, we expect Chinese authorities to balance management of financial stability risk with a parallel need to support recovery over the second half of this year.

Even as growth cooled since the initial rebound from Q1 2020 troughs, trend growth of China's large and diversified economy remains very high compared with that of most economies around the world even if the former moderates towards a 5% rate over the medium run.

The Agency I represent affirmed China's long-term local- and foreign-currency issuer and senior unsecured debt ratings at A+ on 9 July and revised the Outlooks to Stable from Negative. We also affirmed China's short-term issuer ratings at S-1+ in local- and foreign-currency and revised the Outlooks to Stable from Negative.

Extensive supervisory and regulatory changes have intensified since the Covid-19 economic crisis with the People's Bank of China laying out defined priorities in the period to 2025 that include improvement of the macro-prudential assessment framework and strengthening supervision of systemically important institutions, businesses and infrastructure.

Further anchoring China's improved outlook is gradual progress in establishing the renminbi as a global reserve currency, which in turn reinforces the country's economic resilience on top of existing external-sector buffers relating to high foreign-exchange reserves and low external debt.

Structural public-sector fiscal deficits as well as an increasing public-sector debt stock over the long run remain prevailing credit challenges, exacerbated by the fiscal and monetary easing adopted to cushion China's economy against repeated macroeconomic shocks.

China's general government deficit increased to 11.4% of GDP in 2020 despite relatively moderate pandemic-related fiscal stimulus, from 6.3% in 2019 and only 0.9% of GDP in 2014. The general government deficit will remain a sizeable 9.5% of GDP this year before narrowing to 8.6% next year.

High and rising levels of total non-financial sector debt since 2008 remain a core credit challenge, although authorities have taken important steps to easing this trajectory of rising debt.

## UK to Ban New Petrol, Diesel Heavy Goods Vehicle Sales From 2040

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel heavy goods vehicles from 2040 as part of a broader package of green initiatives aimed at achieving net-zero emissions from all forms of transport ten years later.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government is seeking to elevate Britain's environmental credentials as he prepares to hold the United Nations' Climate Change Conference, known as COP26, in Scotland later this year.

The government said that it would ban the sale of smaller diesel trucks from 2035, and larger ones weighing more than 26 tons from 2040, or earlier if feasible.

It also set out plans to create a net-zero rail network by 2050 and ensure net-zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040.



## OPEC+ Agrees Oil Supply Boost

MOSCOW (Reuters) - OPEC+ ministers agreed on Sunday to boost oil supply from August to cool prices which have climbed to 2-1/2 year highs as the global economy recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

The group, which includes OPEC countries and allies like Russia, crucially agreed new production allocations from May 2022 after Saudi Arabia and others agreed to a request from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that had threatened the plan.

"We are happy with the deal," UAE's Energy Minister Suhail bin Mohammed al-Mazroui told a news conference. Saudi energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, refused to answer questions on how the compromise was reached. OPEC+ last year cut production by a record 10 million barrels per day (bpd) amid a pandemic-induced slump in demand and collapsing prices. It has gradually reinstated some supply to leave it with a reduction of about 5.8 million bpd.

From August until December 2021 the group will increase supply by a further 2 million bpd or 0.4 million bpd a month, OPEC said in a statement.

The group had agreed to extend their overall pact until the end of 2022 from an earlier planned date of April 2022, to leave more room for maneuver in case global recovery stalls due to new virus variants.

Whilst both Riyadh and the UAE had been supportive of an immediate output boost, the UAE had objected to the Saudi idea to extend the pact to December 2022 without getting a higher production quota.

To overcome the disagreement, OPEC+ agreed new output quotas for several members from May 2022, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Kuwait and Iraq.

The overall adjustment will add 1.63 million bpd to supply from May next year, according to Reuters calculations.

The UAE will see its baseline production, from which cuts are being calculated, increase to 3.5 million bpd from May 2022 from today's 3.168 million. Saudi and Russia will see their baselines rise to 11.5 million bpd each from the current 11 million. Iraq and Kuwait will see their baselines rise by 150,000 bpd each.

## Coal-Based Bitcoin Mining Jumps in Kazakhstan

NUR-SULTAN (Dispatches) - Bitcoin mining continues to rely predominantly on electricity generated from fossil fuels despite the heightened attention to the climate toll of crypto mining.

Kazakhstan, where fossil fuels make up nearly all the energy mix, has seen its global share of Bitcoin mining surge in recent months, just ahead of a Chinese crackdown on the mining of the world's most popular cryptocurrency.

The Chinese authorities' crackdown on crypto mining saw more than 90 percent of China's Bitcoin mining capacity shut down as of last month.

The Chinese ban didn't mean that crypto mining has ever stopped. Miners just had to find new markets to do it. One of those places is Kazakhstan, a Central Asian country rich in oil, gas, and coal resources, New Scientist's technology reporter Matthew Sparkes notes.

Kazakhstan noted the rise in crypto mining activity—with power generated from fossil fuels, mostly coal—and decided at the end of June to levy a surcharge of electricity for crypto miners. The additional fee is expected to come into force at the beginning of 2022, blockchain and Bitcoin magazine ForkLog reported.

Cryptocurrency mining has recently attracted a lot of attention because of the large amount of energy it sucks. Elon Musk, who had said earlier this year that people could buy Teslas with Bitcoin, backtracked on this promise a few weeks later, saying that crypto mining is still largely powered by fossil fuel-derived energy. Most recently, Musk said last month that Tesla may start accepting cryptocurrency again if crypto mining becomes green.

Kazakhstan, where renewables accounted for just 1.4 percent of the energy mix in 2018, per International Energy Agency's (IEA) data, saw its global Bitcoin mining share jump almost six-fold from 1.4 percent in September 2019 to 8.2 percent in April 2021, catapulting it to third place in global mining power share, new research from the Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance (CCAF) showed on Thursday. The report found that China's share was declining sharply even before the government crackdown in June. China's share of total Bitcoin mining power fell from 75.5 percent in September 2019 to 46 percent in April 2021, CCAF said.

## 4th Wave of Pandemic Casts Cloud Over South Korea Economic Recovery

SEOUL (Dispatches) - The fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to put the brakes on South Korea's economic recovery, darkening the nation's growth outlook for the third quarter, according to economists Sunday.

"Daily new infections rose sharply during the summer vacation season, when private consumption is expected to grow. Possibilities remain that the local economy could contract in the third quarter, affected by the virus resurgence and the toughest Level 4 social distancing," said Joo Won, chief economist at the Hyundai Research Institute.

A surge in COVID-19 cases and subsequent tighter social distancing measures have dealt a harsh blow to businesses that provide face-to-face services. The government placed the Greater Seoul area under Level 4 social distancing rules, the highest in the system, for two weeks starting last Monday as the nation's daily new case count surpassed the 1,000 mark.

"Regardless of sound export performance, a decline in the nation's economic growth rate is inevitable if real economic activity slows down. GDP growth this year is projected to be around 4 percent, but I think it will remain in the 3 percent range or reach just slightly below 4 percent," said Sung Tae-yoon, a professor of economics at Yonsei University.

Asia's fourth-largest economy has been on a modest recovery track amid robust exports, which jumped nearly 40 percent on-year in June, continuing an upward trend for eight consecutive months on the back of a recovery in global business activities, which led to stronger demand for chips and automobiles.

Buoyed by signs of recovery, the Ministry of Economy and Finance forecast that the country's economy would expand 4.2 percent this year, up from its December estimate of 3.2 percent.

Despite the mounting market skepticism, the government reiterated its positive outlook for the local economy, expressing confidence in its stringent social distancing system and stimulus measures.

"By bringing the fourth wave of the outbreak under control through strong distancing measures, the government could achieve the 4.2 percent policy target," Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki said.

Also, even if the nation's economic growth rate for the third quarter is near zero, this year's figure could reach 4.2 percent as expected driven by the envisioned supplementary budget and an additional round of relief cash, which are expected to drive up the growth rate for the fourth quarter into the 1 percent range, according to the ministry.

## Switzerland Accounts for Half of India's Gold Imports in FY21



NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Swiss gold accounted for almost half of India's imports of the yellow metal, at \$16.3 billion, in 2020-21. India imported gold worth \$34.6 billion last fiscal against \$28.2 billion in the previous year despite the raging Covid-19 pandemic.

Among India's top 10 import partners, inbound shipments increased from Switzerland only in the last fiscal, up 7.8% to \$18.2 billion, led by gold. Moreover, the European country replaced Saudi Arabia to become the fourth-largest import partner of India while the West Asian country fell a rank.

Total imports from China fell 0.07% to \$65.21 billion but the country remained India's top source of shipments, followed by the US and the UAE. Germany entered the top 10 list of India's import sources in the last fiscal, replacing Indonesia.

India is the world's second largest consumer of gold after China.

"Switzerland is the largest gold refining centre and transit hub in the world, and imports have been increasing from there for quite some time for this reason," said an official, who did not wish to be identified. Last year, India imported gold worth \$4.19 billion from the UAE, followed by South Africa at \$2.5 billion. Unwrought forms of gold including bars, gold plated with platinum or in semi-manufactured forms and powder forms were the key items that India imported.

"Best gold refineries of the world are there in Switzerland with the finest quality gold and consumers prefer buying Swiss gold than that from other countries," said an official of the Gems & Jewelry Export Promotion Council, requesting not to be identified.

The government reduced the import duty on the yellow metal to 10% from 12.5%, including 7.5% customs duty and a 2.5% agriculture infrastructure.

In the first quarter of this financial year, India's gold imports rose a whopping 1046.7% to \$7.8 billion, data released by the commerce and industry ministry showed. Gold is the second largest product in India's import basket, with about 8.8% share.

## “The Recess” Wins SFFFF Best Short Film Award

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iranian short film “The Recess” won the Best Dramatic Short Film Award in the 15th San Francisco Frozen Film Festival (SFFFF).

The award was announced on Monday in an online event of SFFFF. The festival was held on July 14-18 in the form of the video conference.

SFFFF is a non-profit entity established in 2006 to make an environment for independent filmmakers who address moral issues among the youth.

“The Recess”, directed by Iranian director Navid Nikkhah Azad, won the Best Dramatic Short Film Award at this festival.



## Spain Pushes Pension Reform, Wants People to Work Longer

MADRID (Dispatches) - Spain will pay workers to postpone retirement as part of a pension reform strategy that analysts warn does not go far enough to cut a huge deficit in the system.

With nearly 30 billion euros (\$36 billion) of annual losses in 2020 and rising, Spain's social security budget is one of the biggest contributors to the country's ballooning public deficit.

The European Commission has long demanded that Spain reform its pension system and has made it a condition for accessing European Union economic recovery funds.

Under a planned reform unveiled earlier this month that aims to get more people to work longer, Spain will give cheques worth up to 12,000 euros (\$14,000) per year to retirement-age workers who postpone their retirement.

Retiring early on the other hand would lead to a reduction in monthly payments.

But the reform, which must still be approved by Spain's fragmented parliament, will also restore the indexation of pensions to inflation.

“Pensioners will no longer have to worry about the evolution of their pension,” socialist Budget Minister Maria Jesus Montero told a news conference last week after the cabinet approved the reform.

A conservative government eliminated indexation in 2013, although in 2018 it hiked pensions in line with inflation following protests by pensioners against their loss of purchasing power.

The 2013 reform also gradually increased the legal retirement age to reach 67 in 2027 from around 65 years currently.

Rafael Pampillon, head of the economics department at Madrid's IE Business School, said that raising pensions in line with inflation every year was “outrageous.”

“The system is not sustainable. Pensions should be frozen,” he told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

Spanish has one of the world's longest life expectancies – around 83 years according to the World Health Organization – and Europe's lowest fertility rate after Malta's.

As a result, the number of youths under the age of 25 who enter the labor market each year is 30% less than those over 40, said Pampillon.

Javier Diaz Gimenez, an economics professor at the IESE Business School, said that while other southern European nations like Italy and Greece face the same problem, “in Spain reform has been put off, the consensus has been to deny the problem.”



“People live longer, therefore they cost more, therefore their pensions should be lowered. That is hard because it means not keeping a promise to people who are about to retire” and who expect a certain sum after paying into the system for years, he added.

The government has said that details of the planned pension reform will be ironed out in the autumn.

It will have to adjust payments based on available funds and extended life expectancy.

Social Security Minister Jose Luis Escrivá recently sparked an uproar by suggesting that baby boomers – those born in the post-World War II baby boom between 1946 and 1964 – would eventually have to accept lower pensions, and quickly backtracked.

With a general election expected in two years, no party wants to risk alienating the large block of older voters by proposing pension cuts, said Pampillon of the IE Business School.

“Everything is up in the air,” he added.

Jordi Fabregat of the Esade business school said part of the problem is that Spain offers generous public pensions, with monthly payments amounting to 80% of a worker's final salary compared with an average of 55% for all of Europe.

“There is not the habit in Spain of saving for retirement,” he added.

The only chance for a deep, sustainable reform of the pension system is if “there is pressure from the European Union,” said Fabregat.

## Resistance Key to...

FROM PAGE 1

Usurped Palestine is calling for our help. Innocent, bloodied Yemen torments every heart. The plight of Afghanistan concerns everyone. The bitter events in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and some other countries – where the interfering, malevolent hand of the US and its cohorts is completely visible – is stimulating the zeal and determination of all the young people.

On the other hand, the emergence of the Resistance Forces throughout this sensitive region, the awakening of nations, and the motivation of the young, enthusiastic generation, is making hearts overflow with hope. Palestine is wielding the sword of Quds in all its territories. Quds, Gaza, the West Bank, the 1948 Lands and the Palestinian camps all rose up and bravely defeated the aggressor over the course of just 12 days.

Yemen, which has been besieged and alone, has endured seven years of war, crimes, and the murder of innocent people by the evil, stone-hearted enemy. It has not surrendered despite a lack of food, medicines and other basic needs. On the contrary, Yemen has perplexed the enemy with its power and ingenuity.

In Iraq, the Resistance Forces are pushing back the occupying US and its puppet DAESH. With their loud cries, they are eloquently expressing their firm decision to confront every act of interference and malice on the part of the U.S. and its cohorts.

The American propaganda effort to distort the will, demands and actions of the brave youth and forces of the Resistance in Syria, Lebanon and other countries and to ascribe them to Iran or any other reference point, is an insult to those valiant, vigilant youth. And this stems from America's deep ignorance about regional nations.

This ignorance led America to be humiliated in Afghanistan. After that raucous invasion 20 years ago and after having used weapons and bombs against defenseless people and civilians, it became stuck in a quagmire and eventually withdrew its forces from that country. Of course, the vigilant Afghan nation should remain watchful concerning America's tools for gathering intelligence and its soft-war weapons, and it must vigilantly fight them.

Regional nations have shown that they are awake and vigilant and that their path is different from the path of those governments that are even prepared to go as far as to give in to US demands over a vital matter – the Palestinian cause – in order to keep it satisfied. These are governments that overtly and covertly create ties of friendship with the usurping Zionist regime. In other words, they deny the right of the Palestinian nation to their historic land. This is an act of stealing Palestinian assets. They did not find it sufficient to ransack the natural resources of their own countries, and they are now ransacking the resources of the Palestinian nation.

### Brothers and sisters,

Our region and the swift, diverse events taking place in it are an exhibition showing us lessons and examples. On the one hand, we can learn the lesson of gaining power using resistance against the transgressing aggressors. On the other hand, we can learn the lesson of humiliation that results from submitting to them and showing weakness.

The true, divine promise is assistance for the fighters in the way of God, “If you aid the cause of Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly.” [Holy Qur'an, 47:7]

The primary result of this struggle in the way of God will be to prevent America and other international aggressors from interfering in the affairs of Islamic countries, God willing.

I ask God, the Exalted, to assist the Muslim nations, I send greetings to the Imam of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for his sake), and I ask God to elevate the status of the great Imam Khomeini and our illustrious martyrs.

Greetings to God's righteous servants.

*Seyed Ali Khamenei*

## Iran Reserves Right...

FROM PAGE 1

Fakhrizadeh, the head of the Iranian Defense Ministry's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research, was targeted in a multi-pronged terrorist attack by a number of assailants in Absard city of Tehran Province's Damavand County in November 2020.

Iranian government officials and military commanders have hinted that the Israeli regime could have been behind the terror attack.

The New York Times reported that Israel was behind the assassination, citing three US officials.

The Noumeaux report also pointed to acts of sabotage against nuclear facilities of Iran, where the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) did not show the will to protect the nuclear infrastructure of one of its member states.

“According to this, it is clear that countries, such as Iran, that have been targeted by terrorist acts, have the possibility and permission to retaliate based on the right of legitimate defense and to target the source of these attacks in time, with their own equipment, and, of course, considering that the consequences are for the one who started this dirty game.” The Iranian administration said earlier this month that the abortive act of sabotage that targeted a building belonging to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) last month was carried out by the Israeli regime with the aim of bringing to a halt the ongoing talks in Vienna on a possible revival of the 2015 nuclear deal.

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## Tehran Slams Israeli...

FROM PAGE 1

Khatibzadeh also commented on the situation in Afghanistan, saying Iran regards Afghanistan's security as its own and will not tolerate unrest in the neighboring country.

“We carefully control and monitor the situation at the borders. We assess the situation and will continue to do so,” he said. Khatibzadeh made it clear that the only way to reach peace in Afghanistan is for the warring sides to engage with each other through dialogue.

“We are actively in contact with Afghan groups. We are ready to continue this in-person process. We welcome and contribute to any initiative in this path,” the spokesman added. The Taliban militant group says it has seized 85 percent of the Afghan territory, a declaration government officials have dismissed as part of a propaganda campaign.

The spokesman also said that the 7th round of Vienna talks will be held under the new administration of Iran.

Answering a question about Syed Abbas Araqchi's remarks that the next round of the JCPOA talks in Vienna, he said, “Negotiations proceeded seriously in six rounds in Vienna. The talks were delayed due to the non-implementation of it by the United States, but it is natural based on democracy we should wait for the

new administration to take office and move forward.”

“This issue will continue in the normal way. It is important that the interests of the people and the decisions of the Establishment be implemented. The moment when the United States returns to its obligations under Resolution 2231 and the JCPOA and we verify them, Iran will resume its commitments,” he added. “We have to wait for the new administration to take office.”

The foreign ministry spokesman also answered a question about the issue of the prisoner exchange between Iran and the United States, saying, “The comment we heard from the United States is astonishing. In addition to the JCPOA talks in Vienna, we had parallel but separate talks with the United States indirectly and with the UK on this humanitarian issue. Releasing Iranians who are unjustly and cruelly imprisoned in the United States, some European countries and other countries under false pretenses is Iran's priority. What the United States is doing is tying a human issue to political issues.”

“All sides went to make preparations, and the part related to US commitments was not done until yesterday. When Iran told the other parties that the seventh round would be held under the new administration, the United States tried to tie this humanitarian issue to the JCPOA talks, and this approach is wrong and makes all paths difficult,” Khatibzadeh noted.

“If the United States fulfills its obligations today, the release of 10 prisoners can be done with the United States and Britain,” he added. Regarding the holding of a meeting between Iran and Egypt, the spokesperson said, “There have always been some contacts between Iran and Egypt and it has never been disconnected.”

“We believe that the normalization of relations between the great Islamic countries is in the interest of the Islamic world and the region, and we have always welcomed this normalization of relations and its expansion,” he added.

## Q2 Global Consumer Confidence Reaches Highest Level Since 2005

LONDON (Dispatches) - Global consumer confidence in Q2 rose slightly, to 109 from 108 in Q1, to reach another record high as economic activity improves, mobility restrictions ease, vaccines are distributed, and COVID cases decline in many regions, according to the Conference Board's Global Consumer Confidence Survey.

But the optimism isn't universal, with low vaccine supply and the spread of new variants weighing on some regions. Confidence increased in 65% of markets surveyed, with the strongest gains in regions with relatively high vaccination rates such as North America and Europe.

In the Asia-Pacific, most notably India, confidence fell sharply as COVID-19 reemerged.

Spending intentions contributed to the global record high sentiment as more respondents said now is a “good” or “excellent” time to buy needed or wanted goods/services. Meanwhile, perceptions of job prospects and personal finances held steady, according to the survey.

Health remain the largest concern for global consumers, rising to 23% in Q2 from 22% in Q1.

The economy (16%) and job security (12%) remain high-priority issues, but they're down from Q1 and down sharply from a year ago. Consumer sentiment across Latin America fell to 93 in Q2, with only Peru posting a positive gain, as political and economic uncertainty prevails in countries like Columbia and Argentina.

Despite increasing inflation, a small percentage of consumers cited inflation as a problem over the next six months in areas like food prices (5%), utility bills (2%), or fuel costs (1%); 8% of respondents said that some form of price increases was their greatest worry, which is unchanged from Q1 and below the pre-pandemic share of 11%. Even with the overall improvement in confidence, 60% of global consumers still believe their economy was in recession in Q2, down from the peak of 86% from last year.

In a more recent data point, U.S. consumers may be feeling less confident, as the University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index preliminary July reading fell to 80.8 from 85.5 in June and missed the 87.0 consensus.

## Munya Dismisses...

FROM PAGE 1

“The tea is at the moment en route to Iran. We shall be going there either on July 28 or 30 to receive it,” said the governor.

The Agriculture ministry, through tea reforms, banned the direct sales of tea international market and ordered that it should be sold through the auction in Mombasa. Former U.S. President Donald Trump in 2018 withdrew the country from the Iran deal and imposed new sanctions on Teheran, coming just three years after the restrictions had been lifted following an agreement between Teheran and five other Western countries on the nuclear deal.

The governor insists that Kericho tea's direct sales are still ongoing and will continue as the region seeks better prices for their farmers. Kenya has been targeting Iran as one of the major buyers and has been promoting sales in Teheran.

According to the agriculture regulator, Iran has a larger population of more than 80 million people with a per capita consumption of 1.4 kilograms against Kenya's half a kilo, creating a huge potential market for the country's produce. Iran imports more than 100 million kilograms of tea, with Kenya supplying 20 million kilos annually.

In 2017, Kenya sent a delegation to Iran to promote the country's beverage by seeking more buyers of the commodity.

## Iran Sets Record for...

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Asghar Abdoli, a barakat vaccine technology and faculty member of Pasteur Institute of Iran, said that the effectiveness of barakat vaccine on the coronavirus variant was evaluated in the neutralization test, and it was found that the serum of people who received the blessing vaccine in phases 1 and 2 was effectively antibody against Delta corona.

So far, about 205,000 people in Iran have injected the Kovairan Barakat vaccine.

## Morikawa Wins British Open

LONDON (Dispatches) - American debutant Collin Morikawa produced an ice-cool final round to win the British Open by two strokes on a blazing hot afternoon at Royal St George's on Sunday. The 24-year-old began the day a stroke behind Louis Oosthuizen but played picture-perfect golf in a four-under round of 66 to overhaul the South African and resist resurgent fellow American Jordan Spieth. Morikawa barely missed a fairway all day as he made four birdies and showed incredible composure late on as Spieth applied pressure down the stretch.

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## Injured Berrettini Latest to Join Tokyo Exodus

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Wimbledon finalist Matteo Berrettini of Italy has pulled out of the Tokyo Olympics due to a thigh injury, the 25-year-old said on Sunday. The world number eight had his left thigh bandaged during his defeat by top-ranked Novak Djokovic of Serbia in the final of the grasscourt Grand Slam earlier this month. "I am extremely disappointed to announce my withdrawal from the Tokyo Olympic Games," the 25-year-old said on Instagram.

8 IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

TUESDAY JULY 20, 2021

## Hamilton Wins British GP, Accused of Dirty Driving

LONDON (Dispatches) - Joyous and revelling in his success after a gladiatorial victory in the British Grand Prix, Lewis Hamilton ran to his adoring crowd clutching the union flag, arms spread wide as if he would bellow: "Are you not entertained?" They were indeed, on their feet and thunderous in their acclamation having witnessed a race for the ages.

Silverstone boasted drama, incident, controversy and a racing comeback worthy of a world champion who has reignited his title fight after giving definitive notice he will not yield an inch further this season.

A capacity crowd of 140,000, the largest sporting event to be held in the UK since the pandemic began, who had sat sweltering in almost 30-degree heat with expectation and tension ratcheting up until the off, were treated to an almighty tussle that went white hot on track.

Hamilton clashed with his title rival Max Verstappen on lap one with the Dutchman sent spinning into the barriers at 180mph with an impact of 51G. He appeared unhurt but he was battered and bruised and he was flown to hospital for precautionary checks. Hamilton was given a 10-second penalty for causing a collision and any chance of a win looked to have gone.

Yet as he had done so many times, the world champion flew, chasing down Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who was second, to take the lead three laps from the flag. It was a mighty comeback and one he desperately needed to keep his foot in the championship. From being 33 points behind Verstappen, he now trails by just eight points.

Hamilton was more than aware of the scale of his achievement. He celebrated with abandon, clutching a union flag on his in-lap and whooping with joy over the radio as his team congratulated him, with some sense of disbelief that their man had done it again. He is the most successful driver at Silverstone, with eight victories but what a way to deliver this most vital of wins.

The battle between Hamilton and Verstappen had been fiercely close for the opening four races, and there was a sense that sooner or later the two drivers would vie for the same piece of tarmac and only one would emerge. For eight corners on the opening lap we were treated to a mighty scrap as they went side by side through the sweeping turns of the old airfield.



Then at turn nine, the fearsomely quick Copse corner, neither would give ground. Hamilton had feinted to go up the outside then dived back inside and his left front wheel clipped Verstappen's right rear. It appeared to be a racing incident, with neither driver willing to yield. Hamilton has gone wheel to wheel with his rival this season but at Imola he went wide rather than risk a clash. This time he believed he had the place and with a deficit in the title race would not give way. "That was my line, he turned in on me," he said.

The Red Bull team principal, Christian Horner, described it as "desperate" and "dirty driving" and was unequivocal in blaming Hamilton in a message to the FIA race director, Michael Masi. A war of words conducted in the form of messages to Masi soon broke out. The Mercedes team manager, Ron Meadows, told Masi: "Lewis was significantly alongside at turn nine." The Mercedes team principal, Toto Wolff, emailed Masi a diagram of his take on the incident. Both team principals marched urgently to the stewards to make their cases.

The stewards gave Hamilton a 10-second time penalty for causing a collision. The crowd were unsurprisingly vocal in expressing their displeasure as boos echoed round the circuit. Horner was fuming at the decision, describing the punishment as "light", the incident a "professional foul" and scathing in his condemnation of Hamilton for putting another driver's life at risk afterwards.

## Ruud Beats Coria for Bastad Crown

BASTAD (Dispatches) - Top seed Casper Ruud ended his dominant week in Bastad by overcoming Federico Coria 6-3, 6-3 in the Nordea Open final on Sunday to capture his third ATP Tour title.

Ruud hugged the baseline throughout the match, dictating play on his forehand as he secured victory in one hour and 28 minutes. It is the second title he has claimed this year, having captured the Gonet Geneva Open title in May. He is now 3-2 in ATP Tour finals, having also won the Buenos Aires trophy on clay (d. P. Sousa) last year.

"It was an incredible week, maybe the best week of my life," Ruud said. "It is an incredible feeling playing here in Bastad with the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish support. There is nothing like that home crowd feeling."

"To win here means a lot. You get a little extra nervous as the No. 1 seed. Me and my father [former World No. 39 Christian Ruud] have been joking about when I am going to beat him at this and this, and now I think I have beaten him in everything! The Ruud family can finally bring the trophy home to Norway. It is a special feeling having him here with me."

## Refugee Team Gets Green Light for Tokyo Games

TOKYO (Dispatches) - The Olympic refugee team will start arriving in Tokyo later on Sunday, the International Olympic Committee said, ending speculation about their participation after one team official had tested positive for COVID-19 in a training camp in Qatar.

The 26 of the total 29 refugee athletes that form the team had been in a training camp in Qatar and had to delay their departure for Tokyo earlier this week following the positive case.

"26 athletes, 16 coaches and 10 officials will be travelling to Japan in the next three days," the IOC said.

"First group is due to arrive at Narita airport tonight after their departure for the Tokyo 2020 Games was delayed."

The team, which will compete under the Olympic flag and includes people from countries including Syria, South Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Iran, is almost three times as big as the inaugural team at the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympics.

The athletes, who will march into the stadium during the opening ceremony in second place behind ancient Games founders Greece and will compete in 12 sports, were selected from a pool of 56.

The IOC unveiled its first refugee team at the Rio Games to raise awareness of the issue as hundreds of thousands of people were pouring into Europe from the Middle East and elsewhere escaping conflict and poverty.

## Milan Sign Defender Ballo-Toure From Monaco

MILAN (Dispatches) - AC Milan have signed Senegal left back Fode Ballo-Toure from Ligue 1 side AS Monaco on a four-year contract, both clubs announced on Sunday.

Ballo-Toure started his career at Paris St Germain before moving to Lille in 2017, where he made his Ligue 1 debut and played 47 times in 18 months. The 24-year-old moved to Monaco in January 2019 and featured 74 times for the club.

He made eight appearances for France's Under-21 side before switching allegiance to Senegal, making his senior debut in March and collecting four caps to date.

## Busta Earns First ATP 500 Trophy in Hamburg



AnyTech365 Andalusia Open in Marbella (d. Munar) on home soil in April, did not drop a set in Hamburg. He produced a dominant display in the championship match as he won 81 per cent (21/26) of his first-service points and broke Krajinovic three times.

Carreno Busta has now recorded 17 clay-court wins this season, having also enjoyed

runs to the semi-finals at the Barcelona Open Banc Sabadell (l. to Nadal) and the Mallorca Championships (l. to Medvedev). This is the first time he has won two clay-court titles in a season. He has bounced back strongly this week after losing to Sam Querrey in the first round at Wimbledon last month.

Carreno Busta made a strong start, as he stepped inside the baseline to move the Serbian from side to side as he dictated play in the first set as the Spaniard broke twice and hit 17 winners with his powerful groundstrokes. He moved ahead when Krajinovic hit a forehand long.

The match followed a similar pattern in the second set, as Krajinovic was pegged behind the baseline. The sixth seed struggled to use the drop shot as effectively as he had in the previous rounds as Carreno Busta broke again. He held serve to seal his victory in 83 minutes.

"Maybe at the end of the match I was very nervous," Carreno Busta said. "But I served good, so [that] was very important to finish the match."

## Milwaukee Edge Phoenix to Grab 3-2 Finals Lead

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - The surging Milwaukee Bucks took control of the NBA Finals with a 123-119 victory over the host Phoenix Suns on Saturday to move a win away from ending one lengthy championship drought and extending another.

After dropping the first two games of the series the Bucks have roared back to life and after hanging on in a wild Game Five finish, now lead the best-of-seven NBA Finals 3-2. Milwaukee are now one win away from clinching their first NBA championship in 50 years, while Phoenix remain two wins away from their first title in the team's 53-year existence.

The Suns were trailing by a point with 20 seconds left when Milwaukee guard Jrue Holiday ripped the ball from Devin Booker's hands and sent an alley-oop pass to Giannis Antetokounmpo for a dunk that sealed the Bucks' win. "One more to go. One more to go," Antetokounmpo said during a televised on-court interview. "We've got to keep playing good basketball."

Antetokounmpo, whose brother and team mate Thanasis was ruled out of the game due to the NBA's health and safety protocols, had a team-high 32 points but he missed a number of late free throws that left the door open for Phoenix. No details were given on Thanasis's circumstances.

Booker scored a game-high 40 points for a Suns team that led by 16 points after the first quarter before the Bucks clawed their way back and withstood a late Phoenix charge.

"We came out and did what we intended to do, get off to a great start and we let it go," said Booker. "They stayed resilient and they kept playing through. So, tough loss for us."

Phoenix initially looked like a completely different team than the one that just lost two road games, making a fast start in front of a raucous crowd that included four-times NBA champion LeBron James 37-21 after the first quarter.



## Pogacar Claims Vintage Tour De France Title

PARIS (Reuters) - Tadej Pogacar became the youngest rider to win back-to-back Tour de France titles on Sunday after some vintage racing drew comparisons with cycling's greatest.

The 22-year-old Slovenian, who won the Tour on his debut last year, hammered his rivals in the Alps with a long-range attack on stage eight, reminiscent of the event in the 1980s, and stayed in control for the rest of the race.

He beat Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard by a massive five minutes 20 seconds as Ecuador's Richard Carapaz took third place, 7:03 off the pace as his Ineos Grenadiers team failed to spark once again after last year's failure.

Pogacar finished Sunday's 21st and final stage safe in the bunch as Belgian Wout van Aert prevailed in the sprint to beat compatriot Jasper Philipsen and Briton Mark Cavendish who were second and third, respectively.

Pogacar watched from the inside of the bunch, raising his arms as he crossed the line. "I see him as the new Cannibal," said five-time Tour champion Eddy Merckx, who earned that nickname due to his insatiable appetite for victory and won his first Tour in 1969 at the age of 23.

"He is extremely strong. I see him winning several editions of the Tour in the years to come. If nothing happens to him, he can certainly win the Tour de France more than five times."

While Pogacar says he doesn't like comparisons, the UAE Emirates rider threw caution to the wind when he attacked in the Col de Romme on the eighth stage, in a move similar to those of Merckx or fellow five-time Tour winner Bernard Hinault.

